

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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RSN Ruckus: Comcast Says No to YES

Fox worked out a deal with **Time Warner Cable** last year for **YES**, but lightning didn't strike twice. After months of negotiations, **Comcast** dropped the **Yankees** RSN in its NY-area markets at 12:01am Wed. As is often the case in these disputes, the 2 sides are painting different pictures. **YES**, (owner **21st Century Fox** handles negotiations for the **Yankees** and **Nets** RSN) claims that the 2 reached "an agreement in principle" on key points "many months ago." It didn't detail exactly when, but several months ago Comcast was buying Time Warner Cable, a time when both companies kept a low-profile on programming negotiations. After months of extensions, Comcast contends the price Fox and the Yankees are requiring isn't acceptable given "minimal" viewership. "YES Network carried approximately 130 baseball games this past season and well over 90 percent of our 900,000 plus customers who receive YES Network didn't watch the equivalent of even one quarter of those games during the season, even while the Yankees were in the hunt for a playoff berth. Viewership of the network in the baseball offseason is even lower," Comcast said. You do have to wonder if Comcast subs would react differently if this channel drop came during the **MLB** season instead of at a time when the 2-9 Brooklyn Nets are drawing headlines such as "Could the 2016 Brooklyn Nets be the worst NBA team ever?" While Comcast is publicly going after YES on the price, the RSN claims it wants special treatment and anti-competitive terms, noting it has secured deals with other major providers in the market. Something to keep an eye on as this drama plays out is whether Comcast's own RSNs (and their ratings) get dragged into the fray. YES has launched website KeepYesNetwork.com. While Comcast's RSNs are not front and center on the site, a FAQ describes YES as "consistently more popular than all of the sports networks that Comcast owns and operates." It doesn't sound like the 2 are anywhere close to the 9th inning of a deal...

Arris/Liberty Global Deal: Arris scored a deal with **Liberty Global** to provide its gateway for wide-scale deployment across the company's footprint. The gateway, dubbed Touchstone TG2492, was designed to deliver high-speed broadband with speeds up to 1 Gbps and advanced streaming video, using the latest 802.11ac WiFi standard. The gateway also includes up to 2 lines of carrier-grade VoIP and supports IPv6, business services and WiFi hotspots.

Univision Launches Streaming Service: Univision joined **HBO**, **Showtime** and other nets in the direct-to-consumer

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| 4. Oprah Winfrey, OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network | 29. Catherine Avgiris, Comcast |
| 5. Rita Tuzon, Fox Networks | 30. Lori Conkling, NBCUniversal |
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| 24. Mindy Grossman, HSNi | 49. Julie Laulis, Cable ONE |
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space with Univision Now, a stand-alone subscription streaming service. The offering, which costs \$5.99 a month or \$59.99 annually, features live streaming of broadcast nets **Univision** and **UniMás** across iOS, Android and web. Asked if cable content will be added in the future, *Tonia O'Connor*, Univision head of content distribution and corporate business development, told us “our cable networks are only accessible through our robust TV Everywhere experience. Our strategy is to be everywhere our audience is, and provide our audience with options to watch Univision and UniMás premier programming.”

Video Monetization Report: Driven by growth across OTT devices and smartphones, monetization of digital video content across platforms outside of desktops and laptops reached 50% of video ad views in 3Q, according to the Video Monetization Report by **FreeWheel**, which was recently acquired by **Comcast**. The report found the majority of viewing on desktops/laptops and smartphones centered around short-form video, while long-form content was often consumed on tablets. About 43% of ad views on tablets came from content that is 30-min or 1-hour in length. TV-connected OTT devices saw 61% of their ad views come from live TV content, the ad tech firm said. Meanwhile, VOD viewing on set-tops accounted for 18% of total video ad views, following desktops and laptops. Check out **Cablefax.com** for the full story.

DC Goes to CES: **FTC** chair *Edith Ramirez* and **FCC** chmn *Tom Wheeler* will be featured speakers at **CES** in Jan. All of the commissioners of both agencies are expected to participate in roundtables at the show (Jan 6-9, Las Vegas). This month show owner and producer Consumer Electronics Assn changed its name to **Consumer Technology Association** to better reflect its membership base, which has grown from 645 members in 2000 to more than 2200 today.

LGBT Equality: **Apple, AT&T, Cisco, Comcast NBCU, DirecTV, Facebook, Google, Nielsen, RBC Capital Markets, Time Warner Cable, Time Warner, Twitter, Walt Disney** and **Yahoo** are among the companies earning a perfect 100% score on the **Human Rights Campaign's** annual scorecard on LGBT Workplace Equality. Some 407 businesses earned top marks in this year's report, which rates 1027 businesses on LGBT-related policies and practices, including non-discrimination workplace protections, domestic partner benefits and public engagement with the LGBT community.

Programming: **truTV**, which was rebranded a year ago, ordered 3 new primetime series, renewed 2 existing shows and booked 2 new unscripted series. The 3 new shows include “Almost Genius,” which celebrates people and things that are almost successful but can't cut it in the end; “10 Things,” a list-based collection of offbeat and unusual topics; and new docu-series “truOriginals: Inside Iconic Comedy.” The net also OKed 13 additional 30-min eps of hidden camera/practical joke reality show “The Carbonaro Effect,” and 10 additional half-hour eps of do-it-yourself show “Hack My Life.” On the development front, truTV has 2 series in the works, including a pilot order for “Jon Glaser Loves Gear,” a new hybrid show, and a pilot presentation for cultural travelogue “Inside Caucasia.” -- **Syfy** picked up “Ghost Hunters” Season 11 and “Paranormal Witness” Season 5. They each received 13 ep orders for 2016. -- **ID** premieres dramatic series “Bad Blood,” which follows families driven apart by heinous crimes, on Dec 2. -- *Snooki* is moving to **FYI**. The net ordered original series “Nicole & Jonni's Shore Flip” from **Entertainment One**. The 8-ep series, featuring the pair flipping homes on the New Jersey Shore, will premiere in early 2016. -- **ABC Family**, which changes its name to **Freeform** in Jan, gave a straight-to-series order to horror tale “Dead of Summer” from *Adam Horowitz* and *Edward Kitsis*.

NAMIC Vision Awards: **NAMIC Southern CA** and **NAMIC** issued a call for entries for the 2016 Vision Awards. The deadline for submissions is Jan 17. Electronic entries will be accepted online beginning Dec 7 at namicvisionawards.com. Two categories were added this year: Daytime and Best Performance in Daytime. Original programs having aired from Nov 1, 2014 to Nov 30, 2015 are eligible.

Small Cell: **Cox Business** is launching a small cell service to allow mobile operators to quickly extend coverage capacity. Cox Business small cell service decreases network overload in high volume locations, thus improving the customer experience and allowing data consumption to grow. It is being exhibited this week at the Metro Ethernet Forum GEN15 conference in Dallas.

Racing Extinction: Tied to its upcoming debut of **Discovery Channel's** documentary “Racing Extinction” (airs Dec 2), **Discovery Comm** will launch a global campaign focused on species conservation this fall with new content, a dedicated digital platform, and an education curriculum. In partnership with *Paul Allen's* **Vulcan Pro-**

BUSINESS & FINANCE

ductions and the **Oceanic Preservation Society**, the initiative will encourage consumers to pledge their commitment to do "1 thing" to save the planet and its creatures. The company is also teaming with **US Wildlife Trafficking Alliance** to bolster species survival with a media campaign showcasing 6 original programs across Discovery VR, the company's virtual reality platform.

People: As it looks to digital platforms to expand its reach, **Ovation** tapped *John Malkin* as evp of content distribution, reporting to CEO *Charles Segars*. He joined the net from **NFL Net** where he was affil distribution vp. Malkin replaces *Brad Samuels*, who recently joined **Bloomberg TV**. **Ovation's** content distribution and partnerships svp *Mike Pons* and affil marketing vp *Randy Rovegno* report to Malkin, who was named **Cablefax's** Affiliate Sales Person of the Year in 2013. -- **Univision Communications** named *Hector Fabregas* vp and dir of sales for Univision Chicago, reporting to svp/gm of Univision Chicago *Doug Levy*. -- Former **Discovery Comm** exec *Clark Bunting* has returned to the TV world as chmn of **Aero Cinema**, a content and production company that is planning to launch a new aviation-focused SVOD service in March. Clark, a 27-year Discovery vet, was most recently pres/CEO of the **National Parks Conservation Assn.**

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	11/18 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	11/18 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DISH:	64.43	2.26	CONVERGYS:	24.71	0.22
ENTRAVISION:	8.55	0.18	CSG SYSTEMS:	35.59	(0.03)
GRAY TELEVISION:	16.71	0.27	ECHOSTAR:	40.35	0.50
MEDIA GENERAL:	15.24	0.01	GOOGLE:	740.89	15.59
NEXSTAR:	59.91	1.15	HARMONIC:	5.31	0.08
SINCLAIR:	34.59	0.49	INTEL:	33.20	0.56
TEGNA:	27.77	1.00	INTERACTIVE CORP:	62.29	(0.22)
MSOS					
CABLE ONE:	464.02	(5.81)	LEVEL 3:	50.74	(0.02)
CABLEVISION:	31.41	0.24	MICROSOFT:	53.89	0.92
CHARTER:	187.64	3.00	NETFLIX:	120.91	3.81
COMCAST:	62.62	1.49	NIELSEN:	47.92	1.28
COMCAST SPCL:	62.67	1.45	RENTRAK:	49.86	(0.08)
GCI:	20.64	0.09	SEACHANGE:	6.34	0.11
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	54.04	0.79	SONY:	27.00	0.13
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	43.23	0.08	SPRINT NEXTEL:	3.99	(0.41)
SHAW COMM:	20.48	0.03	TIVO:	8.91	0.21
SHENTEL:	49.84	2.57	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	50.21	2.27
TIME WARNER CABLE:	184.91	0.91	VONAGE:	6.80	0.11
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	30.32	0.14	YAHOO:	33.01	0.15
AMC NETWORKS:	79.96	0.94	TELCOS		
CBS:	51.38	0.60	AT&T:	33.56	0.30
CROWN:	5.90	(0.01)	CENTURYLINK:	28.47	0.34
DISCOVERY:	30.78	0.68	FRONTIER:	4.86	0.08
DISNEY:	118.25	2.12	TDS:	28.81	0.77
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	28.98	0.70	VERIZON:	45.41	0.33
HSN:	49.79	(0.12)	MARKET INDICES		
LIONSGATE:	37.79	(0.01)	DOW:	17737.16	247.66
MSG NETWORKS:	20.07	(0.73)	NASDAQ:	5075.20	89.19
SCRIPPS INT:	56.66	0.92	S&P 500:	2083.58	33.14
STARZ:	35.28	0.80	TECHNOLOGY		
TIME WARNER:	71.90	1.44	ADDVANTAGE:	2.30	0.02
VIACOM:	54.65	1.84	AMDOCS:	55.63	0.31
WWE:	17.42	0.72	AMPHENOL:	54.84	0.97
TECHNOLOGY					
APPLE:	117.39	3.70	ARRIS GROUP:	29.06	0.62
ARRIS GROUP:	29.06	0.62	AVID TECH:	6.15	UNCH
AVID TECH:	6.15	UNCH	BLNDER TONGUE:	0.42	0.02
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.42	0.02	BROADCOM:	53.31	0.99
BROADCOM:	53.31	0.99	CISCO:	27.14	0.33
CISCO:	27.14	0.33	COMMSCOPE:	27.39	0.89
COMMSCOPE:	27.39	0.89	CONCURRENT:	4.70	(0.08)
CONCURRENT:	4.70	(0.08)			



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Think about that for a minute...

Tablotes

Commentary by Steve Effros

I have long had a love-hate relationship with remote controls. As I have noted many times over the years in this column, I think that ease of navigation is critical to the service we offer. It has now become obvious that one of the primary focuses of the heated competition among video deliverers, be they “MVPDs” or “OTTs” (not sure there is much difference there, but that’s a column for another time) is how folks find the programming they want to watch.

One of the early winners of the navigation wars was Netflix. No, not with OTT, but before that, with DVDs. If you will remember it was Netflix back then that created one of the first really good websites so that you could scan movie titles and get recommendations for which movies you might like based on ones you had already picked. Pandora did that for music. The key to both was that it made it easier for folks to find something they wanted to see or hear. That was the real breakthrough on navigation.

The fundamental problem with navigation is that there’s so much to choose from these days. Again, another column coming on this point, but it seems obvious that this problem leads directly to the value of brand names. Eventually you have to rely on someone to curate what you want to watch, or what is of value to watch. The competition we are now seeing all around us is focused not only on who has what programming... HBO has this hit, Netflix has that hit, a broadcast network breaks through with a “winner,” etc., but whether it is available to you, where, and when. A grid program guide simply doesn’t do it any more.

But the television screen is not the greatest place to be manipulating that “availability” and “recommendation” data either. We are truly at the point we have all been



talking about for a very long time; the “convergence” of the television set and the computer. That convergence is taking place. Look, for instance, at the new Apple TV box. But that box also displays the obvious weaknesses of the current iterations of the technology. The “search” function on the Apple TV, with a very clunky one-letter-at-a-time process of spelling out what you are looking for is not going to make for happy users either.

One solution, I think, is the Tablote. A combination of a computer tablet and a remote. This, of course, is not a new idea. Google’s Chromecast relies totally on such a device, whether it’s an actual computer tablet or a smartphone. While I hate to say it, I think this is the way we will all be manipulating and choosing the video we watch in the future. I prefer a tablet to the phone because the screen is bigger. I can actually see the text of the video being described and it’s easier to type in (or speak) what you are looking for, or hit the little icon on the screen.

Sure, there’s been criticism for years about not having better navigation and remotes, but think about it; if previously video providers had to supply an advanced, screen/voice remote to all customers, what do you think the price for that would have been? Google figured that one out: let them buy their own “Tablote,” or use their smartphone. It improves customer satisfaction while diverting costs. A win-win.

By the way, Amazon is now selling a \$50 tablet that I’m testing. Seems to work with “apps” just fine.

Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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