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# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 10, 2017

What the Industry Reads First

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## Are We There Yet? Surveying the Progress of Audience Measurement

Ever since viewing of TV content across mobile devices and streaming services reached critical mass a couple of years ago, programmers, advertisers and other stakeholders have been reckoning with how to measure viewing. How much progress has been made? That can depend on who you ask, but everyone agrees this is the most consequential period for measurement perhaps since the dawn of cable, with tens of billions of dollars at stake. "We look at this as a pivotal year," said *Gian Fulgoni*, founder and CEO of **comScore**, who will deliver an exclusive keynote presentation at **Cablefax's** TV Innovation Summit on June 8 [*Register at [www.cfxtvsummit.com](http://www.cfxtvsummit.com)*]. "We will have some major milestones accomplished for cross-platform measurement delivered at scale and in a timely manner." Both **comScore** and **Nielsen**, the major third-party measurement services, have rolled out a series of cross-platform initiatives in recent months. **comScore** also acquired **Rentrak** in 2016, in part because it helped expand its ability to measure across linear and digital. But as *Fulgoni* readily concedes, there have been high hurdles to widespread adoption of a revised universal currency. "You can't measure the entities you're trying to measure without their co-operation," he says. "It is totally turning the world upside-down. It all comes back to the fragmentation of media." It isn't just the explosion of digital and linear programming sources creating confusion—VOD and connected devices also yield data that must be harvested in particular ways. The multitude of digital platforms and ways to get access to content keep proliferating. "What's challenging about developing solutions is that it's actually a whole bunch of solutions that you need," says *Colleen Fahey Rush*, evp and chief research officer at **Viacom Media Networks**. "If I'm measuring 'on the glass' [linear TV], it's one set of engineering solutions. If I'm on Hulu, it's another. If I'm on VOD, it's yet another." Major programmers like **Viacom** and **Turner**, which have seen ratings erosion according to traditional metrics, have long agitated for more comprehensive tools. Both are among those who have opted to create proprietary measurement tools in order to help advertisers understand how their content is viewed across platforms. While *Rush* emphasized **Viacom's** respect for third-party measurement companies' efforts to hit a fast-moving target, others have been more publicly fractious. **NBCUniversal** sales chief *Linda Yaccarino* sent **Nielsen** a letter last December complaining that its Total Audience Measurement tool was not ready for prime time. "Some say 'Something is better than nothing.' We disagree. Bad, inaccurate and misleading data is far worse than no data at all." Despite all of the industrywide angst, *Rush* adds, progress is happening, even if "it's happening in a lumpy way." *Sean Muller*, CEO of ad tracking firm **iSpot**, says one fundamental distinction has to be drawn when assessing cross-platform measurement: whether the objective is measuring content or measuring ads. In terms of telling advertisers how their ads are traveling across linear TV, OTT services and VOD, "we're very bullish on that," *Muller* says. But the picture gets cloudier when digital viewing is factored in. "**Facebook** and **Google** have created walled gardens," making their numbers and methodologies opaque so as to increase their leverage with advertisers. "You can still sort of duct-tape different metrics together to give clients a sense of it. But those are difficult areas." *Rush* says upstarts like **Symphony** (which uses audio signals to ana-

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lyze programming) are offering some interesting new approaches. "It's a very creative time," she says. "I just think that's going to accelerate... This is not just an upfront process just parked in the spring. It's year-round." - *Dade Hayes*

**Powell on C-SPAN:** Like many Americans, **NCTA** pres/CEO *Michael Powell* was surprised on Election Night as returns started coming in for *Donald Trump*. But he says the trade association is ready. "I've been through lots of transitions in government. I've been through lots of presidents in my public policy career. While we might have anticipated preparing for one kind of political policy environment, it wasn't very difficult to quickly reorient ourselves to preparing for a very different one, one that I think, at least for the industry and with the new Commission, holds opportunities for us," Powell said in an upcoming ep of **C-SPAN's** "Communicators" (debuts online today; on C-SPAN at 6:30pm ET Saturday). A former **FCC** chairman himself, Powell believes *Ajit Pai* is "more in line" with most chairmen over the last 20 years and thinks the fact that he's served as a commissioner since 2012 means he is well-versed and can act quickly. "I think he has a very committed understanding that both infrastructure and edge providers are of equal importance to what we call the Internet ecosystem. For us to see that be reasserted is valuable, no matter where it takes us on a specific policy," he said. Cable certainly had more than a few battles with former chair *Tom Wheeler* on everything from the Open Internet order to set-top boxes. Check out the interview for his thoughts on everything from cable's wireless play to the demise of NCTA's annual trade show.

**Retrans Update:** Good news for **AT&T**, still bad news for **DISH**. A deadline came and went with **Morris Multimedia** stations still on the **U-verse** lineup. The two agreed to extend talks as they finalize a deal for the 3 stations, which includes **WDEF** (CBS) in Chattanooga. **DISH**, on the other hand, is headed into its second weekend without **Hearst** stations in 26 markets. The satcaster is airing a video in impacted markets featuring *Warren Schlichting*, evp of marketing, programming & media sales. In the two-minute spot, the exec says Hearst has refused to budge from a March 1 offer that would double the price **DISH** pays for the stations and make it the highest paid local broadcaster on the satellite system. "Hearst won't respond to our latest offer... Every day we ask Hearst to come back to the negotiating table," Schlichting said.

**Innovations:** **Sling TV** broadened availability of its Cloud DVR to new customers through its "First Look" early access program. Priced at \$5 per month for 50 hours of storage, Cloud DVR is available for purchase exclusively to Sling TV customers using Amazon Fire TV, Fire TV Stick or Fire tablet devices. Sling TV also expanded its Cloud DVR-supported devices.

**Partnerships:** **Viacom Velocity** and social media influencer *Shaun "Shonduras" McBride* have formed an exclusive year-long partnership. As creative strategy consultant, McBride will contribute to strategic initiatives and creative campaigns at Velocity, which produces and distributes data-driven branded content for advertisers. His first project will be as a special social correspondent for **MTV's** "Woodies" awards at **SXSW** on March 16, followed by a shoot from the set of **Spike's** "Adam Carolla & Friends Build Stuff Live!" which McBride will then distribute across his social media network. -- **Condé Nast**, **NBCU** and **Vox Media** formed a new partnership to bring data platform, **Spire**, and advertising platform, **Concert**, together. The union eventually will reach more than 200 million in the US across the three companies' digital networks.

**Business/Finance:** **Charter** and its subsidiaries intend to offer \$1bn in aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes due 2027. These notes will form part of the same series as the 5.125 percent Senior Unsecured Notes issued on February 6, 2017. Charter intends to use the net proceeds and cash on hand to repurchase or redeem \$2.0 billion in aggregate principal amount of Time Warner Cable's 5.850% notes due 2017.



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Let Your Hair Down

Once upon a time, **Disney** princesses lived in “the vault”—that magical, mysterious place where their animated movies were retired to until a special DVD (or VHS tape) was released for a limited time. But these bright, young women must have found an escape hatch because we’ve spied “Aladdin’s” Jasmine, “Beauty & the Beast’s” Belle and other royals making guest appearances in **Disney Junior’s** “Sofia the First.” The most brazen princess of all appears to be Rapunzel from Disney’s 2010 theatrical, who has broken free and is appearing in Friday’s **Disney Channel** original movie “Tangled Before Ever After” (8pm). She then strikes out on her own in new animated series “Tangled: The Series” (premieres March 24, 7:30pm). “It was a very particular challenge to take a character that was dynamic and large and really fit on the big screen, and take that idea and make it work for series. It was about taking certain aspects of the character and growing her,” said executive producer *Chris Sonnenburg*. “What I didn’t want to do was see the screen as being smaller and making her role in that universe smaller. It was actually taking her character and saying, ‘how can we take what was so successful in the film and grow these characters, not only out in time but in depth, and give them other dimensions other than what was brought forward in the film.’” Rapunzel’s character isn’t the only thing growing. Fans have been teased for weeks with a trailer showing that her long locks—famously cut at the end of the movie—is back in all its glory. Her new storyline in the original movie will explain how it came back, but not why. That comes in the series, promises Sonnenburg, an animation vet who worked on such films as “Pocahontas,” and “Mulan.” We’ll try to be patient. “You and about 40 million screaming Tangled fans all want to know.” — *Amy Maclean*

**Reviews:** “The Game of Dating,” 8pm ET, Tuesday, **TV One**. A complete hoot. Three three-person teams sit on couches watching video of dates and then answer questions. The producers must have encouraged the teams to drink and have fun. They’re wild and arguably more entertaining than the daters. Honesty or bad editing? As “The Game” heads to a break before it reveals an answer, the camera catches one team being real as its members groan, “Nooooo...not another commercial.” -- “The Americans,” 10pm, Tuesday, **FX**. There was no rust on the Season 5 premiere ep of this excellent Cold War-era story about Soviet spies posing as an American couple (*Keri Russell* and *Matthew Rhys*). Yet the characters in the March 14 ep spend too much time talking. Viewers wait some 40 minutes for stakes to be raised surrounding the couple’s daughter, who knows her parents’ secret. Clearly it’s an expository ep, laying out plot lines for the rest of the season. Fingers crossed. -- “Water & Power: A CA Heist,” 9pm, Tuesday, **Nat Geo**. This doc is a superb and deeply troubling David and Goliath story: waterless CA residents and activists being David and a cadre of corporations and corporate farmers the giant. Unfortunately, David’s prospects are terrible as are those for millions as harrowing statistics at the film’s end profess. — *Seth Arenstein*

| Basic Cable Rankings<br>(2/27/17-3/5/17) |      |     |      |
|--|------|-----|------|
| Mon-Sun Prime                            |      |     |      |
| 1  | FOXN | 1.5 | 3474 |
| 2  | ESPN | 0.8 | 1771 |
| 3  | HGTV | 0.7 | 1655 |
| 3  | MSNB | 0.7 | 1569 |
| 3  | USA  | 0.7 | 1524 |
| 6  | AMC  | 0.6 | 1395 |
| 6  | CNN  | 0.6 | 1372 |
| 6  | HIST | 0.6 | 1315 |
| 6  | DISC | 0.6 | 1290 |
| 10                                       | TBSC | 0.5 | 1243 |
| 10                                       | TNT  | 0.5 | 1171 |
| 10                                       | ID   | 0.5 | 1128 |
| 10                                       | DSE  | 0.5 | 100  |
| 14                                       | DSNY | 0.4 | 949  |
| 14                                       | FOOD | 0.4 | 900  |
| 14                                       | TLC  | 0.4 | 871  |
| 14                                       | FX   | 0.4 | 835  |
| 14                                       | HALL | 0.4 | 800  |
| 19                                       | A&E  | 0.3 | 799  |
| 19                                       | NAN  | 0.3 | 776  |
| 19                                       | TVLD | 0.3 | 776  |
| 19                                       | ADSM | 0.3 | 756  |
| 19                                       | LIFE | 0.3 | 678  |
| 19                                       | BRAV | 0.3 | 654  |
| 19                                       | FRFM | 0.3 | 620  |
| 19                                       | APL  | 0.3 | 613  |
| 19                                       | NKJR | 0.3 | 603  |
| 19                                       | HMM  | 0.3 | 585  |
| 19                                       | VH1  | 0.3 | 582  |
| 19                                       | SPK  | 0.3 | 577  |
| 19                                       | SYFY | 0.3 | 575  |
| 19                                       | DSJR | 0.3 | 547  |
| 33                                       | MTV  | 0.2 | 487  |
| 33                                       | INSP | 0.2 | 478  |
| 33                                       | OWN  | 0.2 | 472  |
| 33                                       | WETV | 0.2 | 468  |
| 33                                       | TRAV | 0.2 | 465  |
| 33                                       | CMDY | 0.2 | 451  |
| 33                                       | EN   | 0.2 | 424  |
| 33                                       | BET  | 0.2 | 422  |
| 33                                       | LMN  | 0.2 | 410  |
| 33                                       | GSN  | 0.2 | 394  |
| 33                                       | NGC  | 0.2 | 390  |
| 33                                       | WGNA | 0.2 | 364  |

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



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