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What the Industry Reads First

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PromaxBDA: Collaboration, Community Key as Content Evolves

We can all reminisce about the days when everyone grew up and got cable, but **Bravo** and **Oxygen Media** evp, marketing *Ellen Stone* on Tues reminded **PromaxBDA** attendees that “now, that’s not the case. They can grow up and they can afford cable, and they can say ‘I don’t understand. I can just get it on the digital space,’ which is just fine,” she said. “How are we going to change as a cable entity or a broadcast entity to meet their needs?” The opening general session largely hinged on that question of how traditional and new media can work more closely together—and for mutual benefit. “We’re learning how to bring in the new and marry it to the old in a way that’s really working,” Stone said. “You have to change with the times, but don’t throw away what’s working.” Of course, that’s easier said than done. “I think we’re all making each other better,” said **Hulu** svp/head of marketing *Jenny Wall*. “The fragmentation of media isn’t something we should break down. We should embrace it.” She noted that fans of **Fox’s** “*Empire*” might watch the first 5 eps on Hulu and “then they jump over and watch on linear.” But she said that’s okay because such consumer behavior can actually lift viewership for both sides. “Instead of fighting... we can really embrace how we can work together,” she said. *Erin McPherson*, chief content officer at **Maker Studios**, said individual digital creators drive much of the marketing—but not in the traditional sense. “They do think of it as a two-way conversation—that they’re not managing an audience, but that they’re managing a community,” she said. And that can be especially true about Gen-Z, who are younger than millennials and were “born into a robust social media environment” where “discovery for them is part and parcel of that.” Another shift: “They’re global,” she said. “They think globally, and they watch content globally.” Meanwhile, panelists said they’re exploring virtual reality, with **Maker Studios** and others already creating pseudo-VR content designed for smartphones, with plans to expand as fully immersive VR equipment becomes more affordable. “That’s just an entirely new universe, and we have to be there,” said *McPherson*. Added *Laurel Bernard*, evp, marketing at Fox Broadcast: “It’s going to be a whole new wild west.”

TiVo Online: **TiVo** is taking the task of helping consumers find and access cable and streaming content into its own hands with the launch of **TiVo Online**. The free portal aims to allow customers to find programs they want to watch from their cable lineup or various streaming services. At launch, **TiVo** subs can stream live and recorded TV when

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on their home network or launch titles with one click from supported programmers and streaming sites. An update planned for later this year will allow anyone who registers for a free TiVo account to access the same personalized viewing experience available to TiVo subs. It's "an extension and refinement" of the portals TiVo created for its wholesale MSOs partners, TiVo marketing vp *Jim Denney* told us. The company inked deals with a slew of mid-sized and small cable MSOs including **Atlantic Broadband** to enable both linear and OTT video services. As part of those deals, custom portals were created for each MSO customer. TiVo Online uses the same core technology with improvements. It's a public version of those portals, Denney said. "We are doing it because it's a pain to have to go to different sites to find different content," he said. The portal seeks to enable unified search, allowing users to search across shows, networks and actors. The "What to Watch Now" feature shows users categories of the most popular programming based on genres and themes. And the TiVo Guide feature provides quick access to a channel lineup. In addition, TiVo Online extends the experience users have with their TiVo devices and it ties into users' TiVo account, said Denney. The key is to have a unified user experience, he said. The portal features OnePass, which aims to give users one place for all available content to be searchable and findable from within the "My Shows" menu, whether the content is recorded from network TV, or is available on supported programmers or from a streaming source such as **Hulu**. Customers can also create, edit or copy their OnePass selections from one DVR to another.

Internet Tax: The full **House** passed the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act Tues. The bill, which was approved by the House in the previous Congress, bans taxes on Internet access, which cable generally supports. "By preventing these taxes, the bill keeps down the cost of connectivity, enabling more American consumers and businesses to join the online world and the Internet to continue to power U.S. economic growth," **NCTA** chief *Michael Powell* said in a statement urging the Senate to pass companion legislation.

FreeWheel Pilots VOD: To unify advertising across screens and devices, ad firm **FreeWheel** launched a VOD pilot aimed at enabling programmers to manage VOD ads alongside IP/digital and TV ads within the same platform. The initiative is in collaboration with **Canoe**, an advertising tech provider founded by **Comcast, Cox, Time Warner Cable and Bright House**, as well as programmers including **ABC, A+E Nets** and **Comcast**. More MVPDs will join the initiative, according to FreeWheel. Participating programmers have the option of using FreeWheel's FourFronts Private Marketplace to monetize VOD inventory made available by the VOD Pilot.

FCC Reform: Thurs' **House Communications** subcmte hearing on **FCC** field office closures was canceled, for a good reason. **House Commerce** leaders said they've reached a deal with the agency to keep 15 of the field offices open. The committee has pressed the Commission on the potential closure of 2/3 of the agency's field offices for several months. The agreement is expected to ensure better response capabilities, provide a mechanism for escalating interference complaints, improve enforcement of the FCC's rules against pirate radio operators and prevent the agency from transferring field office jobs to its DC headquarters.

Comcast Credits: **Comcast** is offering \$5 credits to customers in CA, WA and Tucson, AZ who experienced several hours of disruption to their Internet service last week. The MSO, which had restored service to most customers by 9pm PT, blamed the problem on a piece of hardware in the backbone network that failed with traffic overloading local DNS server capacity. "Since the incident, we have been working non-stop to fully understand the problem and bring additional DNS capacity online in the affected areas, so we can prevent it from happening again," the MSO said. In other news, Comcast announced Thurs that it has rebuilt its online customer support forums, giving them a new user interface and better navigation.

Ratings: With **NBA** playoff action moving to broadcast, other cable programs rose to the top last week. Yes, ratings winners "Game of Thrones" (**HBO**) and "Mon Night Raw" (**USA**) accounted for the top cable shows of the week, but other winners included **Fox Sports 1's** Nascar Sprint Cup coverage Sun (averaged 3.6mln viewers) and **Discovery's** "Alaskan Bush People" (3.4mln). **Disney** had a slight edge over USA in prime delivery for the week (1.67mln vs 1.65mln). It was helped by tween spy series "K.C. Undercover," which averaged 2.5mln viewers Sun night.

TV Ads Still King: A whitepaper released by **Turner** on Tues declares that television remains the most effective advertising medium in today's video age. Marketing analytics provider **MarketShare's** analysis for Turner found that

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TV has the highest relative efficiency in achieving KPIs, besting online display, paid search, print and radio. When comparing performance at similar spend levels, TV drove, on average, 4 times the sales lift of digital overall, MarketShare said. Other findings: TV has maintained its effectiveness over the past 5 years, while other online and offline mediums experienced a double-digit decline; and premium online video from broadcast and cable networks outperforms other publishers' video content (such as **TubeMogul** and **DailyMotion**).

Programming: iHeartMedia will serve as the official radio partner of Wed's CMT Music Awards, marking the 1st time there's a live, radio simulcast of the show. -- Nick picked up animated, preschool series "PAW Patrol" for a 3rd season. -- TCM extended their partnership to bring monthly screenings of "TCM Presents" to select cinemas nationwide for the remainder of the year. The partnership began in Jan with "The Wizard of Oz." This month, the 2 will present "Jaws" in honor of its 40th anniversary.

People: Univision tapped former Scripps Nets Interactive exec Sameer Deen to the post of svp, Univision Digital. Based in Miami, he'll be responsible for leading the digital strategy across the programmer's growing digital and mobile portfolio and maximizing digital-linear TV integration.

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	06/09 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	06/09 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	91.90	0.11	COMMSCOPE:	26.18	(0.03)
DISH:	73.02	(0.62)	CONCURRENT:	6.56	0.07
ENTRAVISION:	7.19	0.12	CONVERGYS:	24.89	(0.02)
GRAY TELEVISION:	15.30	(0.16)	CSG SYSTEMS:	31.58	(0.08)
MEDIA GENERAL:	16.46	(0.23)	ECHOSTAR:	51.18	0.10
NEXSTAR:	56.21	(0.46)	GOOGLE:	526.69	(0.14)
SINCLAIR:	29.99	(0.21)	HARMONIC:	7.13	0.05
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	23.81	0.04	INTEL:	31.25	(0.05)
CHARTER:	173.00	1.91	INTERACTIVE CORP:	75.13	(0.4)
COMCAST:	57.85	(0.02)	JDSU:	12.78	0.01
COMCAST SPCL:	57.61	(0.01)	LEVEL 3:	54.59	0.10
GCI:	16.15	0.02	MICROSOFT:	45.65	(0.08)
GRAHAM HOLDING:	1069.00	(2.11)	NETFLIX:	647.15	19.92
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	52.24	0.23	NIELSEN:	44.51	0.21
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	55.02	0.04	RENTRAK:	68.36	0.99
SHAW COMM:	21.80	0.15	SEACHANGE:	7.50	(0.03)
SHENTEL:	31.98	(0.15)	SONY:	29.14	(0.13)
SHENTEL:	31.98	(0.15)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.53	0.03
TIME WARNER CABLE:	179.07	2.70	TIVO:	10.53	0.04
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	32.81	(0.27)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	52.03	(0.84)
AMC NETWORKS:	78.00	(1.15)	VONAGE:	4.72	(0.08)
CBS:	59.85	(0.43)	YAHOO:	41.63	(0.38)
CROWN:	4.17	(0.02)	TELCOS		
DISCOVERY:	33.44	(0.34)	AT&T:	34.51	(0.08)
DISNEY:	108.52	(0.77)	CENTURYLINK:	32.07	(0.15)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	37.11	0.15	TDS:	29.98	0.15
HSN:	68.22	(0.81)	VERIZON:	47.34	(0.1)
LIONSGATE:	35.58	0.21	MARKET INDICES		
MSG:	85.39	0.43	DOW:	17764.04	(2.51)
SCRIPPS INT:	67.28	(0.48)	NASDAQ:	5013.87	(7.76)
STARZ:	41.31	0.14	S&P 500:	2080.15	0.87
TIME WARNER:	85.53	(0.49)			
VIACOM:	67.02	(0.42)			
WWE:	15.71	0.15			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADVANTAGE:	2.35	0.01			
AMDOCS:	55.69	(0.28)			
AMPHENOL:	56.69	(0.17)			
AOL:	50.00	(0.07)			
APPLE:	127.42	(0.38)			
ARRIS GROUP:	32.84	(0.35)			
AVID TECH:	16.25	(1.57)			
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.83	0.06			
BROADCOM:	53.55	0.31			
CISCO:	28.24	(0.03)			

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SPECIAL REPORT

Cuba Libre: As Relations With U.S. Improve, TV Production Progresses

Just 6 months after President *Obama* announced he would be taking steps toward restoring diplomatic relations with Cuba, one independent network saw an opportunity. **ONE World Sports** made history last week with its telecast out of Havana of the New York Cosmos pro-soccer team versus the Cuba National Team. It's the first time a team from the U.S. has gone to Cuba since the 2008 FIFA World Cup qualifier game versus Cuba, produced by **ESPN**.

ONE World isn't the only network venturing into Cuba to create television for global audiences. Even before Obama's announcement **Discovery Communications** was entrenched in Cuba shooting the reality show "Cuban Chrome." Havana is getting increased attention from TV. **TBS'**

"Conan In Cuba," which marked the first time a late night host did a show in the country in more than 50 years, logged a record 3.7mln viewers in March.

The stories behind these Cuban telecasts all vary. For ONE World, it started with a conversation between Cosmos head coach *Giovanni Savarese* and his counterpart on the Cuban team. And then the country's respective governments got involved. "The Cubans thought this would be a great way to do a few things," said ONE World Sports president and CEO *Sandy Brown*. "First and foremost, to advance the game of soccer in Cuba, but at the same time, in light of the fact that relations between our two countries has been normalized for the first time in 50-plus years, the Cuban government thought this would be a great way to develop a bridge between our two countries."

As TV rights holders for the Cosmos, a team well-known globally as the former side of Brazilian soccer legend Pelé, ONE World saw this as an opportunity to shine on a global stage. "This is what we do. We specialize in

broadcasting international events and bringing them to this country," said Brown. "Being able to have an opportunity to bring something like this... as historic an event as this is, this is a great feather in our cap."

The major challenges, the team quickly learned, would involve the state of Cuba's telecommunications infrastructure. ONE World Sports evp, programming and production *Joel Feld*, a 20-year veteran of producing sports events for **ABC**, said they visited a month prior to get the lay of the land. There were a number of ways they could have approached the production, he said, but it was important to collaborate with the Cuban crew on the ground. "We are not only using Cuban facilities, but also three quarters of our crew are going to be from the

Cuban broadcast group," Feld said prior to the match last week.

That kind of collaboration hasn't always been possible for sporting events. Recalling the 2008 match, ESPN senior coordinating producer

Amy Rosenfeld admitted that "things have come a long way in 7 years... in terms of their abilities operationally, logistically, personnel, equipment." ESPN simulcast the Cosmos' June 2 match on **ESPN 2** and **ESPN Deportes** and was impressed with the progress. Back in '08, "we had a lot of debate about what we would try to ship from the United States and what we would try to source locally." They opted to float a production truck, based out of Maine, from Florida to Havana. "We had an American mobile unit, but we sourced the generator and the uplink from Cuba." With mixed results. In fact, at around the 80th minute of play the lights went out in the stadium, she recalled, inspiring some to shine lights on the field with their cars so the teams could finish the qualifier.

"It was one of those nail-biters... where our head of operations was constantly running out and checking on the generator," Rosenfeld recalled. There were challenges with the uplink as well. "We were taking an SD feed and upconverting it in Bristol. ONE World used straight HD. Right then and there you see the improvement in terms



ONE World Sports' historic telecast between the NY Cosmos and the Cuba National Team was a true collaboration between two countries.

of facilities in Cuba... They didn't have that 7 years ago," she said.

During the Cosmos telecast, Feld's prediction that telecommunications would be the major challenge came true. Getting telephone service out of Cuba wasn't easy. "It happened, but it took a little bit longer than we had hoped," Feld said. "And there was no WiFi. Doing a production of this scale in this era with limited telephone service and no WiFi required us to do a fair amount of workarounds—all of which turned out to be successful, it just requires you to reengineer your thinking."

Collaboration between the American and Cuban teams was a true highlight, ONE World execs agreed. For a few, key positions, for instance, ONE World brought in bilingual crew members from Miami, which helped with communicating about technical aspects. "We believe they definitely learned a few things from us, in terms of what we do on a production of this magnitude, and vice versa, they did a few things differently that we learned from them," said vp, operations *Bob Brown*. For example, the Cubans' production mobile unit was HD-equipped with high-quality cameras and incorporated an audio booth to do voiceovers on the fly, which Brown found to be an innovative solution for smaller venues and different areas where technical capabilities are challenged.

The opportunities for Cuban programming don't all center on sports. Discovery's series "Cuban Chrome" offers a look at Cuba's passion for classic cars and the lengths to which owners must go to preserve them given that auto parts are so scarce. "People hold on to [the cars] like they're treasures and pass them on to their families," said executive producer *Craig Coffman*.

Given that it wasn't a government-sanctioned collaboration between pro sports teams, the red tape required to actually get to Cuba was extensive. "We were thinking it was going to be a long shot, and it was. After a year we got permission," he said, but they had to guarantee that it wouldn't be political, or an exposé, and that it would really be about the cars, Coffman said. Remarkably, the team learned of Obama's announcement in the middle of shooting the 8-part series, which allowed them to catch the reactions of Cubans on the street. "We have footage of people in the show in a bar of people watching Obama on television," Coffman said. "It becomes part of the story, though not heavily... because there aren't



Discovery Channel's 'Cuban Chrome' highlights how classic car owners preserve their vehicles even while auto parts are difficult to come by.

big changes in Cuba right away... but it's a big deal." The series is meant to be finite. But that was before Obama's announcement, Coffman said. "This is an unusual show for Discovery, because it's going to have Spanish in it, some subtitles... and typically for us that can be a stretch, and difficult for us to get an audience to watch it. So we have to see how it does."

Meanwhile, Shark Week is dipping its toes in Cuban waters for the first time with the show "Tiburones: The Sharks of Cuba." Permission to shoot in Cuba took about a year and a half for natural history photographer and conservationist *Ian Shive*, who brought the series to Discovery with permission already granted. Executive producer *Howard Swartz* believes Shive's relationships and reputation in the science community helped him secure access. But once granted, the challenges were more related to the science of it. "It was the same type of challenge any natural history filmmakers endure, which is, are the animals going to be where we hoped they're going to be." The appeal of Cuban waters is that they are largely untouched, Swartz said. "Scientists have been dying to get in this waters for a long time, and Cuba's done a remarkable job with their conservations efforts... it's very much like the Bahamas was 70 or 80 years ago before it became so accessible."

In terms of future programming shot in Cuba, execs say it remains to be seen how soon the process of gaining permission to shoot there will improve. Feld is one who's looking forward to it if the opportunity should arise. "If certain Cuban events become available in the U.S. market for production we'd be happy to have that conversation with the Cuban Sports Federation," he said. "Now it's in the government's hands, not in our hands."

— Kaylee Hultgren