

# Cablefax Daily™

Monday — April 2, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

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## Rise of the Machines: Artificial Intelligence Marches Forward

Elon Musk warned of its unchecked dangers at SXSW. Fox is piloting AI-focused game show “Man Vs. Robot.” But whether on the backend or consumer-facing front, artificial intelligence is making its way to prime time. ZoneTV, a company with partners including Microsoft, this summer will launch a package of 14 AI-powered “dynamic channels” in North America. But CEO Jeff Weber told CFX the channels—including Foodies, Great Outdoors, Playground and Styler—will augment the core linear experience and serve as a complement, not competitor, to existing pay TV distributors. “We believe in pay TV, we are a friend of pay TV. We think there’s a lot of opportunity here, yet they need to evolve,” he said. With a library of some 70K licensed or acquired shows in place, ZoneTV has deals with an operator in both North America as well as parts of Europe to personalize the viewing experience similar to the way Spotify customizes audio—all using existing set tops and hardware. “Linear, by definition, is static... but we reprogram the channels based on the metadata of what you’re watching and enjoying,” Weber said. Meanwhile, Comcast is leveraging AI across several areas including X1, IoT, customer experience and network performance and “working on AI- and machine-learning-powered experiences in a number of stages of development from experimental to fully deployed,” Jeanie Heck, vp, AI product, told CFX. That includes the X1 voice remote and computer vision. “Last year, we introduced an AI-powered feature that made it easier for customers to see what was happening on their home cameras. That’s the first of what we think will be many advancements in making our Xfinity Home cameras smarter and more powerful,” Heck said. Comcast also developed and trained its Natural Language Processing platform using AI to “really understand our customers’ intent, and deliver highly relevant, accurate results.” John Holobinko, Cisco director of cable access strategy, cited “a number of areas of low hanging fruit. Machine learning to optimize networks will likely become a reality within the next 12-24 months.” That includes Cisco’s recently announced Crosswork Automation product, which aims to collect, store and process network information using machine learning on an end to end basis, including self learning and self healing networks. Cisco recently bought AI startup MindMeld, a move Holobinko said “is all about developing computer-based conversational interfaces. While the greatest demand for these interfaces is with customer service organizations, think consumer products, in the future we may leverage this technology to assist technicians in solving difficult plant issues.” - Cathy Applefeld Olson

Cablefax

## Leaders Retreat

April 30-May 1, 2018

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, FL

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**To Infinity and Beyond:** The FCC Friday issued an order authorizing **SpaceX** to launch a satellite system comprised of 4,425 satellites to provide fixed-satellite service around the world. SpaceX aims to begin launching the satellites as early as 2019, reaching full capacity in 2024. The FCC approval states that SpaceX must launch 50% of the system by March 2024 with all being prepared and launched by March 2027. "Grant of this application will enable SpaceX to bring high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband service to consumers in the United States and around the world, including areas underserved or currently unserved by existing networks," the FCC order reads. Space X initially filed an application requesting authority for the proposed satellite system in November 2016 and is the first US-based operator to be approved to launch this type of system, according to the FCC.

**Together Again?: CBS Corp.** is readying to make an initial merger proposal to **Viacom** in the coming days, according to a *Bloomberg News* report. Such a proposal would be the first step in bringing the two companies together again after their formal split in 2006. The reported offer is expected to include an opening suggestion on valuation and leadership plans. Reps from both companies declined to comment on the report. The companies' boards had previously created special committees of independent directors to explore a potential merger. Previous talks in 2016 failed to bring about a deal.

**Above and Beyond:** Customer interaction platform company **Alorica** received the 2018 AT&T Supplier Award for its superior service to **AT&T** affiliates in 2017. Criteria included customer service, product/service performance and sustainability.

**Game Night: IFC** is introducing a number of new initiatives this spring, starting with an interactive weekly game during breaks for its primetime movie. Viewers can play along by watching "Bingo Breaks" and filling out an online card. "Night Flight" has partnered with IFC to bring back the pop culture show from the 80s: Premiering April 20 at 1am, each 15-minute episode will feature a classic guest star such as *Ozzy Osbourne*, *David Bowie* or *The Sex Pistols*. The network also renewed comedy "Brockmire" for two additional series ahead of its April Season 2 premiere on April 25. Seasons 3 and 4 of the **Funny or Die** production are slated to air in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Later this year, IFC will launch the **Sloth TV** digital OTT initiative, paying tribute to slow TV with a twist, from 80s' workout videos and knitting tutorials to viewers.

**Going Mobile:** Anime SVOD service **Crunchyroll** is branching out, launching its first-ever mobile game. "DanMachi: Memoria Freese," coming to iOS and Android, is based on the series "Is It Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?," which is available to view on Crunchyroll. The original voice actors contributed their voices to the project while series creator and writer *Fujino Omori* developed exclusive stories for the game.

**Ratings:** Thursday's season opener between the **New York Yankees** and the **Toronto Blue Jays** was the highest-rated Yankees season opener on **YES** in seven years, averaging a 5.34 household rating in the New York DMA. The telecast

## Cablefax Industry Jobs

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peaked during the 6:45-7pm quarter hour, hitting a 6.61 rating and reaching 608K total viewers. The pre-game show averaged a 1.55 TV household rating; the post-game peaked at 2.12.

**Programming:** National Geographic and Katie Couric are coming together to talk the most pressing issues in America today with “America Inside Out with Katie Couric.” Debuting on April 11 at 10pm, the series will see Couric traveling to Charlottesville, Montgomery and New Orleans in order to find more clarity in the debate over how Americans should approach the history of race in the nation.

**People:** FCC commish Mignon Clyburn named Nese Guendelsberger as wireline legal advisor and Michael Scurato as media legal advisor. Guendelsberger joins the staff after serving as senior deputy bureau chief of the **Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** while Scurato was last a legal advisor to the chief of the Enforcement Bureau. Prior to this, he was vp of policy at the **National Hispanic Media Coalition**. Clyburn also announced departures of chief of staff J. David Grossman and current wireline legal advisor Claude Aiken. -- **Universal Pictures Home Entertainment** boosted sales and marketing exec Kathleen Gallagher to evp, managing director - North America. Gallagher, who replaces UPHE veteran Dick Longwell as he transitions into retirement, most recently served as svp of sales, customer marketing and category management.

## Cablefax Dashboard

### Tweet Tweet



**John F. Jones**  
@JonesJF Follow

Special thanks to #FSFConf10 for hosting another informative conference and letting me participate on the “Solutions for Connecting America and Closing Digital Divides” panel. Networks are converging and fiber and spectrum will jointly help create advanced networks and services.

12:05 PM - 27 Mar 2018



**Matthew M. Polka**  
@MATTAACA Follow

I will tell you what sets apart our @AmericanCable Mbrs like @comporium... history, commitment, innovation, devotion to community, and lasting roots. #Comporium, like so many of our Mbrs we are privileged to serve, is #StandingTheTestOfTime! Thank you for ALL you do!

### Up Ahead

- [April 4: WICT Signature Luncheon](#)
- [April 4: 21st Annual Cable Hall of Fame Celebration](#)
- [April 5-8: Adaptive Spirit Annual Event](#)
- [April 30-May 1: Cablefax Leaders Retreat](#)

### Research

- > 70% of OTT households also have a multichannel subscription.
- > 65% of people who use a second screen while streaming have looked up information on products being advertised on a TV show.
- > Advertising comprises 45% of all online video revenue and is projected to grow to nearly 60% over the next 10 years.

(Source: [Video Advertising Bureau Insights Report](#))

### Quotable

“Essentially you have a brilliant platform-based advertising model that emphasizes precision propaganda, and that precision propaganda can be used for good or evil. A big part of communication conversation going forward will have to be necessarily comprehensive and include how to think about companies whose enormous profits derive from the amassing of massive intimate data sets that they monetize to various forces.”

- NCTA pres **Michael Powell** in an interview for C-SPAN’s “The Communicators” series.

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