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What the Industry Reads First

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Holding Pattern: More than 189K without Cable as Harvey Flooding Continues

With Harvey still walloping Texas and Louisiana, it's difficult to get a complete sense of the severity of damage the storm has left in its wake. **FCC** stats show at least 189K cable subs out of service in the affected area as of 11am ET Monday. **Comcast** has suspended operations in the Houston area until local emergency management agencies deem it safe to be on the roads. It also extended making its WiFi hotspots throughout the Houston area free to all through Sept 8. While restoration crews were in standby mode, Comcast employees were attentive on social media as Harvey made landfall. On **Twitter**, the company assured an area resident that he would be refunded for the much-hyped *Floyd Mayweather-Conor McGregor* PPV fight Saturday night if he were to lose power. Another Comcast rep jumped in when a surprised **Verizon FiOS** customer looking for storm coverage discovered she didn't have **Weather Channel** and threatened to switch to Comcast. She was a bit behind the times as FiOS dropped Weather in March of 2015 for **AccuWeather**. "We've got your back. Just DM @comcastcares for help getting set up with an account," Comcast tweeted in response. On TV, millions watched harrowing images of flooding from broadcast and cable nets. More than once, reporters have been in boats with emergency responders essentially helping with the rescue efforts they are reporting on. Such efforts didn't go unnoticed by **FCC** chmn *Ajit Pai*. "Broadcasters and other news outlets have also played a critical role in conveying emergency information, and in some cases, even coordinating live, on-air rescues. Everyone who is pitching in deserves our gratitude and support. We're all in this together," he said in a statement. After **KHOU (CBS)** evacuated on live TV as Harvey flooded its studio, Denver **NBC** affiliate **KUSA** sent a secondary feed to Houston that included **WeatherNation's** 24-hour coverage. AccuWeather has relied on storm chaser *Reed Timmer* (star of former of **Discovery** series "Storm Chasers") and videographer *Andy Coates* for footage of Harvey. "They've been constantly on with our live network product," said *Tom Loebig*, vp, digital media content Accuweather. "It's been an interesting few days," with Timmer now at a hotel with no power/running water, and no way out for the time being with the roads flooded. Preliminary numbers from Weather Channel for Friday and Saturday (based on live, not live+SD) show it reached approximately 15mln households each day. Its total reach on Facebook hit 184mln. This clip of meteorologist *Paul Goodloe* rescuing an American flag in Harvey's destruction had Weather's highest engagement as of Monday morning (more than 165K shares). For Friday, **Fox News**

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and **MSNBC** led Weather Channel in Hurricane Harvey ratings for P2+ from 8pm-midnight, but Weather had the lead for A25-54. Fox News averaged 2.18mln total viewers Friday from 8pm to midnight, per early time period data from **Nielsen**, while MSNBC averaged 2.01mln and **CNN** had 1.42mln. FCC data as of 11am Monday found 16 Public Safety Answering Points were experiencing service issues, up from 9 Saturday, but down from 16 Sunday (six from Sunday were taken off the list, but five were added). The FCC said 4.7% of cell sites are down in the affected area, up from 4.1% Sunday.

Fight Night: Showtime is offering refunds to customers who ordered OTT streams of Saturday night's fight between *Floyd Mayweather* and *Conor McGregor* but were unable to view the bout. The event, which cost viewers about \$100, marked the first time Showtime ever offered a live PPV event directly to consumers. Showtime Sports svp, communications *Chris DeBlasio* said the net received a "very limited number of complaints," adding refunds must be handled at the point of sale. This means the net will only reimburse those who purchased the fight directly from Showtime, as opposed to via their pay-TV operator or another OTT platform. As the fight's primary distributor, Showtime was responsible for getting the fight to MVPDs and other vendors, who in turn were responsible for delivering the video to paying customers. **UFC Fight Pass**, an OTT service powered by **Neulion**, was the subject of complaints on social media. Neulion and UFC did not respond to requests for comment. Showtime delayed the fight approximately 10 minutes amid reports of issues from some distribution partners, which it attributed to high last-minute order volume. ESPN **reported Comcast, Atlantic Broadband** and **Frontier** customers were among those impacted by the outages. Atlantic Broadband vp, customer care *Courtney Long* in a statement said, "Atlantic Broadband experienced an equipment software glitch on Saturday that impacted a small percentage of PPV buyers that ordered the fight ahead of time. No viewers missed the main event as the issue was resolved quickly and well in advance." Showtime also was the target of a class action lawsuit Monday alleging thousands of fans who ordered the direct-to-consumer stream were subjected to "grainy video, error screens, buffer events and stalls." The lawsuit stated Showtime "rushed its pay-per-view streaming service to market, without securing enough networking bandwidth." The net declined to comment on the litigation. Showtime has yet to make an official announcement about whether Saturday's fight broke the record for most domestic buys set by Mayweather's 2015 fight against Manny Pacquiao (4.6mln). PPV revenue for that fight totaled more than \$400mln. Mayweather in his post-fight presser claimed Saturday's fight broke the record. **Macquarie Research's Amy Yong** estimated the fight "could have brought in 5m+ PPV purchases." At about \$100 per buy, she estimated PPV purchases generated \$500mln in revenue, "with 40-50% or so to the MVPD." She pegged the boost to ARPU in the cable and pay-TV sector from the fight at \$1-2 in 3Q17. **Fathom Events**, which hosted viewings, took in \$2.6mln in 532 movie theaters across the country. Data from digital security company **Irdeto** identified 239 illegal streams of the fight, which reached an estimated 2.9mln viewers.

GoT Ratings: A series high of 12.1mln people tuned into Sunday night's season finale of "Game of Thrones" on **HBO**. Total viewership, including streaming, was 16.5mln. The TV-only figure marks a whopping 36% increase from the Season 6 finale, which drew 8.9mln viewers. It also scored a 19% better rating than this season's premiere, which drew 10.1mln.

Live Sports Rights: **ESPN** reached a deal to become the home of boxing promotion **Top Rank** in the US and Canada. It will televise live fights on ESPN and **ESPN Deportes** that will also stream on the ESPN app. The net's forthcoming OTT service by **BAMTech** (slated for early 2018) will also stream some fights, including PPV events. The first year of the deal includes 18 fights. -- The **NCAA** and **Golf Channel** reached a long-term extension of live coverage of the NCAA D-I men's and women's golf championships. The net has provided live coverage of the men's event since 2014 and the women's since 2015.

Hulu Adds CW: **Hulu** has reached a deal to add **The CW** to its live TV service. With the addition of The CW, the service now offers all five major broadcast nets. Local stations will be added in the coming months. Hulu could not provide details Monday on how many affiliates it will launch. Prior to the addition of The CW, Hulu offered 201 live local stations, making it a leader among virtual MVPDs.

Programming: Discovery en Español is marking Hispanic Heritage Month with two new productions: "RMD Garage" and "The Auto Firm Con Alex Vega." Both will premiere Sept 11 and leverage the net's most popular genre: automotive.