

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — May 8, 2015

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 26 / No. 088

## Time Crunch: Talking Competition, Vimeo & Vice as INTX Wraps

When it comes to competition today, it's not so much about who is disrupting who or what other shows are on in the 9 o'clock hour. "The competition we're really all in is for people's time," said **A+E Nets** pres/CEO *Nancy Dubuc* at **INTX's** closing general session Thurs. A primetime schedule is there mainly because advertisers are used to it being there, she said, acknowledging that a lead-in isn't what it once was. Time even comes into play with skinny bundles—and could even be an incentive for programmers to participate. "If you could imagine an environment with smaller packages, there's less competition for us, too," said Dubuc. While A+E Nets are part of **DISH's** Sling TV package, she said the verdict's still out on smaller bundles. The A+E chief declined to say much on plans to have **Vice Media** take over **H2**—plans that were halted last week reportedly after the programmer couldn't get distributor **DirecTV** on board with the change. "We love the Vice guys. We believe in them. We're investors. I hope *Shane [Smith, Vice's founder]* gets a channel someday," she said. Sharing the stage with Dubuc was **Vimeo** CEO *Kerry Trainor*, who runs the largest video sharing platform behind **YouTube**. The difference is that Vimeo's content is ad-free and viewers pay for what they watch. "We don't have a problem with ads and their place on earth. It's a great business model... It's just a question of what's right for us," Trainor said, billing Vimeo as premium, direct content. "We want to be the 'open **HBO**.' People like to pay for content just as much as they like to get it for free," he claimed. Vimeo's biggest success is comedy series "High Maintenance," about a bike delivery messenger pot dealer and his clients. It received great critical buzz, and now HBO has bought it. Trainor admitted it's bittersweet to lose it, but said he understands the opportunity. "There is no question that the economic maturity of channels like HBO are well beyond where we are... We would be jerks not to support them," he said. At the same time, Vimeo has its own advantages being a global platform with a highly interested audience. "We reach all sorts of nooks and crannies they don't," he said. "The footing is going to become more and more equal." Isn't this where A+E and other programmers should be afraid? Dubuc said it goes back to that competition for time—sometimes viewers are going to want to seek out very specific content on a hobby from Vimeo, but sometimes they just want to sit back and be entertained. "What we do see is incredible stability in the

The advertisement features two main images: a blue and white Lucas Oil Chili Bowl Nationals sprint car on the left and a white Red Bull rally car on the right. The text includes "LUCAS OIL CHILI BOWL Nationals" in a stylized font, "WRC FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP" in a clean font, and "LIVE EVENTS ONLY ON MAVTV MOTORSports NETWORK" in large, bold letters. The website "mavtv.com" is listed at the bottom.

CABLEFAX DAILY (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Associate Publisher: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Editor: Joyce Wang, 301.354.1828, jwang@accessintel.com ● Sr Community Editor: Kaylee Hultgren, 212.621.4200, khultgren@accessintel.com ● Advisor: Seth Arenstein ● Dir. of Business Dev.: Rich Hauptner, 203.899.8460, rhauptner@accessintel.com ● Jr. Acct. Exec: Olivia Murray, 301.354.2010, omurray@accessintel.com ● Dir. of Market Dev.: Laurie Hofmann, 301.354.1796, lhofmann@accessintel.com ● Production: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Diane Schwartz, SVP Media Comms Group, dschwartz@accessintel.com ● Group Subs: Laurie Hofmann, 301.354.1796, lhofmann@accessintel.com ● Sub Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,649/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 4 Choke Cherry Road, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

amount of video people are viewing on a daily basis,” she said. “Storytelling is what’s going to prevail.”

**OTT Strategies:** So why doesn’t DISH’s SlingTV include any broadcast channels in its basic package, which costs \$20 and includes 19 channels (most of them basic cable staples)? “We are trying to be a piece of the puzzle...Viewers might take SlingTV and Hulu and other content and put together their own bundle,” SlingTV CEO *Roger Lynch* said at an **INTX** panel Thurs. Most people are already getting broadcast nets over-the-air so DISH doesn’t want to force people to pay for channels they already receive, he said, adding it might offer broadcast nets in tiers that viewers can buy into, but they won’t be forced into subs’ basic packages. Lynch was joined on the panel by other OTT service execs, including Hulu head of distribution & partnerships *Tim Connolly* and *Braxton Jarratt*, CEO/co-founder of **Clearleap**, a multiscreen tech firm that counts programmers such as **HBO**, **BBC America** and **LMN** as customers as well as ops like **Time Warner Cable** and **Verizon**. Jarratt stressed that having a great user experience is as important as owning great content. And adding new features and functionality that improves the user experience can drive immediate increase in engagement, he said. Hulu believes in the “build your own platform” model, Connolly said. “We have decided that the technology platform is a core part of creating a great user experience.” That’s why the company has built its own user interface, server and even a data platform. However, Lynch noted “if you are a content company and want to get into direct-to-consumer service, it’s better to work with companies like Clearleap.” Meanwhile, Hulu continues to shift its focus to subscription-based model from free ad-supported model. Customer engagement of subs versus non-subs is dramatically different, according to Connolly. The company is using free ad-supported content as a tool to drive subscriptions, he said. In terms of engagement on different platforms, mobile drives high levels of engagement for both SlingTV and Hulu, execs said. And the majority of viewing of TV content happens at home.

**NAMIC Honors Scott:** It’s usually bad news when an industry event runs long, as **NAMIC’s** 35th anniversary breakfast did Thurs at **INTX**. This breakfast was the exception. No stranger to cable, *Susan Scott* was permitted to speak without a time limit about her baby brother, *Stuart*. Accepting NAMIC’s Mickey Leland Humanitarian Achievement Award for the late “SportsCenter” anchor. Scott’s passionate oratory about her brother’s final months and his obsession to help other cancer fighters “stay on their normal life paths for as long as possible” were elements of a speech that will be remembered for years. Breaking up momentarily while thanking ESPN for its “uncomplicated support” of “Stuart when he had cancer,” she went off script: “The first time I met *Sean Bratches* I never thought I’d think of him as family. But I do...their support couldn’t have been more respectful, strong or helpful.” On July 19, Stuart’s birthday, a small group officially will launch **The Stuart Scott Foundation for Cancer Fighters**, she said. Prior to the Leland award, the tone was far lighter, thanks to remarks by **ESPN’s** *Chris LaPlaca*, who said, “I know I’m going to like this year’s breakfast at 8 o’clock more than I liked last year’s at 7.” Major sources of hilarity were the co-hosts: **Univision** talent *Lourdes Stephen*, *Carlos Calderón* and especially *Jomari Goyso*, who milked his accented English to great effect while introducing NAMIC awardees: next gen leaders *Eddie Hill*, svp, **BET**; *Chandini Thakrar-Ochoa*, vp, **Suddenlink**; *Quincy Johnson*, vp, **Turner**; and *Jessica Rodriguez*, evp, CMO, Univision; luminaries: *Fernando Alem*, vp, **Discovery**; *Aja Byrd*, vp, **Al Jazeera America**; *Jennifer Giddens*, vp, **NBCU**; *Dawn Holliday-Mack*, vp, **El Rey**; *Tina Perry*, evp, **OWN**; *James Rollins*, vp, **Disney/ESPN**; *Freddy Rolon*, vp, **ESPN Deportes**; *Rydne Williams*, vp, **Comcast Cable**; *Inae Wilson*, svp, **FOX**; and *Julie Yoo*, svp, **Scripps**.

**Don’t Forget TVE:** “If TVE marketers were retailers, events would be our Black Friday,” said **Univision** audience dev vp *Greg Weinstein* in a **CTAM** TVE panel at **INTX** Wed. And this summer, that event is soccer’s Gold Cup. Univision is using a sweepstakes to drive usage, with the focus on acquiring email addresses for communications and targeted marketing purposes. **Fox Nets** also used a sweepstakes for its big TVE campaign, but it used sign-in as the form of entry. Integral to “Stream It, Dream It” was “heavy customizable campaigns” with MVPDs, particularly with promotional marketing, said svp distribution marketing *Jamia Bigalow*. **Turner Network Sales** svp business & product dev *John Harran* stressed the importance of live content for developing TVE, in the areas of sports, breaking news and product innovation, with apps like March Madness Live. Turner’s trying to tap into trends and continuing to gain more entry points for programming and “explore horizontally,” he said. Yet though live events have been

key to introducing TVE to customers, the next step has to come from general entertainment companies, said **A+E** **Nets** distribution, business development, analytics & marketing svp *Mark Garner*. The company's focused on a satisfying in-app experience and increasing repeat viewing. **Cox Comm** product marketing vp *Jonathan Freeland* said that for Cox 75% of TVE is actually in-home and the ratio is 50/50 for on demand/live usage. In terms of drivers, said NBCU's TVE consumer marketing vp *Alexa Wilson*, **NBCU's** "Watch TV Without the TV" campaign suggested that "the number 1 driver of TVE is content," and quality programming is what gets people to sign on. The challenge to be met in NBCU's case was creating one campaign for all of its brands. **Comcast Cable** is working on eliminating barriers to sign-in, like privacy, ease of access, and fear of getting charged, in order to increase adoption, said sr dir TVE content & product strategy *Vito Forlenza*.

**UltraHD and Beyond:** Next generation video isn't just about 4K, despite rapid expansion and adoption of the technology, speakers from CableLabs and several interactive TV service providers said at a panel Wed. For Daryl Malas, principal architect at CableLabs, bettering the video experience goes beyond resolution itself. New emphasis has been placed on things like high dynamic range (HDR), bit depth and color gamut, he said. When it comes to bit depth, which refers to the color information stored in an image, the anticipated new standard is 10 bits (previously 8) which will have a more precise representation of the originally captured source and more accurate representation of brightness and color, according to Malas. Regarding color space, vendors are expected to adopt a new ITU standard that increases the size of the color gamut. Finally, HDR, introduced recently to motion pictures, is designed to increase the peak luminance output so that the brighter part of the video increase in intensity while maintaining detail in the dark portions of the video, according to Malas. "We expect to see some HDR content coming out this year," he noted. Meanwhile, merely delivering 4K isn't enough. The key is to make 4K experience more personal, interactive and immersive, said Eric Grab, CTO at NeuLion, provider of live and on-demand content to Internet-connected devices. To do that, service providers need to be creative with their live 4K streaming offering, enabling access to things like different audio tracks and better camera angles, he said. "Streaming 4K isn't about making video over-the-top. It's about making over-the-top better and more engaging and compelling... It's time to embrace these technologies and not fragment ourselves in a million different directions," he said. The company has done live 4K streaming trials and Grab signaled that commercial live 4K streaming is coming this year. "We are ready to go... We are going to turn it on this year." Wurl intends to up its game in the interactive TV service game, whether it's HD or 4K and beyond. "There is a lot of Web content that's not intended for TV but will be great for TV," said CTO S.V. Vasudevan. The company's Wurl Bridge API allows operators to make TV and movie related Internet content available in their set-top-delivered guides. While the Netflix app might drive viewers away from linear TV content, Web content from Wurl brings viewers back to linear TV, he said, calling integration of Web content "complementary" to pay-TV's business model. "Everyone loves video content and it's great... But it's really the clips that drive tune-in and consumption," he said. Furthermore, ad-supported clips bring new opportunities to monetize linear content whether it's on TV or on the Web, he noted.

**MAVTV Goes North:** **MAVTV** is coming to Canada thanks to a deal with **Anthem Media Group**. The motorsports channel will be based out of Anthem Studios in Toronto. **Fight Network** founder *Mike Garrow* will oversee the rollout and launch of MAVTV Canada, working with Anthem's technical and production teams.

**More ESPN Moves:** First *Sean Bratches*. Now *David Preschlack*. The **Disney & ESPN Media** nets affil sales and marketing evp has left his post and will serve as an adviser at ESPN until the end of the year. This follows the resignation from evp, sales and marketing Bratches just a few weeks ago. In a memo to the company regarding Pre-

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

schlack's decision to leave, Disney Media Nets pres & co-chmn *John Skipper* said the exec "has been a key driver at every stage and has done all of that as the consummate professional, a trusted colleague, a valued friend and with a relentlessly positive spirit that touched us all. We are immeasurably better for having had him on our team." Bratches is also serving in an adviser role until year-end.

**People: Disney and ESPN Media Nets** promoted *James Rollins* to vp, digital video distribution.

**Lifetime's Broad Focus:** Lifetime is launching "Broad Focus," an initiative that aims to provide women with more opportunities to write, develop, produce and direct content for the net. As part of Broad Focus, Lifetime as signed on at the exclusive cable partner of *Geena Davis's* inaugural Bentonville Film Festival and will telecast 1 of its winning films. The net also will choose a winning script from the festival's script writing contest to put in its development pipeline.

**Cablefax Party:** Thanks to everyone who came out to the House of Blues Wed night to celebrate the **Cablefax 100** with us! There was some sweet harmonies from No Comment and plenty of dancing. Special thanks to our sponsors **Pop, MAVTV, Music Choice** and **Ride TV**. And congrats again to our 100 honorees!

## Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	05/07 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	05/07 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
DIRECTV:	88.80	0.47	COMMSCOPE:	26.11	0.15
DISH:	67.00	0.28	CONCURRENT:	6.02	(0.05)
ENTRAVISION:	6.40	(0.01)	CONVERGYS:	23.81	0.39
GRAY TELEVISION:	13.88	UNCH	CSG SYSTEMS:	30.39	0.44
MEDIA GENERAL:	15.81	(0.73)	ECHOSTAR:	49.03	(1.41)
NEXSTAR:	56.73	(0.66)	GOOGLE:	530.70	6.48
SINCLAIR:	29.51	(0.46)	HARMONIC:	6.73	UNCH
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	20.56	(0.24)	INTEL:	32.24	0.03
CHARTER:	182.96	(0.95)	INTERACTIVE CORP:	73.52	(0.28)
COMCAST:	57.92	0.26	JDSU:	12.39	0.15
COMCAST SPCL:	57.80	0.29	LEVEL 3:	55.47	(0.3)
GCI:	14.78	(0.57)	MICROSOFT:	46.70	0.42
GRAHAM HOLDING:	966.68	4.07	NETFLIX:	565.24	4.70
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	53.37	(0.49)	NIELSEN:	44.99	0.25
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	52.10	(0.22)	RENTRAK:	50.70	0.21
SHAW COMM:	22.54	(0.21)	SEACHANGE:	7.00	(0.01)
SHENTEL:	31.38	(0.86)	SONY:	30.30	0.34
SHENTEL:	31.38	(0.86)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.73	(0.11)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	155.12	(0.23)	TIVO:	10.81	0.10
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	32.78	(0.9)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	56.36	0.04
AMC NETWORKS:	76.75	(2.13)	VONAGE:	4.58	(0.19)
CBS:	61.22	0.10	YAHOO:	43.87	2.21
CROWN:	3.85	(0.01)	<b>TELCOS</b>		
DISCOVERY:	31.50	(0.49)	AT&T:	33.37	(0.01)
DISNEY:	109.26	(0.46)	CENTURYLINK:	34.65	0.12
GRUPO TELEVISA:	35.59	0.09	TDS:	28.90	0.06
HSN:	66.19	1.96	VERIZON:	49.73	0.09
LIONSGATE:	30.65	(0.05)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
MSG:	83.80	0.33	DOW:	17924.06	82.08
SCRIPPS INT:	68.04	(1.95)	NASDAQ:	4945.54	25.90
STARZ:	38.15	(0.24)	S&P 500:	2088.00	7.85
TIME WARNER:	83.68	0.05	<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>		
VIACOM:	66.95	(0.95)	ADVANTAGE:	2.41	0.02
WWE:	13.53	0.09	AMDOCS:	53.61	(0.09)
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADDVANTAGE:	2.41	0.02	AMPHENOL:	55.75	0.05
AMDOCS:	53.61	(0.09)	AOL:	39.39	(0.09)
AMPHENOL:	55.75	0.05	APPLE:	125.26	0.25
AOL:	39.39	(0.09)	ARRIS GROUP:	33.20	(0.24)
APPLE:	125.26	0.25	AVID TECH:	15.87	0.18
ARRIS GROUP:	33.20	(0.24)	BLNDER TONGUE:	0.76	-0.00
AVID TECH:	15.87	0.18	BROADCOM:	46.42	0.92
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.76	-0.00	CISCO:	28.80	(0.17)
BROADCOM:	46.42	0.92			
CISCO:	28.80	(0.17)			

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## On HBO, a Queen Plays an Empress

It took director *Richard Linklater* 11 years to make "Boyhood," the acclaimed **IFC Films** coming-of-age piece. "Bessie," an **HBO** Original Film about blues pioneer *Bessie Smith* (1894-1937) has that beat. Producers *Richard Zanuck* and *Lili Fini Zanuck* approached then-fledgling actress *Queen Latifah* with an idea 22 years ago. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright *Horton Foote*, who wrote the screenplay for "To Kill a Mockingbird," penned the first draft. "I have been excited about this project since the very beginning," Latifah says, although she admits at 22 she had no idea who Smith was. *Dee Rees* and *Christopher Cleveland & Bettina Gilois* revised Foote's work into the screenplay for *Bessie*, which will premiere on HBO May 16, 8pm; Rees also directs. The screenwriters' approach to describing Smith's rise from a poor unknown from TN who eventually became The Empress of the Blues is clever. They reveal Smith through her music, specifically songs she wrote, as opposed to her biggest hits. "The lyrics actually deliver on her emotional narrative," Rees says, "...[and are] the best way to get into the character." The lyrics also speak to the largely racist, male-dominated world that Smith lived in. Smith and her mentor, *Ma Rainey* (played wonderfully by *Mo'Nique*), did more than entertain; they used song to conduct a social and sexual discourse. Says Dees, "Their live repertoire was sometimes the only public discourse of women's issues...the only place where they could directly criticize the systems that they were being oppressed by...the blues... became the first way that people could begin to talk about these issues and make it personal, political..." A powerful personality (watch the film and you'll see that's an understatement), Smith lived vigorously. Her eating, drinking, lovemaking and fighting had few limits. "You have to give so much of yourself to play one of these kinds of roles," Latifah says. She does, and wonderfully. — *Seth Arenstein*

**Reviews:** "Ripper Street," 10pm ET, Wed, **BBC America**. Not many American series sport a plotline that has the leading actor go missing for a spell. British series seem to do so sporadically. Such is the case here, early in Season 3, with Detective Inspector *Edmund Reid* (*Matthew Macfadyen*) departing until he can clear his name; his second, Det Sgt *Bennet Drake* (*Jerome Flynn*), becomes Interim D I. Yet *Reid's* influence—to remain honorable while combatting crime in dishonorable East London in 1889—is palpable in Wed's ep, whose plotlines intermingle into a delicious mystery. -- "Stockholm, Pennsylvania," Sat, 8pm, **Lifetime**. Premiered at Sundance, "Stockholm, Pennsylvania" almost feels like a documentary as it tells the story of a girl who was abducted at age 4 and returned to her parents 20 years later. As the victimized *Leeann*, *Saoirse Ronan* is outstanding, portraying a physically and mentally shaken character, using her eyes and facial expressions expertly. Also strong is *Cynthia Nixon* as her mother, gingerly attempting to socialize her somewhat brainwashed daughter without overwhelming her. The film drags at times, yet Ms. Nixon and Ronan provide an acting master class. -- "Mother(s) of the Bride," Sun, 7pm ET, **UP**. *Gail O'Grady* and *Betsy Brandt* square off as mothers planning a daughter's wedding in this light yet fun Mother's Day romp. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (4/20/15-4/26/15)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	TNT	1.2	2840
2	FOXN	0.7	1702
3	DSNY	0.6	1570
3	TBSC	0.6	1534
3	ESPN	0.6	1494
3	HIST	0.6	1387
3	USA	0.6	1380
3	HGTV	0.6	1357
3	DSE	0.6	122
10	DISC	0.5	1276
10	FX	0.5	1194
12	ADSM	0.4	1063
12	FOOD	0.4	1019
12	LIFE	0.4	899
12	SYFY	0.4	897
12	TLC	0.4	860
12	ID	0.4	781
12	DFAM	0.4	82
19	A&E	0.3	789
19	BRAV	0.3	768
19	SPK	0.3	725
19	NAN	0.3	713
19	AMC	0.3	701
19	FAM	0.3	645
19	HALL	0.3	635
19	NBCS	0.3	621
19	DSJR	0.3	595
19	HMM	0.3	412
19	BOOM	0.3	295
30	VH1	0.2	571
30	EN	0.2	555
30	TVLD	0.2	542
30	APL	0.2	541
30	CMDY	0.2	526
30	MTV	0.2	526
30	WETV	0.2	508
30	OWN	0.2	505
30	NGC	0.2	505
30	CNN	0.2	503
30	MSNB	0.2	502
30	TRU	0.2	497
30	BET	0.2	464
30	LMN	0.2	425
30	GSN	0.2	400
30	TRAV	0.2	390
30	FXX	0.2	370

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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