

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Virtual Reality: Discovery VR Debuts

Discovery Comm has always been at the forefront of viewing experience, whether it's HD, 3D, or its latest venture, virtual reality. The programmer launched Discovery VR Thurs, featuring original content, show extensions and 9 upcoming short-form programs across platforms. The service is available at DiscoveryVR.com and through Discovery VR iOS and Android apps, via the **Samsung Milk VR** premium video service and on network **YouTube** channels. The initial lineup includes franchises from **Discovery Channel**, **Science Channel** and content from **Discovery Digital Networks** brands. The service's mobile apps and website player technology are provided by **LittlStar**. Founded in 2014, LittlStar is a global network and community for 360 degree, panoramic and VR video. Its platform features content created on panoramic video cameras for display on mobile devices, the Web and head mounted VR displays. Programs for Discovery VR include "MythBusters Shark Dive," and VR experiences from Discovery Channel's "Shweekend," a weekend of new Shark Week programming. There's also "Pay Dirt," in which the VR experiences will focus on a digger that the "Gold Rush" team uses to mine. In "How to Survive in the Wild," "Survivorman" star *Les Stroud* is equipped with a VR rig to take viewers through an off-the-grid trek. Meanwhile, viewers will have some heart-pounding "virtual" experiences whether it's freeboarding in San Fran or taking surfing lessons with Discovery Digital Networks' talent *Kyle Thiermann* in "Adventure." Finally, Discovery VR's "Planet" section will take viewers onto journeys to the desert, jungles and oceans. Of course, not every technology experiment ended up being successful. Discovery, **Sony** and **IMAX** shut down their all-3D joint venture TV channel **3net** last year with 3D never really taking off with consumers. Cable has already started its exploration into the next big thing. **CableLabs** has been testing VR services including 360-degree video experiences optimized for headsets, execs have said. Market analysts estimate the VR market opportunity to grow from single digit millions in 2016 to billions of dollars in 2020. The potentially lucrative market also prompted Comcast's investment in the business. Its venture capital arm, **Comcast Ventures**, is investing in **AltspaceVR**, which offers social VR. The service allows users to communicate and share experiences in a 3D virtual online environment, where they can co-view drone-captured footage of a volcano or have a private conversation in the corner of a virtual living room. An interesting feature is the ability to watch streaming video from

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OTT providers like **YouTube**, **Netflix** and **Twitch** in VR, Comcast Ventures principal *Gavin Teo* wrote in a blog post earlier this month. TV manufacturers are eyeing a piece of the pie too. **Samsung** enlisted **AMC's** "The Walking Dead" executive producer *David Alpert* and other creative minds to develop entertainment content for its upcoming virtual reality headset, Alpert recently told us. At this year's **CES**, Samsung showed off its Milk VR service, which will offer titles from companies including Alpert's **Skybound Entertainment**. Perhaps a virtual zombie apocalypse is in the works? **Elemental Technologies**, a video software provider that has partnered with programmers and ops to develop 4K services, plans to demonstrate video processing and delivery at **IBC 2015** that aims to enable service providers to offer real-time 4K virtual reality.

**DISH/Sinclair:** **DISH** and **Sinclair** reached a retrans agreement in principle Wed, 24 hours after their dispute led to a blackout in 79 markets. The spat's ending came after **FCC** chmn *Tom Wheeler* directed the Media Bureau to convene an emergency meeting with the companies. But Sinclair said viewers don't need to send the chmn any thank you notes. "We understand the temptation for the FCC to take credit for resolving this impasse, but their intervention had nothing to do with it," the broadcaster said in a statement. "We were very close to a resolution well before Chairman Wheeler got involved. In fact, the FCC process actually delayed the resolution, because it added more issues to negotiate, which lengthened DISH's service interruption, not shortened it. And it is important to remember that our stations never went off the air in any of those markets, but were consistently available free of charge to our viewers, as well as through DISH's competitors."

**Connect America Funding:** **CenturyLink** has accepted nearly \$506m in annual, ongoing support from the Connect America Fund to expand and support broadband for its 2.3m+ rural customers. It marks the largest amount accepted by any company to date, the **FCC** said. CenturyLink said the money would help it deliver broadband speeds of at least 10 Mbps down/1Mbps up to nearly 1.2m homes and businesses in rural areas. **AT&T** has accepted nearly \$428K in support from the fund to expand and support broadband for some 2.2m rural customers. Other companies accepting support include **Cincinnati Bell** (\$2.2m for 14K+ rural customers in KY and OH) and **Consolidated Telecom** (nearly \$14m for 50K customers in 6 states).

**CBS/TEGNA Agreement:** **CBS** and **TEGNA** (the new digital and broadcast division of **Gannett**) renewed station agreements for 10 TEGNA Media markets, covering 10m HHs. The renewal also includes TEGNA's access to **CBS's** streaming service, CBS All Access, expanding the live linear feed coverage of the offering to 85% of US HHs by year-end. CBS recently reached a deal with **Cablevision**, making the MSO the 1st pay-TV provider to offer the \$6 a month service (and **Showtime's** standalone streaming service).

**Jury Verdict:** A jury in a civil trial returned a verdict Thurs finding **Time Warner Cable** primarily responsible for the 2013 explosion that leveled a Kansas City restaurant. The jury ordered TWC to pay \$5.78m. The blast, which killed one restaurant worker, occurred after a crew for cable company subcontractor **Heartland Midwest** hit a gas line. "We know no court decision can undo this tragedy. We'll take some time to review the court's decision before deciding our next step in this case," TWC said.

**Sprinting for DirecTV Subs:** **Sprint** has put a bounty on **DirecTV** customers. Anxious not to lose customers to DirecTV's new owner **AT&T**, Sprint is offering the DBS company's customers a free year of service when they switch to Sprint. Existing Sprint customers can take advantage of the offer by adding a new line of service through Sprint Lease, iPhone Forever, Sprint Easy Pay or paying full retail for a smartphone and getting 12 months of unlimited talk, text and a full 2GB of data per line (up to 5 lines). That's not all—Sprint is offering to pay off DirecTV customers' old phone and contract. If you're out of contract or don't have phone payments, Sprint will buy back your current working smartphone for up to \$300. Customers are responsible for a \$36 activation fee.

**Amazon Prime Instant Video in Japan:** Following **Netflix's** plan to launch in Japan on Sept 2, **Amazon** said late Wed that it will expand its Prime Instant Video to Japan in the same month. Check out the full story on **Cablefax.com**.

**Justice for All (FiOS Subs):** **Justice Central.TV** scored carriage on Verizon FiOS, giving court junkies 24/7 access to the legal news. The net is owned by *Byron Allen's* **Entertainment Studios**. FiOS carries Entertainment Studios' other nets, including **Comedy.TV** and **Pets.TV**. The nearly 3-year-old Justice Central features programs with Judge Mablean from

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

“Divorce Court” as well as “We the People with Gloria Allred.”

**Pac-12 for DirecTV:** Now that the AT&T-DirecTV merger has closed, Pac-12 fans are getting their hopes up that DirecTV may soon carry **Pac-12 Net** since AT&T **U-verse** offers it.

There are even reports on *DBSTalk* of what appeared to be a brief test of the net. However, there’s no news to report yet. “We’ve had discussions with the PAC-12, but have not yet reached an agreement to carry the network on DirecTV,” a spokesman said Thurs.

**Comcast on Campus:** Comcast has expanded its Xfinity On Campus service to additional universities. According to the service’s web page, the schools currently offering or planning to offer it include Benedictine University; Yale; Sonoma State; Saint Michael’s College; Morehouse College; Tennessee State University; Dartmouth; Loyola University Maryland; Goucher College; Rider University; Regis College; California State University; Chico; Carnegie Mellon University; Bridgewater College; Emerson College; Lasell College; Drexel University; MIT; Northwestern University; the University of Delaware; and the University of New Hampshire. Comcast launched the service last year, offering a combo of linear and authenticated TV and VOD.

**Hoda at WICT:** NBC “Today” co-host *Hoda Kotb* will speak the **WICT Leadership Conference**, Sept 28 in NYC. The conference takes place during Cable’s Diversity Week.

## Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	08/27 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	08/27 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>			<b>CONVERGYS:</b> .....22.89 .....0.55		
DISH:.....	59.11	0.54	CSG SYSTEMS:.....	30.46	0.43
ENTRAVISION:.....	7.49	0.05	ECHOSTAR:.....	44.62	1.25
GRAY TELEVISION:.....	11.16	0.30	GOOGLE:.....	637.61	8.99
MEDIA GENERAL:.....	11.30	0.01	HARMONIC:.....	5.67	0.06
NEXSTAR:.....	45.38	0.22	INTEL:.....	27.72	0.42
SINCLAIR:.....	25.81	0.20	INTERACTIVE CORP:.....	71.66	1.94
TEGNA:.....	23.44	0.21	LEVEL 3:.....	45.73	1.20
<b>MSOS</b>			MICROSOFT:.....	43.90	1.19
CABLE ONE:.....	416.01	2.09	NETFLIX:.....	117.62	7.49
CABLEVISION:.....	24.06	0.77	NIELSEN:.....	45.35	1.12
CHARTER:.....	181.65	4.05	RENTRAK:.....	47.45	2.83
COMCAST:.....	56.77	1.37	SEACHANGE:.....	5.82	(0.11)
COMCAST SPCL:.....	57.37	1.65	SEACHANGE:.....	5.82	(0.11)
GCI:.....	17.00	0.22	SONY:.....	25.86	0.82
LIBERTY BROADBAND:.....	54.66	1.46	SPRINT NEXTEL:.....	5.07	0.28
LIBERTY GLOBAL:.....	49.06	2.16	TIVO:.....	9.09	0.24
SHAW COMM:.....	20.02	0.27	UNIVERSAL ELEC:.....	44.99	1.34
SHENTEL:.....	39.75	0.37	VONAGE:.....	5.66	(0.21)
TIME WARNER CABLE:.....	187.89	2.69	YAHOO:.....	33.69	1.17
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>			<b>TELCOS</b>		
21ST CENTURY FOX:.....	27.80	0.46	AT&T:.....	33.44	0.75
AMC NETWORKS:.....	72.81	3.09	CENTURYLINK:.....	26.74	0.37
CBS:.....	45.26	0.91	FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS:.....	4.93	0.09
CROWN:.....	4.45	(0.08)	TDS:.....	28.33	0.97
DISCOVERY:.....	26.91	0.39	VERIZON:.....	46.19	1.03
DISNEY:.....	102.17	2.94	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
GRUPO TELEVISIA:.....	30.16	0.53	DOW:.....	16654.77	369.26
HSN:.....	62.22	1.07	NASDAQ:.....	4812.71	115.17
LIONSGATE:.....	37.41	0.83	S&P 500:.....	1987.66	47.15
MSG:.....	71.12	1.00			
SCRIPPS INT:.....	52.67	0.90			
STARZ:.....	37.43	0.69			
TIME WARNER:.....	72.82	1.50			
VIACOM:.....	41.51	0.88			
WWE:.....	20.00	0.13			
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADDVANTAGE:.....	2.35	0.05			
AMDOCS:.....	57.75	1.35			
AMPHENOL:.....	53.22	2.63			
APPLE:.....	112.84	3.15			
ARRIS GROUP:.....	26.33	0.67			
AVID TECH:.....	8.22	0.23			
BLNDER TONGUE:.....	0.60	0.03			
BROADCOM:.....	51.65	1.80			
CISCO:.....	26.17	0.49			
COMMSCOPE:.....	25.88	0.08			
CONCURRENT:.....	4.68	0.07			

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Return Ticket

Just say the words “Girlfriends’ Getaway” to any woman and it will likely conjure up memories of laughs, relaxation and more laughs. And possibly even serve as a reminder that they need to schedule another one. So was the case with **TV One**. After the nice reception for last year’s comedy “Girlfriends’ Getaway,” the network booked another trip with “Girlfriends’ Getaway 2” to debut Sat at 8pm ET. *Terri Vaughn*, a producer and cast member, said the movie actually has something in common with real life. Her co-stars really are her friends. “We were already friends. When *Cas [Singers Beedles]*, my producing partner, and I came up with the concept of the movie and got the script together, it was just a matter of me calling some of my peers to see who was available,” Vaughn said. “We’ve been friends for years.” *Malinda Williams* (“Soul Food”), who plays Camille, actually is godmother to Vaughn’s daughter. “We need our girlfriends. We value our friendships. It’s such a big part of womanhood, at least for me and my peers,” Vaughn said. While the 2014 movie was about a girlfriend trip after Vicki’s (*Garcelle Beauvais*) boyfriend ended their relationship, this year’s getaway to Puerto Rico is in honor of Vicki’s wedding. Insert hilarious hijinks. Along with the laughs, there’s also genuine friendship on display. Vaughn praised TV One for serving “an audience that’s not being served” with films like hers. Specifically, she’s talking about African American women over the age of 25. “Everyone caters to the young generation. I want to be able to turn on the television and be inspired and laugh at someone who is in my age range,” Vaughn said. “I don’t always want to look at someone who’s 20. The silly stuff we did in our 20s—I can’t relate to that any more.” The cast will be watching along Sat and tweeting live (#GirlfriendsGetaway2). — *Amy Maclean*

**Reviews:** “Inside Hurricane Katrina,” Saturday, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. Ten years after Katrina it remains painful to watch this terrific mini doc, which tells the story well on several fronts: the weather, the preparation or lack thereof, the political failures and subsequent buck passing and the suffering. The filmmakers subtly spread the blame. Today, levees are rebuilt and new evacuation plans are ready. Still, you wonder if authorities learned anything from Katrina. -- “Million Dollar Listing LA,” Season 8 premiere, Wednesday, 10pm, **Bravo**. This beautiful-looking reality series about young, very rich real estate agents seems as fresh as ever. A problem: multi-million-dollar inventory is down. Oh, dear. -- “The Strain,” Sunday, 10pm, **FX**. We’re still hooked on this series from *Guillermo del Toro* and *Chuck Hogan* about an epidemic overtaking NYC. There’s violence, worms and vampires with tongues that would make *Miley Cyrus* jealous. This week finds Zach pining for his vampire mother. He may not have long to wait. -- **Notable:** “MTV Video Music Awards,” 9pm, Sunday, **MTV**. With *Miley Cyrus* hosting, it’s a good bet the VMAs will top last year’s 13.7mln viewers, which included simulcasts on MTV, **MTV2**, **VH1** and **Logo**. It will be hard to be summer’s top cable show again, though. *Miley* can blame *Donald Trump* and 9 other Republican presidential hopefuls for that. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (8/17/15-8/23/15)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	FOXN	0.8	1981
2	DSNY	0.7	1731
2	AMC	0.7	1678
2	USA	0.7	1612
2	HGTV	0.7	1583
6	TNT	0.6	1497
6	ESPN	0.6	1360
8	TBSC	0.5	1322
8	HIST	0.5	1320
8	DISC	0.5	1186
8	DSE	0.5	104
12	ADSM	0.4	1034
12	A&E	0.4	1033
12	FX	0.4	985
12	LIFE	0.4	968
12	ID	0.4	950
12	FOOD	0.4	897
12	SYFY	0.4	867
12	NFLN	0.4	724
20	SPK	0.3	756
20	NBCS	0.3	717
20	TLC	0.3	714
20	NAN	0.3	699
20	VH1	0.3	688
20	BET	0.3	667
20	WETV	0.3	639
20	CNN	0.3	635
20	MSNB	0.3	634
20	APL	0.3	600
20	BRAV	0.3	599
20	HALL	0.3	586
20	DSJR	0.3	586
20	TVLD	0.3	585
20	HMM	0.3	479
35	FAM	0.2	575
35	OWN	0.2	511
35	MTV	0.2	494
35	TRU	0.2	478
35	NGC	0.2	463
35	ESP2	0.2	443
35	GSN	0.2	433
35	CMDY	0.2	416
35	LMN	0.2	407
35	INSP	0.2	403

\*Nielsen data, supplied by ABC/Disney, is based on coverage area of individual networks

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