

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Full House: Poker Central Opens New Studio After OTT Success

The switch from linear TV to a digital approach has proven to have its challenges, but **Poker Central** believes it made the right bet. The company revealed last month that a new studio was on the way, and it officially opened the facility on Thursday evening. The studio, housed in Vegas' ARIA Resort and Casino, will serve as the exclusive home for all Poker Central-owned live events and those distributed on its OTT service, **PokerGO**. It will also allow for greater creation of original programming, a focus over the next year. Poker Central partnered with competitive gaming content company **ESP Gaming** on the studio's opening. ESP, a sister company to Poker Central, will use the space to host its own live esports event productions, including the Vainglory Premier League, when Poker Central is not utilizing the space. "We'll keep it in use quite often and we'll be able to optimize and be really efficient for the amount of original content that we create for both businesses," *JR McCabe*, chief digital officer of Poker Central/PokerGO said in an interview with **Cablefax**. Poker Central shut down its dedicated linear TV channel at the end of 2016 in favor of going all digital. It has continued to host its content on **Roku**, **Apple TV** and **Amazon Fire TV**, but no longer offers a live stream. It's not the first to attempt making the leap from a linear network to the OTT marketplace. **Esquire Network** announced in January 2017 that it would become a digital-only brand, but would still be offering original programming on its website. However, a look around the web doesn't seem to show any new content in more than a year. Esquire magazine's website, however, is still very current (though print heavy). So what allowed Poker Central to make the transition and maintain viewership? It hasn't completely abandoned its ties to linear TV. "We believe in the power of scale and reach through cable," McCabe said. "Marrying the best of a deeper experience in OTT with the greatest ability to reach scale through cable is part of the secret of our success." Poker Central has a deal with **ESPN** to carry its "World Series of Poker" events through 2020 while **NBC Sports Group** has the broadcast rights to the "Super High Roller" bowl and other events. These give Poker Central's niche audiences more ways to get to the content they crave, something McCabe thinks is key when super-serving those groups. "We've proven that the niche audiences want more of what they want, when they want, how they want it," McCabe said.

Next Steps: Rep Mike Doyle (D-PA) filed a discharge petition Thursday to require a vote in the House on his resolu-

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tion to nix the **FCC's** Restoring Internet Freedom Order. "Now that the Senate has passed legislation to overrule the FCC order eliminating net neutrality, the next step is passing this legislation in the House," Doyle said. A majority of the representatives would need to sign the discharge petition before it can be brought before the full House, with many observers doubting that 218 lawmakers will get on board.

Paving the Way: Asian American innovators came together with government representatives Thursday evening at Media MX, a panel discussion in DC centered on how those creators are using content and new media platforms to open doors for diversity in entertainment. The event was held by Asian lifestyle company **CJ Group** in collaboration with the **Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus**, and in commemoration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. "The last five years have just been incredible for diversity," *Suk Park*, co-head of productions and acquisitions of **Warner Bros.** and co-founder/former pres of **DramaFever**, said, noting that **ABC's** "Fresh Off the Boat" has just been renewed for its fifth season. "And not just ethnic diversity, but also sexual diversity, and just opening up the platform of entertainment to everybody." She commented that the need for cable and OTT to focus on specific markets and explore other cultures or identities has been great for business. And it seems like that will continue to be the case, as **Netflix** just revealed its upcoming political comedy "First Ladies" will focus on America's first female president and her wife. The panel also featured *Angela Killoren*, COO of **CJ E&M America**; *Jimmy Lynn*, co-founder **KISWE**, senior advisor/adjunct faculty Georgetown University; and *Sanjay Sharma*, CEO **AllDefDigital** and former evp strategy and BD of **Machinima**.

IoT Support: Leverage, an IoT software company, has been unveiled as the startup powering **Cox Communications'** IoT business line, Cox2M. Its first initiative will be for **Cox Automotive**, with **Manheim** using an application that delivers real-time tracking of vehicles across auction lots. The solution was piloted last year and will be implemented across the US and Canada to connect more than 500K vehicles. -- Half of consumers (49%) today would like to see IoT devices help them simplify tasks in the home within the next three years. A new poll from **CSG** revealed that consumers in the US, UK, APAC and Canada view wearables as the most important (40%) and most commonly used (45%) IoT devices. The majority opinion (60%) was that the most valuable attribute of these devices is in their ability to make life easier. Over the next five years, respondents said they are most excited to see the future of possibilities in IoT (28%) and the providing of daily conveniences (32%).

Cable-Tec Content: **NCTC** pres/CEO *Rich Fickle*, **ACA** pres/CEO *Matt Polka* and *Shirley Bloomfield*, CEO of **NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association**, will head a panel this fall at **Cable-Tec Expo**. Entitled "Off The Beaten Path: Strategies For Success In Small, Midsized and Rural Markets," the panel will talk broadband availability and



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complications in rural markets.

Programming: ID and People expanded their partnership to include two series scheduled to come in 2018. “People Magazine Investigates: Cults” will premiere on ID on June 4 at 9pm while “People Magazine Investigates: Crimes of Fashion” will premiere in 3Q 2018. -- **YouTube** ordered an eight-ep documentary series on AI to debut next year. It will be executive produced by **Team Downey** partners *Robert Downey Jr.* and *Susan Downey*; **Network Entertainment’s** *Derik Murray* and *Paul Gertz*; and **Sonar Entertainment’s** *Jenna Santoianni* and *Tom Lesinski*.

People: *Superna Kalle* has joined **Starz** as evp, international digital networks. The former **Sony** exec is known for being a senior advisor for multiple media companies, advising them on international SVOD strategy, digital operations, restructuring and global business development. -- Former **FCC** attorney *Brian Hurley* is coming to **ACA**. Starting June 4, he’ll be charged with leading the legal and regulatory agenda of the organization’s members. *Matthew Maraist* joined the association on May 14 as manager of digital communications, heading ACA’s website and social media functions.

Oops!: *Jay Wallace’s* title was president of news and editorial at **Fox News Channel** before his promotion to president, Fox News and executive editor.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Warren Davidson @WarrenDavidson
 #NetNeutrality Twitter favors 1934 FCC rules that only apply to ISPs (i.e. not them) over real legislation that would safeguard privacy and access with application to all internet companies, websites, devices, and applications. That’s why you see so much on their favored policy.

Twitter Public Policy @Policy
 Twitter stands for strong #NetNeutrality rules because they’re essential for innovation, free speech and public safety. If you agree, make your voice heard today!

Ed Markey @SenMarkey
 The people saying we can’t win on #NetNeutrality in the House are the same people who, just 5 months ago, were saying we could never do it in the Senate.

Ignore them. Just keep fighting.
 7:33 AM - 17 May 2018

Research

- Top cable companies added 845K subs in 1Q 2018, 84% of the net adds in 1Q 2017.
- Overall, broadband additions in 1Q 2018 were 83% of the 965K net adds in 1Q 2017.
- Telcos have had combined net broadband losses in each of the past eight quarters.
- At the end of 1Q 2018, cable had a 64% market share vs. 36% for telcos.

(Source: **Leichtman Research Group**)

Up Ahead

- May 21-23: Media Finance Focus 2018**, Arlington, VA
- June 4-6: Fiber Connect**, Nashville, TN
- June 5: The Faxies Awards Luncheon**, NYC
- June 5: Cablefax 100 & Top Ops Celebration Dinner**, NYC
- June 12-14: ANGA.COM 2018**, Cologne, Germany
- June 13-15: CES Asia**, Shanghai, China

Quotable

“We’re going to write public policy in this space, we would benefit from these CEOs coming in. My point is come in before you’re under some investigation or scandal. Help us better understand how your platforms work, what your goals are, what you’re doing to protect Americans’ privacy, and give us good guidance in terms of what that public policy should be.”

- **Energy and Commerce Cmte Chmn Greg Walden (R-OR)** on *Fox Business’ “Varney & Co”* to discuss his op-ed inviting Silicon Valley CEOs to testify before the committee.



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