

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Unlicensed Spectrum: Debate over Interference in the 5GHz Band

It's been four years since the **FCC** voted to make 100MHz of spectrum in the 5GHz band available for unlicensed use, but one incumbent user says it has recently measured a "dramatic rise" in the 5.1 GHz noise level. **Globalstar** has petitioned the Commission to open up a Notice of Inquiry regarding the viability of continued spectrum sharing—a move that cable warns could have devastating consequences on Americans' WiFi experience. The opening of the band, among other things, has allowed WiFi to be deployed more easily at outdoor venues, mass transit stations, corporate campuses and universities. Since May of 2014, Globalstar said it has confirmed a 2dB increase in the 5.1GHz noise level, warning that a failure by the FCC to take corrective action could endanger the lives of its subscribers as some rely on its mobile satellite services for critical back-up capabilities for public safety personnel during disasters when terrestrial networks can be rendered inoperable. On Friday, **NCTA**, **Wireless Internet Service Providers Assn** and **Cisco** filed objections to the petition, arguing that Globalstar has failed to allege any concrete harm. For starters, NCTA argued that only Globalstar's duplex services use the band where unlicensed devices operate, with an SEC filing putting the company's global duplex subs at 69,033 at the end of March. "With such low subscriber numbers, the Commission has every reason to view Globalstar's claims of future harmful interference with a healthy dose of skepticism," NCTA said in its objection, which also claims Globalstar's noise floor measurement methodology is flawed and could significantly overstate the additional noise. What's more, the cable group argues that Globalstar could use existing rules for relief in "the unlikely event" it someday experiences harmful interference from unlicensed devices. Cisco argued that the FCC shouldn't initiate an inquiry, "but this is not because incumbent protection is unimportant—quite the contrary." The vendor said the FCC and unlicensed community takes very seriously the responsibility to protect licensees, but Globalstar "has not fulfilled its basic responsibility to establish that there is something genuinely amiss before seeking to upend a spectrum sharing arrangement that is delivering significant benefits to American consumers." Globalstar's supporters include clients, such as **Sci\_Zone** and the **National Public Safety Telecom Council**, a federation of public safety organizations such as the **National Sheriffs' Association** and **International Association of Chiefs of Police**. "Globalstar service is used in both urban and wildland environments by first responders and significant interference to

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that service could be detrimental to public safety,” NPSTC said. Also expressing support for an inquiry is **Sirius XM**, which doesn’t currently operate in the 5150-5250 MHz band, but has a strong interest in assuring that there’s no interference as a pending mid-band spectrum proceeding to allow unlicensed devices in the 7025-7075 MHz band would be in the same frequencies that the satellite radio service uses. This is worth watching as players continue to push for expanding unlicensed access into other parts of the 5GHz band, with an active docket pending at the FCC on the 5850-5925 MHz band. NCTA continues to believe that the band presents the best near-term option for making available additional Wi-Fi spectrum.

**Patent Patrol:** **Blue Spike** filed a patent infringement suit against **DISH** in the US District Court for the Eastern District of TX. The firm alleges 17 counts of infringement, including for patents involving processes for transmitting streams of data and generating a packet watermark. Blue Spike has filed multiple patent suits, including a similar one last month against **Frontier’s** Fios TV service. In 2014, **Electronic Frontier Foundation** called Blue Spike a “patent litigation factory” that at one point had filed more than 45 cases in two weeks.

**Ratings: History** scored the No 1 cable special of the year, excluding news and sports, with 3.5mln people tuning into “Evel Live” Sunday night. *Travis Pastrana* paid tribute to *Evel Knievel* by completing three of his most dangerous stunts live in Las Vegas. Some 1.2mln adults ages 18-49 watched the three-hour event live, making it History’s best premiere special since “Gettysburg” in May 2011. -- **Starz** said the Season 5 premiere of its original series “Power” grew its audience across platforms, with a 40% increase in VOD viewing and a 9% total average audience increase season over season. The Starz App also saw a 110% increase in new and returning viewers compared to the same period last year. The ep had more than 2.8mln streams. In L+3 viewing, it delivered 2.1mln viewers. -- It was time for a comeback. **Nick’s** “Double Dare” reboot brought in an average of 1.4mln viewers during its June 25 premiere week. It was the network’s best series launch among A18-49 in more than five years, according to **Nielsen**. The original Double Dare was Nickelodeon’s longest-running game show, airing on the network from 1986-1993.

**For Sale?:** The *WSJ* reports that **Univision** is considering a sale of **Fusion Media Group**, which includes websites such as **Gizmodo** and **Deadspin** as well as cable network **Fusion** and Univision’s interest in **El Rey**. The paper quoted unnamed sources familiar with the matter.

**Privacy Police:** **House Commerce** sent letters to **Apple** CEO *Tim Cook* and **Alphabet** CEO *Larry Page* to investigate their companies’ representation of third-party access to consumer data. Other topics addressed included the

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collection and use of audio recording data and any location information collected on iPhone and Android devices. While the letters to both addressed reports that smartphone devices can collect “audio data from users’ conversations near a smartphone in order to hear a ‘trigger’ phrase,” and that the data gathered can be accessed by third-party applications, each CEO was posed a number of different questions. “In the wake of the privacy scandals that surfaced earlier this year, you made several comments to the press around Apple’s beliefs about privacy, including ‘[w]e’ve never believed that these detailed profiles of people that have incredibly deep personal information that is patched together from several sources should exist,’” the letter to Cook read. “However, users have consistently had access to apps through the App Store that you have highlighted as contradictory to Apple’s values, including **Google** and **Facebook** apps.” The letter to Page called out a Google policy change from June 2017 that said it would halt the scanning of the contents of a Gmail user’s email to personalize advertisements. “Last week, reports surfaced that in spite of this policy change, Google still permitted third parties to access the contents of users’ emails, including message text, email signatures, and receipt data, to personalize content.”

**Just Google It:** **DISH**, the first TV provider to offer direct compatibility with **Amazon’s** Alexa, is at it again. It now offers integration with the **Google** Assistant, with it the first pay-TV provider to do so. Only customers with a Hopper, Hopper Duo, Joey or Wally can use the service. The service is also friendly with **Netflix’s** selection of television and movies, along with DISH’s live, recorded and on-demand titles.

**From Sea to Sky:** **Discovery Channel** and **Southwest Airlines** partnered to send out a Shark Week Fleet Monday morning in celebration of the programming event’s 30th anniversary. The five aircraft each featured artwork themed after a specific species of shark typically appearing in Shark Week programming. Those onboard the flights will be able to enjoy Shark Week content from the Onboard Entertainment Portal’s custom Shark Week TV Series Channel, which houses a library of past episodes. Fliers will be able to track the fleet online at FlightAware.com, where the flight’s typical airplane-shaped icons have been replaced with custom-created shark icons. The aircraft will fly through August 31, while Shark Week 2018 begins on July 22.

**Programming:** **Bravo** is set to debut its new late-night talk show “Real Men Watch Bravo” this fall. *Jerry O’Connell* serves as the host and exec producer, and each episode will feature O’Connell along with a panel of male celebrities, comics and tastemakers. -- **Disney** is premiering an interactive live trivia series “Disney QUIZney” on July 16 at 9pm ET/6pm PT on Disney Channel and Disney Now. The seven-minute show will test Disney trivia and knowledge. -- **Charter’s Spectrum News Albany** launched “Your Morning Albany,” a newscast hosted by *Julie Chapman* and *Dan Bazile* from 7-8am on weekday mornings. -- **The Jim Henson Company** announced it is developing the education product line **Slumberland** into a live-action puppet series for preschoolers. -- **CuriosityStream** will premiere “VITAMANIA” on Aug 2. The special event will dive into an exploration of vitamins and supplements, available exclusively on CuriosityStream’s streaming and on-demand platforms. -- **Nat Geo** has announced “Yellowstone Live,” a four-night special event airing August 5-8 and hosted by TV journalist *Josh Elliot*. -- **Paramount** ordered a pilot for “68 Whiskey.” It will be produced and directed by Oscar-winner *Ron Howard*. The project is adapted from the Israeli series “Charlie Golf One.” -- **Syfy** and **USA** have exclusive rights to the “Harry Potter” franchise after **NBCU** struck a deal with **Warner Bros**. The networks will serve as the home for all eight films as well as the upcoming “Fantastic Beasts” projects until April 2025. **Disney’s Freeform** previously had the rights. The nets welcome the magical world with a “Harry Potter Wizarding Weekend” starting on Friday.

**People:** **Crown Media** recruited *Revella Cook* and *Margaret Johnson* as directors of business and legal affairs in L.A. Cook previously worked as an attorney at **ABC Television**, and Johnson comes from **Madison Wells Media**. -- **Turner Sports** promoted *Hania Poole* to svp of **NCAA** Digital and gm of Bleacher Report Live. -- *Svetlana Gans*, the former **FTC** chief of staff, joined **NCTA** as vp, associate general counsel.

**Honors:** **The Media Institute** will honor “Fox News Sunday” anchor *Chris Wallace* and **Urban One** founder and chairperson *Cathy Hughes* at the annual Friends & Benefactors Awards Banquet on October 24 at the Four Seasons Hotel in DC. Wallace will receive the Freedom of Speech Award for a broadcast tenure that spans more than 50 years. Hughes, who will receive the American Horizon Award, heads the largest African-American O&O broadcast company in the US (which includes cable net **TV One**).

**On the Circuit:** **WICT** added actress and activist *Alyssa Milano* as the keynote for its annual Leadership Conference in NY. The conference will take place at the Marriot Marquis on Oct 15-16, kicking off the industry’s Diversity Week. -- **ESPN** launched its 14th Annual ESPYS Auction benefiting the **V Foundation for Cancer Research**. It is underway on **eBay** and will continue through July 18. -- Four chief HR officers will share their insights at **CTHRA’s** HR Symposium Oct 2 in Philly. The Symposium is the industry’s largest gathering of human resources professionals.

## CFX TECH

### Outside the Box

In our last edition of CFX Tech, we covered **Weather Channel's** use of immersive mixed reality technology to create hyper-realistic simulations on sets during programming events. What was powering it all? A video game engine.

While it's designed for the development and rendering of intricate scenes from some of the industries most popular games, don't place it inside of that box. **The Future Group**, Weather's partner in the endeavor, added its own layer on top of the base Unreal Engine, created by **Epic Games**, to create its proprietary Frontier product.

"This technology, using video game engines to revolutionize just what anyone in media can do with graphics has been amazing," said *Michael Potts*, Weather's vp of design. "We were able to provide information in such a memorable way

More and more often, outside industries are snatching these virtual toolboxes and customizing them to fit their own needs.

*Tim Sweeney*, founder of Epic Games, told attendees of the 2016 **Game Developers Conference** that architects were integrating the technology into their building design processes, creating detailed 3D models rather than physical prototypes. **McClaren Automotive's** *Mark Roberts* noted that the engine helped with his company's design process and is the secret behind its "Customer Configurator," a tool that gives customers the power to visualize their own luxury car before it's built.

Even **Lucasfilm** has grabbed a hold of the tech, using it to build "Star Wars" areas in Disney World and Disneyland.

The Weather Channel's not the only one adopting the Unreal Engine when it comes to TV programmers, although it may be one of the first to commit to such a major use of it in its segments. **Nickelodeon** introduced "SlimeZone," a social VR experience that lets six people select from a range of character avatars, play games, watch cartoons,

create art and slime their friends.

The development team at the Nickelodeon Entertainment Lab first adopted a version of the Unreal Engine in 2013, but utilized updated features from Unreal Engine 4 to bring together the final version of SlimeZone.

"Initially we were attracted to UE4 for the level of rendering quality you can achieve and the approach to real-time production techniques for creating linear and interactive content with Sequencer," *Chris Young*, svp, Nickelodeon Entertainment Lab, said of his experience with an in-engine tool that allows users to scrub through 3D scenes as they would in any piece of video editing software. "We also liked that Blueprints gave us the visual ability to build out our ideas."

The Blueprints feature allows for the prototyping and shipping of interactive content without the designer having to worry about coding. Blueprints are able to be used to build object behaviors and interactions, modify user interfaces, adjust input controls, and test your work with a build-in debugger.

It's all about remembering that, at its core, a game engine is just a software program. When integrated with other programs, creating new animations and prototypes can be far from unreal. — *Sara Winegardner*

**Breaking Barriers:** If "blockchain" isn't already a part of your vocabulary, it's time to add it in. The technology could be breaking traditional structures in Hollywood studio culture thanks to a deal between platform **Crowded Cloud** and blockchain-based video sharing platform **Veracity**. Crowded Cloud attempts to decentralize the way in which TV and film projects are launched and funded, allowing content creators and investors to vote for, fund, produce and profit from television and film content format conversion into AR, VR, 3D and/or enhanced 2D formats. They'll use the native HAVI token to power the new ecosystem while Veracity will give viewers a chance to earn "VERA" tokens from watching ads and sharing videos. It will give advertisers greater visibility and valid audience metrics.

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