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What the Industry Reads First

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Female POV: Women Fight for Bigger TV Roles On, Off Screen

The female gaze is fixed on the small screen. A flurry of new TV projects feature not only strong leads for women, but a female perspective behind the camera as well. “I’m passionate because things have to change,” *Reese Witherspoon*, who stars in and co-exec produces HBO’s upcoming mom-centric drama story “Big Little Lies,” said during TCA earlier this month. “We have to start seeing women as they really are on film, and not just in movie theaters on a tiny budget. We need to see real women’s experience, whether it involves domestic violence, whether it involves sexual assault, whether it involves motherhood or romance or infidelity or divorce... I feel like the constant [is having] women of incredible talent playing wives and girlfriends with thankless parts. I just had enough.” Echoed *Nicole Kidman*, who co-stars and exec produces with Witherspoon, “This piece for me was the stories of women that I know, and it was a way in which we could go to other women and say, ‘There’s five great roles here. They’re all complicated. They all deserve to be told. And that is rare.’” The issue has been so important to **Lifetime** that it created “Broad Focus” 18 months ago with the aim of achieving gender equity among behind-the-camera talent. Lifetime achieved a 55% hire rate for female directors on scripted projects, up from just 13% one year prior. The campaign’s 2017 programming slate included the recently aired “Beaches” (*Allison Anders*, director) as well as several other films, including “Michael Jackson: Searching for Neverland” and “Mary Kills People.” **Hulu** newcomer “Harlots,” a family drama centered on an 18th century London brothel, is helmed entirely by women. “We wanted to enhance that female point of view,” co-exec producer *Alison Owen* said at TCA. “Rather than being titillating, we see how they looked out on the world rather than the world looking at them.” To hammer home the point, she said there’s as much male nudity as female nudity on the show. “When women view a program, they are almost subconsciously taking the information and reinterpreting from a female point of view. When I saw the first cut what struck me as a woman was that it was incredibly relaxing to not have to do the work women have to do all the time. I’m watching something that’s made entirely for me.” *Zander Lehmann*, showrunner of Hulu’s “Casual” said he actively stepped up the number of “powerhouse women” to direct episodes of Season 3, including *Amy York Rubin*, who’s directed *Amy Schumer* and *Sarah Silverman*; and *Carrie Brownstein*, who’s written and appeared in **IFC’s** *Portlandia*. “We’ve [found] a lot of women who haven’t had a chance to make the stuff in the TV



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space that they wanted to. That's one of the joys of making the show." *Greg Poehler*, who stars in **AT&T Audience Network's** polyromantic comedy "You Me Her," told **CFX** having a female director "brought a needed sensibility to the show. It's been important to all of us to have it not be a male-centric show." Writer/director *Sarah Doyle* "is very direct. She puts the direct in director. Which I love." - *Cathy Applefeld Olson*

Nielsen Universe Estimates: Nielsen's February cable network Universe Estimates have been released, and things are still on a downward slide. Excluding virtual MVPDs such as **Sling** and **DirectTV Now**, the data shows a median decline in pay TV homes of -1.9% and median cable network household penetration of -2.1% year-over-year, **Pivotal Research** noted. The good news? Nielsen's figures are gradually including VMVPDs, which should help growth rates, Pivotal said. **Sundance TV** is one of the few nets to see an increase in its universe, climbing 6.3% compared to January's estimate, according to **Cablefax's** analysis of the data. It's estimated to be in 65.9mln homes today. **El Rey's** estimate rose by 100K to 44.9mln, up 0.22% from January, while **RFD-TV** gained nearly a half million to 43.6mln (+1.1% from last month).

Tough Words on Fake News: The head of the **Interactive Advertising Bureau** called on members Monday to fire back at fake news. "As the child of clickbait and the grandson of the direct-mail scams pioneered in the 1920s, fake news also is another form of the hucksterism with which the ad industry has been associated since its origins in the 19th Century. The shocking headlines! The wild overpromise and underdelivery. The Barnumesque mendacity," pres/CEO *Randall Rothenberg* said in prepared remarks from the group's annual meeting. "But it's much worse than that. Because the object of hucksterism is to fool you into buying something. From that, you will recover. The object of fake news is to fool you into cynicism, mistrust, and even hatred. From that, our society cannot recover." The IAB chief urged senior execs in brands, agencies, tech companies, platforms and publishers to address fake news and said the failure to do so is "consciously abdicating responsibility for its outcome." Rothenberg's strong words were reserved for all—from publishers running ads disguised as news to tech companies with algorithms that drive consumers to fake content to journalists who complain but don't participate in correction. His remedies include compliance with industry standards and consulting customer payables and suppliers in order to halt business with anything "you wouldn't want your parents, spouses, neighbors, or children to know about."

History Vault Launch: History's first direct-to-consumer subscription VOD service History Vault was launched on **Comcast** Xfinity On Demand Monday. The service offers weekly spotlight series and programs focusing on timely and contextual topics, including History Vault's most recent addition, "Inside the Presidency." The service costs \$4.99 a month. The SVOD offering is already available on OTT platforms including **Apple TV**, **Roku**, iOS devices and **Amazon Channels**.

Ratings: Kansas' 79-73 defeat of Kentucky earned a 2.0 overnight on **ESPN** Saturday, ranking as the highest-rated college basketball game this season on the net. It was also up 11% over last year.

Hirsch Staying at Starz: Starz COO *Jeffrey Hirsch* signed a new long-term deal with the company to extend his tenure until Dec, 2020. The exec joined Starz in 2015 after serving as evp and chief marketing officer at **Time Warner Cable**.

Union Talk: **AT&T** reached a tentative deal with **CWA** in negotiations covering CWA-represented former **DirectTV** tech support employees in 7 states. The agreement covers about 500 employees.

Research Initiative: **Univision**, **Fusion Media Group** and **American University's Center for Media & Social Impact** (CMSI) joined forces to launch a research-based initiative aimed at evaluating the depiction of key social issues in entertainment media. The initiative is designed to inform content produced across Univision's Spanish-language broadcast, radio, and digital platforms as well as Fusion's English-language platforms including **Fusion TV**, **The Root** and **The Onion**, among others. The project also includes a 12-month graduate fellowship and student team at CMSI. Among its programs is an evaluation of the effectiveness of media and campaign tactics in getting out the vote in the 2016 election. CMSI director *Caty Borum Chattoo* will lead the project. *Chad Boettcher*, svp of social impact at Univision and managing director at **Rise Up**, the social impact unit of Univision and Fusion, will be the project's liaison.

People: *Jon Weisman* is joining **Showtime Networks** in the newly created role of vp, corporate pr. He most recently served as the **L.A. Dodgers'** director for digital and print content. -- **Fox Digital** exec *George Blue* joined **Bright-Line** as chief revenue officer, responsible for growing strategic partnerships with agency holding groups, their client

BUSINESS & FINANCE

partners and media companies. BrightLine's product suite lets marketers turn ads into dynamic and immersive experiences on connected TV, with the advanced ad formats already deployed on **A+E Nets, Hulu** and others. -- Congrats to **Outdoor Sportsman Group's Tom Caraccioli** who was upped to vp, communications. -- **NBCU Telemundo** named **Fabrizio Alcobe** as svp, HR, reporting to **NBCU Intl** and **NBCU Telemundo** chmn **Cesar Conde**. He was most recently svp, admin for **Univision Networks**. -- **A+E Nets** appointed **Youngsun Soh** as gm of A+E Networks Korea. She joins the company from **Twitter Korea**. -- **Ira Goldklang** joined **Entertainment Studios** as svp, business and legal affairs. He comes to the **Byron Allen** company after nearly 12 years with **Sony Pictures Entertainment**.

Obituary: **GCI** co-founder **Bob Walp** passed away at the age of 89. He originally came to Alaska in the early 1970s as a consultant on a **NASA** project. He founded **GCI** in 1979 along with pres/CEO **Ron Duncan**. Walp retired in 1989 but remained a pillar at the company. "Bob was a true pioneer in the Alaska communications industry and made a major contribution to **GCI's** success. Much of what we do at **GCI** today can be traced back to Bob's vision and entrepreneurial spirit," Duncan said. **GCI** will remember Walp at a memorial ceremony this spring.

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/30 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/30 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DISH:	59.34	0.06	MICROSOFT:	65.13	(0.65)
ENTRAVISION:	5.30	UNCH	NETFLIX:	141.22	(1.23)
GRAY TELEVISION:	11.80	0.30	NIELSEN:	41.07	0.18
NEXSTAR:	64.55	0.90	SEACHANGE:	2.45	0.05
SINCLAIR:	33.65	(0.05)	SONY:	29.44	(1.08)
TEGNA:	22.73	0.04	SPRINT NEXTEL:	9.11	(0.11)
MSOS					
CABLE ONE:	633.84	(5.83)	SYNACOR:	3.15	UNCH
CHARTER:	324.80	1.25	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	59.05	(0.7)
COMCAST:	75.34	(0.61)	VONAGE:	7.08	UNCH
GCI:	19.93	0.01	YAHOO:	43.93	(0.49)
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	83.63	(0.04)	TELCOS		
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	36.62	UNCH	AT&T:	41.82	(0.19)
SHAW COMM:	21.56	(0.02)	CENTURYLINK:	25.81	(0.15)
SHENTEL:	27.65	(0.3)	FRONTIER:	3.49	(0.05)
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	31.37	0.08	TDS:	30.64	(0.08)
AMC NETWORKS:	56.99	0.28	VERIZON:	49.37	(0.23)
CBS:	64.40	(0.34)	MARKET INDICES		
DISCOVERY:	27.98	(0.08)	DOW:	19971.13	(122.65)
DISNEY:	110.94	1.64	NASDAQ:	5613.71	(47.07)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	22.51	0.06	S&P 500:	2280.90	(13.79)
HSN:	34.80	0.25			
MSG NETWORKS:	22.70	0.35			
SCRIPPS INT:	76.30	0.03			
TIME WARNER:	96.62	0.24			
VIACOM:	45.50	0.55			
WWE:	19.57	0.07			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADVANTAGE:	1.79	0.03			
AMDOCS:	58.32	(0.17)			
AMPHENOL:	66.98	0.06			
APPLE:	121.63	(0.32)			
ARRIS GROUP:	28.72	(0.81)			
AVID TECH:	5.03	UNCH			
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.74	(0.01)			
CISCO:	30.83	(0.15)			
COMMSCOPE:	37.00	0.34			
CONCURRENT:	5.16	(0.04)			
CONVERGYS:	25.21	(0.28)			
CSG SYSTEMS:	48.47	(0.77)			
ECHOSTAR:	51.26	(1.4)			
GOOGLE:	802.32	(20.99)			
HARMONIC:	5.05	(0.1)			
INTEL:	37.42	(0.56)			
INTERACTIVE CORP:	68.93	(0.78)			
LEVEL 3:	59.33	(0.28)			

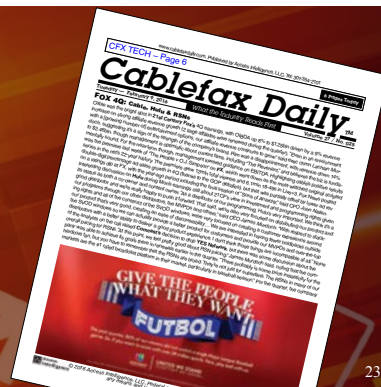
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CFX TECH by Joyce Wang

Tech Policy Outlook

While we tend to keep things technical here, with a new Administration and a new Congress, here is a rare overview of how potential policy changes might impact the cable tech community. While the *Trump Administration* hasn't detailed its tech agenda, some level of deregulation is expected, experts said. Net neutrality is expected to be one of the first things new GOP FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* will re-examine. *Stephane Bourque*, founder and CEO of **Incognito Software**, said one of the risks of repealing net neutrality is "the current playing field that we all enjoy may be jeopardized." It would be "a step back for subscriber rights" and open the door for paid prioritization, he said. "In business, we know that if something can be monetized, it will be monetized," he said. The company provides broadband provisioning, service activation, bandwidth intelligence and other services for companies like **Cable One**, **Mediacom** and **Midcontinent**. However, those supporting a repeal, including large ISPs, said that despite supporting the net neutrality rules they have been operating under, they oppose Title II reclassification, which was passed under then-chmn *Tom Wheeler*. Pai is "obviously not a fan" of Title II regulation, **AT&T** CEO *Randall Stephenson* said during the company's earnings call last week. "He (Pai) felt like it had gone entirely too far. We obviously tend to agree with him on that. We happen to be advocates of net neutrality... But placing utility style regulation on our mobility and internet businesses? There is no way anybody can argue that that is not suppressive to investment," Stephenson said. Meanwhile, a recent report by law firm **Keller and Heckman**, said "we expect this new Republican leadership to focus on one goal: deregulation." The firm represents companies in the telecom and cable industry. Priorities at the new FCC will likely include less aggressive enforcement actions coupled with a deregulatory push that may include scaling back the agency's net neutrality rules, revoking or reworking the broadband privacy regulations and scuttling the ongoing business data service proceeding. Deregulation across the board may "play into the hands of the larger and more powerful providers because

deregulation often leads to an aggregation of the industry. This would have significant effect on broadband users," Bourque said. "I don't think all regulations are bad. I believe they should be put in place to even the scales and ensure that smaller service providers, content producers, and end users are fairly represented," he said. Despite focusing primarily on deregulation, some things are expected to remain largely unchanged. For example, Keller and Heckman sees little change in the FCC's spectrum policy and expects the FCC to keep focusing on broadband deployment, particularly in underserved or unserved areas. The deregulation trend has already begun, with Pai proposing to extend the small business exemption last week. The exemption, which excludes small ISPs from the transparency net neutrality rules, expired in December, and Wheeler failed to extend it.

Rogers' Comcast Integration: Comcast keeps expanding its tech influence up north. Joining its fellow Canadian operator **Shaw**, Rogers inked a long-term partnership with Comcast in December to license its X1 platform for deployment in early 2018. "We have seen the success X1 has had for Comcast in the U.S. market," including improving TV subscriber additions, lowering churn, increasing ARPU, and most importantly, delivering a better customer experience, Rogers CFO *Tony Staffieri* said during the company's earnings conference call last week. Rogers had an OTT joint venture with Shaw called Shomi. The platform was shut down in November, 2 years after it launched. And Rogers abandoned its own IPTV platform before licensing Comcast X1. Also on Rogers' tech roadmap is Comcast's digital home solution, which it plans to launch together with its IPTV service next year. The cloud-based solution allows users to manage all of their connected devices. It will also link to the DOCSIS 3.1 WiFi gateways that Rogers plans to launch in mid-2017. "Comcast is going to bring the scale needed to invest in software and CPE that can provide seamless interactivity between fixed and wireless," Staffieri said.

Got tech news? Reach out to Cablefax Tech editor Joyce Wang at jwang@accessintel.com

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