

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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5 Questions: Philo OTT Service Skews Female, Open to Sports Content

As we gear up for the Cablefax Leaders Retreat in Amelia Island, FL, next week, we caught up with Mike Keyserling, head of content and distribution partnerships at Philo—a unique OTT service that started as a cable alternative for college students and last fall expanded its marketing to the broader market. Philo has kept its prices relatively low by focusing on entertainment networks and avoiding more expensive news, sports and broadcast net content on the platform.

Philo made a choice early on to focus on entertainment and not include often expensive broadcast and sports nets. Will that change going forward? We talked to a lot of the companies that have sports channels, and I think we're definitely open to adding those channels if we can do it in a way that preserves the flexibility and the value of the product.

You make the case that Philo is a better TV experience than the traditional bundle. Do you view yourself as a cable adversary? We actually look at the relationship with the cable companies in a really complementary way. We're actually talking to a number of cable companies about potentially marketing our product, targeted potentially to their internet-only subscribers. It's all evolving really fast in this market, and I think a lot of cable operators are really looking for low-cost, high-value solutions that they can use to offer to those customers who want to cut the cord. **You currently offer packages of a few dozen channels for \$16 and \$20 per month, respectively. How maxed out are you on networks you can add while still maintaining an affordable price point?** Right now, we are really laser-focused on delivering value.

But we think there's a lot of room to grow beyond what we're doing today. We're looking at adding additional content to the platform as long as it delivers on that product experience and value... Our goal isn't to be the cheapest. It's to be the best product experience. At a low price point of \$16, you're getting multiple streams, you're getting a VOD library, you're getting a cloud DVR with unlimited recording for 30 days. So you're getting all of these really neat features that actually other MVPDs are [charging for]. We have a completely, philosophically different approach. Coming from the college market, targeting Gen Z and millennials seems to make sense. **But what are your ambitions to expand your customer base?** There's actually quite a lot of appeal across the gamut. We really think we are emerging as a product that has high value to a lot of different demographics. We are skewing female. It's almost 60 percent female, which is something we're really proud of. **As you learn more about your audience, how do you see Philo evolving over the next few months?** We

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are building and working on an integrated social experience that will be coming out later this year, and we're really excited about it. Every day we're trying to figure out how to build a product that people will really love. We have always felt that TV is the most social form of content consumption. None of the social evolution in the last decade has really played into a TV product. I just think that's a huge opportunity, being able to connect with friends and being able to share content with your friends—all of these could have a really transformative effect on television. *[There's still time to register and book your flight for this incredible experience in Amelia Island, FL, on April 30-May 1. Register [here](#).]*

Carriage: Hallmark Drama has been steadily gaining carriage since its October launch. **Cox** is the latest distributor to sign on the dotted line, adding **Crown Media's** third linear channel to its lineup next month. It joins **DISH, Optimum, Suddenlink** and **Layer3 TV** as Hallmark Drama affiliates. No deals yet with Comcast, Charter, AT&T/DirecTV or Verizon, but execs have expressed optimism for continued carriage. Hallmark Drama offers a slate of movies as well as episodes of acquired series such as "7th Heaven" and "Touched by an Angel."

Pai Pressed on Sinclair: FCC chmn **Ajit Pai** was grilled once again on **Sinclair's** planned **Tribune** acquisition. This time it happened at a **House Finance** subcmte hearing on the agency's budget. Ranking Member **Mike Quigley** (D-IL) tried unsuccessfully to get him to commit to holding off on approving or denying the merger until a federal court has ruled on the FCC's authority to reinstitute the UHF discount for the 39% national broadcast ownership cap. Noting that the FCC's shot clock on reviewing the merger has been paused since January, Pai said he's loathe to forecast anything with regards to the timeframe. Pai said the FCC has only just began evaluating Sinclair's latest divestiture proposal. The FCC chair also faced questions about a reported Inspector General investigation into whether he or his staff acted in any way to benefit Sinclair. He said he's been advised by general counsel that he doesn't need to recuse himself from the merger review. Asked if Sinclair told him or his staff about the deal before it happened, he replied "absolutely not." Pai said he did make a presentation in 2016 to Sinclair gms in which he talked about the need for media ownership reform. The FCC is seeking a spending level of \$333,118,000 in the FY19 budget, with money derived from regulatory fees for regular FCC operations, and an auction spending cap of \$112,734,000. The FCC received \$322,035,000 for FY 2018, with Pai noting that the agency's appropriation has declined by more than 17% since FY09.

Time Warner's First Quarter: **Time Warner's** 1Q revenues rose 3% thanks to an \$8bln boost in growth at **Turner** and **HBO**. The success of the cable networks was able to offset a decline in revenue at **Warner Bros**. It wasn't all great news, however, as the company saw its operating income drop 13% to \$1.8bln and adjusted operating income declined by 8% to \$2bln. Time Warner is standing by its full-year outlook for adjusted operating income to increase

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in the high single digits, but that leaves out any costs associated with the pending acquisition by **AT&T**. Closing arguments in the **AT&T-DOJ** case are expected to begin Monday.

Full FTC: The Senate confirmed all five **FTC** commissioners Thursday, with antitrust lawyer *Joseph Simons* to serve as chairman. It's the first time the agency has had a full slate of commissioners since August 2015.

Track It Down: **Comcast** is coming together with **Tile** on a partnership to let **Xfinity** customers use their remote to find Tile devices anywhere and see the results of their search on their TVs. This is the first video and voice control partnership for Tile, whose Bluetooth trackers can be attached to any item, giving users a way to locate their lost or stolen items. At launch, only Xfinity Home customers with the X1 voice remote will be able to add their Tiles through the Xfinity Home app. Eligibility will come to Xfinity Internet customers later this year.

For the Troops: **Mission Media** is continuing its mission to support veterans' transitions into careers in the media industry by launching the "Models of Success" initiative. Models of Success will act as a collection of case studies that highlight industry employers' go-to strategies for recruiting, onboarding and retaining veterans. The issues will also incorporate insights from veterans who have undergone the transition into cable and media entertainment. The first issue will focus on **Charter's** veterans hiring program. The company has employed nearly 12K veterans, 12% of its workforce, and has committed to increase veterans hiring by 5% by 2020. Charter will share info on its "Introduce Yourself" online video feature, broadband technician training program and the training facility housed with the Career Resource Center at Fort Bragg. Other resources showcased include Charter's leveraging of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, the **US Chamber of Commerce** Hiring our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program, **RecruitMilitary** and more.

Warming Up: **The Weather Channel** has been named the 2018 **Harris Poll** EquiTrend TV News Brand of the Year for the eighth year in the row. The poll, in its 30th year, tracks and compares the brand health of more than 3K brands across 300 categories. Other winners included **History Channel** (Factual Entertainment), **AMC Network** (General Entertainment), **Disney Junior** (Kids TV), **Amazon Fire TV** (Media Streaming Device), **HBO** (Pay Cable TV Network), **YouTube** (Social Networking Site) and **Netflix** (Video Streaming Subscription).

Fun House: **Comedy Central** is committing to emerging talent with its latest initiative, The Creators Program. The digital in-house initiative will be led by svp, digital, *Jennifer Danielson* and will become the anchor of the network's digital strategy. It will also act as an in-house agency developing branded integrations and brand-sponsored short-form video content. *Nate Dern* ("Funny or Die," "Upright Citizens Brigade") will lead the first Creators Program as head of creative. *Ryan Beck*, *Chris Cotton*, *Hanna Dickinson*, *Jordan Mendoza* and *Natasha Vaynblat* were selected from more than 1,000 applicants, and will now be writing, producing and starring in a daily reactive series and a weekly scripted series. Both of these will find homes on social platforms, primarily **Facebook** and **YouTube**.

Backing MobiTV: **ETI Software** is supporting **MobiTV's** Connect platform, a move which will allow service providers to move to next-gen platforms while maintaining any and all back-end integrations.

Programming: **Revolt** revealed a slate of original programming coming in May that includes new episodes of "Drink Champs" (Thursday, May 3 at 10pm) and "REVOLT Sessions" (May 12, 9pm) along with a new format coming for "The Breakfast Club" (May 7, 6am). Three new series are making their debuts: "R News" (May 7, 7:45pm), "REVOLT Justice" (May 8, 9pm), "REVOLT Hijacked" (May 10) and digital series "On Clout 9." -- **Showtime** has greenlit a fourth season of "Billions." The drama is currently airing its third season on Sundays at 10pm, but will move to 9pm starting on May 6. -- **BBC America** is set to simulcast **BBC One's** coverage of the Royal Wedding on May 19. Live coverage will air before and after, with BBC following the main wedding program itself and the carriage procession following. An encore presentation will air on BBC America later in the day. -- The full season of "AMC Visionaries: *James Cameron's* Story of Science Fiction" will be available to **AMC Premiere** customers when the first episode airs on the linear network Monday at 10pm.

People: *Paula Kaplan* has joined the **Viacom Digital Studios** team as evp of talent and development. Kaplan joins the network from **Awesomeness TV** and has 20 years at **Nickelodeon** under her belt. -- *Nina Diaz* is continuing her career at **Viacom** with a promotion to president, programming and development for **MTV**, **VH1** and **Logo Group**, effective immediately. She previously acted as evp, programming and development, unscripted for MTV and VH1, a position she stepped into in November 2016. -- *Ted Lim* will join the **MGM** family on May 14 as svp of strategic planning & corporate development. He most recently served as svp of strategy and business development at **Participant Media**, leading strategy and M&A. He was key in its investment in **Amblin Partners**, the acquisition of **SoulPancake** and its expansion into TV series production.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'Ancient Aliens': Still Out of This World

Keeping a series alive for eight years in today's programming war is no small feat, but **History** has achieved just that with "Ancient Aliens," which lands back on the channel Friday, April 27 at 9pm. The show will continue on its hunt for the questions surrounding extraterrestrial life that humans have been asking for years. "We live in an increasingly secular world—and one where science is, in my opinion, too eager to put periods at the end of sentences," series creator and executive producer *Kevin Burns* told **Cablefax**. The series remains relevant thanks to recent discoveries in chambers within Egypt's Great Pyramid, news surrounding the US government's funding of UFO research and the interviews with lead expert *Giorgio Tsoukalos*, *David Hatcher Childress*, *William Henry* and more. The new episodes sees investigators traveling to over a dozen countries to see what they believe to be firsthand signs of ancient alien visitation. Audiences will be treated to the first public look at ancient statues of giants with alien features in Sardinia, Italy as well as the uncovering of hidden messages in the artwork of *Leonardo da Vinci*. With more and more competition arriving on cable every week, what has kept viewers coming back? The series' continuing success can largely be attributed pure curiosity and the desire to have answers to questions about our world, according to Burns. "Ancient Aliens uses a combination of historical fact and informed speculation and encourages audiences to find their own answers to life's most important questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Are we alone in the universe?" – *Sara Winegardner*

Reviews: "Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas," 11:30pm, Friday, **HBO**. It's hard to know how mush to gush about this new series without having seen more than the premiere episode (just one was provided). We can say we want to see more. Please. Ep 1 was terrific, blending *Cenac's* wry sense of humor with an excellent look at news stories, including a hilarious story about cow manure. Swiftly the show ran a lengthy segment about policing in America, which proved more depth than one might expect from a 30-minute show that's partly a comedic look at current events. Making adroit use of graphics as well as Alexa and Siri, the show feels like a mini documentary. And what a great set. Cenac promises to re-visit policing in coming eps. As we said, we want to see more. -- "The Last Days of Knight," **ESPN+**. Another fine doc from ESPN's "30 for 30" explores, in a methodical way that may seem tedious to some, the journalistic backstory of how **CNN** sports producer *Robert Abbott* and his boss *Steve Robinson* convinced former IU star *Neil Reed* to go on camera and confront legendary coach *Bobby Knight*. Reed's allegation about Knight choking him, or grabbing his neck, was the start of the end for Knight, but, as this doc shows, not the controversial story. – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (4/16/18-4/22/18)		
Mon-Sun	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
TNT	0.965	2939
FNC	0.780	2374
MSNBC	0.637	1941
USA	0.445	1356
HGTV	0.434	1322
ESPN	0.421	1283
TBSC	0.396	1207
ID	0.335	1021
HIST	0.330	1005
DISC	0.319	971
CNN	0.308	936
A&E	0.299	910
FOOD	0.288	878
ADSM	0.276	841
TLC	0.276	841
NICK	0.249	758
AMC	0.243	741
BRAVO	0.227	690
NAN	0.226	688
DSNY	0.225	686
FX	0.213	648
TVLAND	0.208	634
HALL	0.206	627
DSJR	0.196	598
HBO	0.186	566
INSP	0.170	519
NBCSN	0.168	512
CRN	0.167	510
LIFE	0.166	506
MTV	0.162	494
PARA	0.159	483
VH1	0.158	482
FRFM	0.157	477
SYFY	0.156	477
GSN	0.155	471
APL	0.154	469
TRAVEL	0.147	446
WETV	0.134	409
NATGEO	0.130	396
NKJR	0.130	395
HMM	0.125	381

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



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