

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Powell's Position: NCTA Chief Talks Net Neutrality, Set-tops

With the caveat that it's hazardous to read tealeaves, NCTA chief *Michael Powell* offered up his best guess for what will happen with the net neutrality case on which the DC Circuit heard oral arguments last week. "I think a likely result is a hodgepodge of wins and losses that will create a bit of a Swiss cheese regime, which is part of what I've been concerned about all along," Powell said in an interview for C-SPAN's "The Communicators" series. "It's not about spectacular victory or spectacular loss. It's whether the kind of coherent, holistic representation the government has made about how it's going to do this could actually stand up. It's my belief it won't stand up and will lead to more confusion and complexity." NCTA joined **US Telecom, ACA, AT&T** and others in challenging the FCC's Open Internet order, which reclassifies broadband as a Title II service. As former chmn of the FCC in 2001-2005, Powell said he was surprised to see the path net neutrality has taken. It was in vogue in the late 1990s to "untangle a century's worth of communications regulation built around railroads and Ma Bell," he said, expressing disbelief at the govt returning to a 19th Century regulatory regime. In addition to Title II, the FCC order also faces challenges over extending the rules to mobile broadband, whether it violates First Amendment rights and even a petitioner claiming the rules don't go far enough. The 30-min interview, which will be available Fri afternoon at C-SPAN.org and on C-SPAN Sat at 6:30pm ET, also delved into the issue of opening up set-tops to competitors. Powell argued that the market is functioning really well, "if not explosively," and doesn't need govt intervention. "What's wrong with this market that we need the government to try to engineer yet another competitive environment?," the NCTA CEO asked, pointing to **Netflix's** success. "The second thing wrong is consumers don't want more boxes. If there's anything that **Netflix** and **Hulu** and **Amazon Prime** and other services are proving, it's that streaming has been an invention that has overtaken a lot of what people have relied on this box to do." For example, the need to record with DVR becomes less significant because customers can stream it, he said. Along those lines, NCTA has said the market is headed toward an app-driven approach that will eventually do away with the need for set-tops. "We're trying to get rid of boxes. It's a pain point. Consumers hate them," he said. Powell suggested that many of the proponents of a so-called AllVid policy are proponents because the boxes represent an opportunity to access an enormous amount of valuable, personal data around consumer viewing habits.



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Questions: Mary-Lou French
301.354.1851 • mfrench@accessintel.com

Sponsorships: Rich Hauptner
203.899.8460 • rhauptner@accessintel.com

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Lins to Lead CTAM: Vicki Lins, a familiar name in the industry, returns to cable in Jan to head up CTAM as pres/CEO. She fills the spot vacated by John Lansing in Sept when he left to become CEO of the **Broadcasting Board of Governors**. Lins was most recently evp/CMO for **United Way** and **Clear Channel Outdoor**. She previously led marketing at **Comcast Spotlight** and **Canoe**, pioneering VOD ad solutions. **Howard Fischer Associates** conducted the search for the new CTAM chief. **Cox** CMO and CTAM board chair **Mark Greatrex** told us there was a slate of excellent candidates, with Lins the board's top pick. "I think that's noteworthy that there were some very seasoned, very senior, very accomplished executives who wanted to lead CTAM. I was impressed by that," he said. Greatrex said Lins impressed with her background, which includes working with distributors and programmers as well as a non-profit. It also doesn't hurt to have a marketer leading the industry's marketing association. "I think this might be the first time that CTAM has had such a heavyweight and very experienced marketer who has launched new brands and rejuvenated brands," Greatrex said. "As we think about marketing the pay TV category and also marketing the cable industry, and potentially looking at the positioning of the cable industry, I think it's extremely valuable that we have a very senior and capable marketer at the helm."

CVC-Altice Suits Dismissed: Two shareholder lawsuits filed in DE federal court seeking to prevent **Altice's** \$17.7bn takeover of **Cablevision** were dismissed by the plaintiffs without prejudice Wed, according to court documents. In one suit, shareholder **James Gould** had argued that the 22% purchase premium doesn't take into account benefits shareholders could receive from continued growth. "Both of these cases were thoroughly without merit," Cablevision said in a statement.

Globes Like OTT: Similar to the **SAG** Awards nominations the day before, **Netflix** had a slight edge over **HBO** in total nominations for the **Golden Globes**. Netflix had 8 compared to HBO's 7. **Starz** leapfrogged over rival premium net **Showtime**, receiving 6 nods, including a Best Drama entry for "Outlander." **Amazon Video** and **FX** each received 5 nominations. Biggest shocker? It may be that there were no actor nominations for HBO's "Game of Thrones," though the series is in the running for Best Drama Series. Other nominees in the category include **USA's** "Mr Robot," Netflix's "Narcos" and **Fox's** "Empire. OTT players dominated in the Best Comedy or Musical series with **Hulu's** "Casual" and Amazon's "Mozart in the Jungle" joining more familiar OTT fare "Orange is the New Black" (Netflix) and "Transparent" (Amazon). Sitcom-heavy broadcast had not a single nomination. The only non-OTT nominees are both from HBO—"Veep" and "Silicon Valley." In Best Limited Series or TV Movie, FX had 2 noms ("Fargo" and "American Horror Story: Hotel"). Also nominated: **ABC's** "American Crime," **Starz's** "Flesh & Bone" and **PBS'** "Wolf Hall." The awards air Jan 10 on **NBC**.

Comcast Share Restructure: **Comcast** shareholders approved a simpler stock structure, voting Thurs to reclassify each share of Comcast Class A Special Common Stock (CMCSK) into 1 share of Comcast Class A Common Stock (CMCSA). The reclassification is effective as of 5pm ET on Fri.

Nielsen's Audience Report: Users in lower-income households (with incomes of \$25K or less) spend more time with every device that they use than high-income HHs (incomes of \$75K or more). That's one of the findings from **Nielsen's** 3Q Total Audience Report. And lower-income adults who watch TV spend more time watching than higher-income adults, and their use of PCs, smartphones and tablets are greater than high-income users. Meanwhile, viewers watched less live TV in 3Q as they spent more time viewing content on secondary devices. Live TV viewing per day among adults 18 years or older was 4 hours and 7 min, down from 4 hours and 13 min in the year-ago quarter and from 4 hours and 27 min two years earlier. Time-shifted viewing was largely unchanged at 28 min per day. It was 26 min per day 2 years ago.

Carriage Deals: **Outdoor Channel** scored a 5-year carriage deal with **NCTC**, covering VOD and TVE rights, among other things. The pact came after Outdoor's carriage deal with **DISH**. -- **Smithsonian Channel** is now available on **DISH**, in both SD and HD, as part of DISH's America's Top 250 package.

50 Years for Pioneers: **The Cable TV Pioneers** is launching a new website (CableTVPioneers.com) and commemorative logo. It's accepting applications for its new class of honorees now through Dec 18. The group expects its 50th Anniversary Banquet (May 15 in Boston during **INTX**) will be sold-out and is already accepting registrations at its new website.

Scripps' Digital Play: **Scripps Networks** is beefing up its digital content with the launch of a new business division, **Scripps Lifestyle Studios**. The unit will develop lifestyle content across multiple platforms. The division will be headed by Scripps Lifestyle Studios svp/gm **Vikki Neil**, with former **Martha Stewart Living** exec **Deb Puchalla** as vp of content development, and digital ad expert **Traci Topham** as svp, client solutions. Digital evp **Tamara Franklin** will be evp, digital

BUSINESS & FINANCE

ad sales while remaining head of the digital business. *Beth Lawrence* will oversee digital ad sales.

Freeform Coming: ABC Family set Jan 12 as the official date for its rebrand to **Freeform**. The new name reflects the net's targeting of what it calls "Becomers," a life stage that spans people who are ages 14-34.

MSG TVE: MSG Networks' "MSG Go" streaming service is now available at no additional charge to **Com-cast** subs who receive the RSN.

People: Cox upped *Steve Necessary* to evp, product development and management covering both residential and commercial services. He will report to pres *Pat Esser*. Necessary was previously vp, video product development and management. -- **Univision Digital** tapped *Hilda Garcia* for the new role of vp, digital local media. -- *Alexi Maltas*, formerly legal & regulatory affairs vp at **Cablevision**, joined **Hogan Lovells'** communications group as a partner this month. His practice focuses on regulatory matters for cable, wireless and Internet services. -- **TLC's** *Sandy Varo Jarrell* was named to the new post of svp, creative for **Discovery Studios**. *Howard Lee*, East Coast development & production evp, will have an expanded role that has him overseeing TLC's entire production and development slate. He'll be the #2 creative under TLC pres/gm *Nancy Daniels*. -- *Skarpi Hedinson* was promoted to CTO for **Disney/ABC Television Group**.

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	12/10 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	12/10 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DISH:	60.13	0.28	CONVERGYS:	24.43	(0.13)
ENTRAVISION:	8.37	(0.15)	CSG SYSTEMS:	34.47	0.05
GRAY TELEVISION:	16.19	0.35	ECHOSTAR:	38.04	0.42
MEDIA GENERAL:	15.48	1.00	GOOGLE:	749.46	(2.15)
NEXSTAR:	57.22	3.05	HARMONIC:	4.30	(0.04)
SINCLAIR:	32.97	0.16	INTEL:	34.77	(0.04)
TEGNA:	26.62	0.08	INTERACTIVE CORP:	59.40	0.01
MSOS					
CABLE ONE:	437.22	5.27	LEVEL 3:	53.21	0.57
CABLEVISION:	29.86	(0.13)	MICROSOFT:	55.27	0.29
CHARTER:	183.64	(1.67)	NETFLIX:	122.91	(1.29)
COMCAST:	59.67	1.08	NIELSEN:	45.70	0.61
COMCAST SPCL:	59.69	1.08	RENTRAK:	47.38	(0.81)
GCI:	20.14	(0.55)	SEACHANGE:	6.81	0.06
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	51.19	(0.37)	SONY:	24.63	0.27
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	42.18	0.89	SPRINT NEXTEL:	3.95	0.21
SHAW COMM:	19.65	(0.13)	TIVO:	8.88	0.01
SHENTEL:	45.53	(1.06)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	50.47	0.19
TIME WARNER CABLE:	183.51	(0.41)	VONAGE:	6.00	(0.02)
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	28.23	0.09	YAHOO:	34.63	0.23
AMC NETWORKS:	80.55	(0.98)	TELCOS		
CBS:	48.53	0.17	AT&T:	33.67	0.10
CROWN:	5.31	(0.08)	CENTURYLINK:	25.99	(0.39)
DISCOVERY:	28.39	(0.06)	FRONTIER:	4.88	(0.04)
DISNEY:	110.76	UNCH	TDS:	27.06	(0.09)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	28.00	(0.11)	VERIZON:	45.32	(0.04)
HSN:	51.07	0.09	MARKET INDICES		
LIONSGATE:	35.25	0.16	DOW:	17574.75	82.45
MSG NETWORKS:	20.39	0.14	NASDAQ:	5045.17	22.31
SCRIPPS INT:	57.07	0.78	S&P 500:	2052.23	4.61
STARZ:	34.33	(0.17)	TECHNOLOGY		
TIME WARNER:	67.84	(0.46)	ADDVANTAGE:	2.22	UNCH
VIACOM:	46.34	(0.01)	AMDOCS:	55.64	0.69
WWE:	16.16	(0.55)	AMPHENOL:	53.56	(0.33)
TECHNOLOGY					
APPLE:	116.17	0.55	ARRIS GROUP:	31.51	UNCH
ARRIS GROUP:	31.51	UNCH	AVID TECH:	6.75	0.16
AVID TECH:	6.75	0.16	BLNDER TONGUE:	0.40	(0.01)
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.40	(0.01)	BROADCOM:	57.94	0.46
BROADCOM:	57.94	0.46	CISCO:	26.77	0.04
CISCO:	26.77	0.04	COMMSCOPE:	26.22	0.42
COMMSCOPE:	26.22	0.42	CONCURRENT:	4.98	0.02
CONCURRENT:	4.98	0.02			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

The Final Frontier

Like many epic, science-fiction tales, **Syfy's** "The Expanse" (premieres Mon Dec 14, 10pm) takes place in space. But what's different is the way in which space factors into the storyline. Based on the book by *Daniel Abraham* and *Ty Franck*, The Expanse depicts how the human race might evolve if it colonized space. And as a function of that realism, it imagines what technology might be built in space to support that survival. Forget warp speed, or photons or lasers. "We've been trying to attack things that generally aren't done in television shows, like dealing with zero gravity," said showrunner *Naren Shankar*. For one, you need magnetic boots that lock you to the floor. And a drug cocktail in order to survive ludicrous space travel speeds (*Spaceballs*, anyone?). And for the group of humans in the series that has been raised primarily in zero or micro-gravity, a return to planet earth would result in the "weight of the planet itself crushing you," Shankar said. In fact, in episode 1, this is used as a means of torture. "Those are things that are almost always avoided in science fiction." And Shankar should know, having worked on "Star Trek: The Next Generation." From a production standpoint, getting it right was a huge undertaking, in part because of what's now possible with special effects. "I'm not even sure you could have made this show even 2 years ago," Shankar said. During his Star Trek days, the effects shops were still using models. There are close to 300 visual effects sequences in The Expanse's pilot—starting with the first scene. A character is suspended upside down in a zero-gravity locker, hair flowing like a mermaid. The reality of it: She's suspended by wires in a floating rig with a green skull cap on. Her mermaid-like hair? "Full 3-dimensional animation," Shankar said. That shot would have been "prohibitively expensive to produce" just a few years ago. Oh, how times have changed. — *Kaylee Hultgren*

Reviews: "Very Semi-Serious: A Partially Thorough Portrait of New Yorker Cartoonists," Mon, 9pm, **HBO**. You don't expect laughs from a documentary. Get ready, especially if you riffle through *The New Yorker* to find the cartoons. This delightful doc, beautifully yet simply shot, isn't all laughs, though. Editor *Bob Mankoff's* job includes rejecting nearly 99% of the 1,000 cartoons the magazine receives weekly. Brave cartoonists allowed their pitching sessions with him to be filmed. Still, there are laughs aplenty and insight about the comedic process. -- "Four Falls of Buffalo," Saturday, 9:30pm, **ESPN**. There's no crying in football. The exception is when you lose 4 Super Bowls as the Buffalo Bills did. Yet this excellent "30 for 30" doc about it, and the players, coaches and fans, are winners. -- **Notable:** It's almost holiday time, right? You could do a lot worse than introducing newcomers to classics like "Miracle on 34th Street" (**SundanceTV**, Sunday, 7pm, 9:15pm) and "White Christmas" (11:30pm). If football's not in your plans this weekend—and if you've read this far we suspect that might be the case—why not make Sunday a total couch potato experience and catch, again and again and again *Groundhog Day* (2:15pm) and *Driving Miss Daisy* (4:45pm)? Since they're all on Sundance you don't even have to strain your fingers switching channels. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (11/30/15-12/06/15)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	FOXN	2.3	2138
2	ESPN	2.1	1949
3	HALL	1.8	1625
4	FAM	1.5	1399
5	TBSC	1.3	1271
5	DSE	1.3	86
7	DISC	1.2	1120
7	HGTV	1.2	1106
9	DSNY	1.1	995
9	CNN	1.1	991
11	USA	1.0	983
11	TNT	1.0	955
11	HIST	1.0	928
14	FX	0.9	812
14	ID	0.9	736
16	LIFE	0.8	760
16	ADSM	0.8	740
18	FOOD	0.7	711
18	AMC	0.7	675
18	BRAV	0.7	646
18	MSNB	0.7	635
18	TLC	0.7	604
18	NFLN	0.7	479
18	HMM	0.7	422
25	SYFY	0.6	548
25	SPK	0.6	509
27	A&E	0.5	509
27	NAN	0.5	490
27	VH1	0.5	433
27	TVLD	0.5	432
27	BET	0.5	410
27	DSJR	0.5	392
27	NKJR	0.5	360
27	DFAM	0.5	31
35	CMDY	0.4	405
35	EN	0.4	388
35	WETV	0.4	386
35	APL	0.4	373
35	NGC	0.4	365
35	OWN	0.4	356
35	ESP2	0.4	352
35	TRAV	0.4	317
35	LMN	0.4	307
35	H2	0.4	264

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

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