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What the Industry Reads First

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New Math: One World Plus Eleven Sports Equals New US Network

One World Sports is no more, with **Eleven Sports** confirming Thursday that it has acquired some of the channel's distribution assets (*CFX*, 3/14). It gives the company availability to 50mln homes through US carriage deals with **AT&T**, **DirectTV**, **Verizon**, **Charter**, **NCTC** and others. It's the UK company's first entry into the US, with Eleven Sports operating various international sports channels in Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, Singapore and Taiwan. News leaked out over the weekend when a channel bug for Eleven Sports appeared on then network. Presumably, Eleven Sports was waiting for the green light from One World affiliates before making the official announcement. Former **ESPN** exec *Anthony Bailey*, who led the emerging tech group at the company, has been tapped to lead the effort as **svp**, **Aser Media** in the US (Aser Media is Eleven Sports' parent company). One World pres/CEO *Sandy Brown* will not be a part of the new venture. Eleven Sports said specific info about television rights would be made available in the near future, but that it will have a portfolio that includes cycling, ice hockey, basketball, soccer, rugby, lacrosse, cricket, drone racing and other millennial-focused sports. "We know there are fans in the U.S. who are underserved by the current sports networks and we are ready to give them what they want," Bailey said in a statement. During its exploration of the US market, Eleven Sports worked with media consultant *Cathy Rasenberger* of **Rasenberger Media**. It's a bit refreshing to see that One World was actually purchased, with some other linear nets with nice distribution just going away. See **Participant Media's Pivot** and **Al Jazeera America**. One World furloughed all of its employees except a handful of senior execs around November of last year after an anticipated investor backed out. It had been pursuing a potential sale ever since, with more than a half dozen companies taking a look at it. Among those, including to sources, was **Anthem Sports & Entertainment**, owner of **Fight Network** and **Fantasy Sports Network**. One World was formed in 2019 and is owned by Dallas-based **One Media Corp**. The network offered **NASL** soccer games, including the **NY Cosmos**. That won't continue, with the Cosmos (now owned by **Mediacom** CEO *Rocco Commisso*) announcing **Tribune's WPIX** and **MSG Networks** as regional TV partners. The team said a number of games will be available through a national television deal expected to be announced by the NASL next week.

Retrans Madness: AT&T U-verse customers lost 27 **Raycom** stations at midnight Thursday. That total included 7 local **CBS** stations that are airing the **NCAA Men's Division I Basketball** tourney. **DISH** subs have their own retrans woes, with

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Hearst stations in 26 markets having been dark on the satcaster's lineup since March 3. AT&T was quick to note that the championship tournament remains available on **TBS, TNT** and **truTV**, and every game is also streaming live at NCAA March Madness Live or for fans using the NCAA March Madness Live app. "We have asked Raycom repeatedly to allow our customers to watch while we work this business matter out privately, but Raycom continues to refuse," a rep said. "We can have Raycom's stations back into our customers' lineups within moments of Raycom simply granting its permission. We'd like to resolve this matter quickly and reasonably, and we appreciate our U-verse customers' patience while we attempt just that." Both sides have pointed to blackouts involving the other party as well as their own successful negotiations. "We never want our communities to experience a disruption," *Pat LaPlatney*, Raycom Media pres/CEO, said in a statement. "These retransmission consent agreements are important free-market negotiations that sustain broadcast localism. It is unfortunate that AT&T U-verse appears to be involving their customers in their broader business strategy." -- One provider that doesn't have to worry much about CBS is **Verizon FiOS**, with the company announcing a new multiyear carriage deal this week for CBS O&Os, the **CW** affiliates, **Showtime**, **Smithsonian Channel** and **CBS Sports Network**.

Netflix Initiated: **Bernstein Research** initiated **Netflix** at "outperform" with a price target of \$178. "Our view is predicated on our belief that SVOD will be the dominant model for delivering professionally produced video entertainment content, and Netflix will be the "anchor" embodiment of SVOD service globally," the firm told clients.

Stand for the Arts: Pretty timely announcement from **Ovation** as President *Trump* has proposed elimination in his first federal budget of the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **National Endowment for the Humanities** and the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**. Ovation has recruited several high-profile, non-profit arts groups and art leaders for its annual Stand for the Arts campaign to raise awareness and encourage action on behalf of the arts and culture. The Coalition includes the **Arts Action Fund**, **National Dance Education Organization**, **Society of Voice Arts and Sciences** among others. Ovation network strategy evp *Liz Janneman* called the decision to eliminate the two endowments "a new low point" by the current administration. "Rather than the short-sighted point of view that the arts are a frivolity or a luxury not worthy of federal funding, this Administration fails to recognize the well-documented fact that arts and culture industries generate \$22.3 billion in revenue to local, state and federal governments every year, and create 4.13 million full-time jobs, generating \$86.68 billion in household income," she said in response to the NEA/NEH news.

Research: **Park Associates'** recent research reveals that 20% of US pay-TV subs say they're dissatisfied with their service, representing a 100% increase since early 2013. On the flip side, only one-third of pay-TV subscribers are very satisfied with their service, a drop from 57 percent who indicated very high satisfaction levels in 2013. Of further note, declines are largest among younger heads of household (the average age of pay-TV subscribers is older now than in 2014).

Ratings: Another week with **Fox News** at the top of the prime ratings pyramid. The net averaged 2.5mln total viewers in prime last week, ahead of **ESPN** (1.7mln), **MSNBC** (1.7mln) and **HGTV** (1.6mln). **AMC's** "The Walking Dead" and after show were the most-watched cable programs of the week (10.7mln viewers and 4mln, respectively). Three eps of **Fox News'** "O'Reilly Factor" had more total viewers than ESPN's **ACC** championship game (3.596mln). -- **BBC America's** "Top Gear" Season 24 premiere grew 5% from last season's premiere and 50% from the Season 23 average among adults 25-54 (which was the show's biggest episode in this key demo in two years). -- The *John Cena*-hosted "2017 Kids' Choice Awards" scored a ratings bonanza, ranking as cable's top kids' program with 3.7mln total viewers across **Nickelodeon**, **Nicktoons** and **TeenNick** for the week of March 6-12. The all-star show pulled in the top spot for the week with kids 2-11 (6.4/1.8M), kids 6-11 (8.1/1.4M) and tweens 9-14 (5.7/1M), marking the program's biggest year over year gains in ten years.

Awards: Nominations are open for **WICT's** 2017 "Woman of the Year" and "Woman to Watch" honors. Awards will be presented at the Touchstones Luncheon Sept 25 in NYC during the WICT Leadership Conference, held in conjunction with the industry's **Diversity Week**. -- The **National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences** has named its honorees for outstanding achievement in animation, which will be saluted at the 44th Daytime Creative Arts Emmy Awards. The panel chose to honor the work of **Netflix's** "Trollhunters" and "The Mr. Peabody & Sherman Show" as well as **Nickelodeon's** "Pig Goat Banana Cricket" and **Amazon's** "Little Big Awesome."

Programming: **Syfy** picked up "The Expanse" for a 3rd season to bow in 2018. -- **Investigation Discovery's** series "Disappeared" is returning with its 100th episode on Sunday, March 26 at 10/9c.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

The Circus Continues...

You've probably heard by now that **Showtime's** bringing back "The Circus," an excellent documentary series that took us behind the scenes during the 2016 election and will now peel back the curtain on the early days of the new Administration. The next season premieres this Sunday, and what a week to unveil a real-time peek at the never-boring presidency of *Donald Trump*, who just unveiled a budget proposal that would kill federal funding for NPR, PBS and the National Endowment of the Arts in one fell swoop. That's not to mention continued controversy around wiretapping claims, alleged Russian ties and other fake news peddled by the dreaded fake media. As Showtime president *David Nevins* told the critics during **TCA** in January, The Circus always had "big time potential beyond just an election." Co-creator *Mark Halperin* is already writing the third installment of the *Game Change* book series with fellow Circus producer *John Heilemann*. **HBO**, which turned the last two Game Change books into TV movies, will produce this one as a mini-series directed once again by *Jay Roach*. But it's Showtime that's got the goods on the completely unscripted reality show behind the reality show in Washington, as The Circus evolves into a premiere brand with the potential to grow in 2017 and beyond. To be sure, it seems certain that Halperin, Heilemann and co-creator *Mark McKinnon* will never run out of material. At least as long as President Trump remains the star. – *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "Parched: Money Flows," 9pm, Tuesday, **National Geographic**. Nat Geo primed viewers for the topic of water with its gripping "Water and Power: A CA Heist" (March 14). "Money Flows" kicks off 3 weeks of short films about water, maintaining the link between liquid and liquidity established in Heist. Your reviewer rarely wishes shows were longer; here's an exception. While Flows is very good, you'll wish it dug deeper because it covers much ground, going behind the headlines to link Flint's poisoned water to disastrous financial management in Detroit. Actually, how austerity measures in Detroit led its utility to shut off water at the homes of citizens with substantial, unpaid water bills is the main story. Interestingly water continued flowing at Detroit sports sites, which had enormous unpaid water bills. Choices were made; we want to know more. -- "The Last Alaskans," season 3 premiere, 9pm, Wednesday, **Discovery**. This acclaimed series remains as unsullied as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) where it's filmed so gorgeously. The views from drones are breathtaking and emphasize the isolation of the 7 families who occupy ANWR, roughly the size of S.C. The premiere features young *Charlie Jagow* building a log cabin solo and *Heimo Korth* killing and gutting a caribou. Contrived plotlines these are not. But that's one of this series' beauties. – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings			
(3/6/17-3/12/17)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	FOXN	1.1	2494
2	ESPN	0.8	1711
3	MSNB	0.7	1694
3	HGTV	0.7	1619
5	DISC	0.6	1449
5	USA	0.6	1412
5	AMC	0.6	1298
5	DSNY	0.6	1285
9	TBSC	0.5	1239
9	HIST	0.5	1092
9	ID	0.5	1081
9	CNN	0.5	1076
9	DSE	0.5	109
14	TNT	0.4	1014
14	FOOD	0.4	999
14	A&E	0.4	857
14	FX	0.4	835
18	NAN	0.3	795
18	HALL	0.3	764
18	ADSM	0.3	760
18	TVLD	0.3	751
18	TLC	0.3	737
18	LIFE	0.3	728
18	VH1	0.3	703
18	APL	0.3	629
18	BRAV	0.3	623
18	NKJR	0.3	609
18	DSJR	0.3	521
18	HMM	0.3	513
18	MLBN	0.3	426
31	SPK	0.2	521
31	INSP	0.2	513
31	WETV	0.2	487
31	FRFM	0.2	485
31	SYFY	0.2	474
31	TRAV	0.2	473
31	NGC	0.2	473
31	LMN	0.2	459
31	ESP2	0.2	459
31	MTV	0.2	457
31	OWN	0.2	443
31	WGNA	0.2	407
31	GSN	0.2	400
31	TRU	0.2	393

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

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