

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Maps: Senators Question FCC on Digital Divide, Alleged DDoS Attack

If any phrase could summarize the **Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation's FCC** oversight hearing, it might be "the map." To be sure, rural senators are especially mindful of the broadband connectivity map established by the FCC to reflect what areas require the most monetary support. That map involves a complex process that includes downloading data from the FCC, going into a portal, receiving a variety of handsets and then testing signal strength and latency every half kilometer before uploading data back up to the site, getting it on a grid and receiving an engineer's certification. FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* noted that they were working to fix known issues by extending the challenge period for those maps by 90 days. "We want to make sure we give everybody a full and fair opportunity to participate in the challenge process, to make sure that we're operating on the basis of accurate data," Pai explained. Many on the committee doubted that extending challenges would yield an accurate map, fearing that the \$4.5bln to be distributed over the next ten years based on this map could still leave out those who need coverage most. "We should stop thinking we can do this alone in Washington," FCC commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* agreed. "We have to go out to the American public and private sector actors and get their assistance and help before we distribute billions of dollars." When questioned by *Sen Brian Schatz* (D-HI) about the reported DDoS attack on the FCC's net neutrality comment docket, Pai argued that his hands were tied when it came to sharing the findings of a report from the FCC inspector general, or even when it came to sharing personal doubts with the public. That report found that the FCC's former CIO was mistaken, and that the outage stemmed from an overwhelming amount of comments being submitted after an airing of *John Oliver's* late night show. According to Pai, he was asked by the IG's office to keep quiet until the report was released. "The position that I was in was do we breach the office of the inspector general's request for confidentiality, in which case the accusation from members of this committee would be he's jeopardizing an independent OIG investigation, including a potential criminal prosecution, or do I adhere to the inspector general's request?," Pai said. Schatz noted that he understood Pai was stuck between a

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rock and a hard place but was seeking accountability from the chmn. “I can’t imagine that there was not another way to thread this needle and deal with us in our oversight capacity,” Schatz said. Pai also defended the highly-publicized decision to take down the pirate radio station in Austin, TX, airing a show from *Alex Jones*. On Friday, August 10, the US government sued in a Texas federal district court to enforce a \$15K forfeiture order issued by the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau in 2014. Some alleged the takedown related to the program’s content. “Our pirate radio enforcement efforts, including this one, have nothing to do with the content of the pirate radio station’s air,” Pai said. “We act against pirate radio stations because they are violating the law by broadcasting on FM airwaves without a license.” He added that the operators of the FM stations received a warning but refused to comply. “We will always follow the law,” Pai said.

Growth Spurt: OTT service **Xumo** released growth metrics Thursday, reporting a 325% rise in viewership and a 90% increase in user consumption over the past year. Xumo is hoping to see this growth continue, announcing the launch of 6 new premium channels from 4 additional content partnerships with **Eleven Sports, ATTN, Endemol Shine Group** and **Genius Brands**. Xumo currently offers over 140 channels to 30mln US households.

Speed Racer: **Shentel** is tripling internet speeds for customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland and introducing a new 150-Mbps option earlier this year.

Getting Curious: **Toyota** signed on as the second premier sponsor for **CuriosityStream**, joining **Sprint**. The partnership includes creative, co-promotion and distribution collaborations. CuriosityStream anticipates signing on a total of six premier sponsors by the end of the year.

Social Stars: **Shareablee** released its July ranking of the most socially engaged TV networks across the country, and **ESPN** came in at number one. Overall, engagement for TV nets fell by nearly 18%. ESPN remained at number one with 124mln social actions across **Facebook, Twitter** and **Instagram**. **Fox News** came in second with 50mln actions, followed by **CNN** with 37mln.

Customer Service: **The Cable Center** will take on the ever-changing dynamics of customer service at **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** with a panel featuring *Dr Charles H Patti*; **Cable One’s** senior director, customer operations, *Kimberly Gibson*; and **Cox Communications** vp, customer operations, *Scott Wise*. The panel will be held at 11:45am on October 25.

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AMC NETWORKS

Embracing OTT: OTT adoption is up 17% YOY, according to **comScore**, and the popularity of those platforms is highly evidenced by the rise in vMVPDs. In April 2018, 5% (4.9mln) of US households with Wi-Fi internet streamed a vMVPD on their TV, a 58% increase from the year before. vMVPDs made up 10% of all time spent on OTT streaming in April, a 53% increase YOY. In addition, the popularity of vMVPDs is starting to creep beyond the younger demographics. Since April 2017, the percentage of MVPD households with a head of household under 35 dropped 8 points to only 21%, meaning older audiences are adopting the new viewing habits.

Joining the Pride: Writer/producer *Jenny Bicks* came to an overall TV deal with **Lionsgate** to develop and produce original content. Bicks has been behind shows like “Sex and the City” and current HBO series “Divorce.” -- **Netflix** locked down a multi-year, exclusive deal with **Emmy** and **Golden-Globe** nominated writer and producer *Kenya Barris*, who will write and executive produce all projects and series through his production company **Khalabo Ink Society**. Barris created “black-ish” and “Grown-ish,” and also wrote last summer’s hit “Girls Trip.”

Who You Gonna Call?: **AMC** and **Postmates** partnered to deliver meals from “Better Call Saul’s” infamous Los Pollos Hermanos restaurant. The fried chicken joint first appeared in “Breaking Bad” but quickly became a staple in the show’s spin-off. Fans in key areas within NYC and LA can order a special mini-meal of character Gus Fring’s famous fried chicken and curly fries on Aug 20, 21 and 22. Using the Postmates app, the meals are delivered for free, while supplies last, beginning at 12pm local each day. Season 4 of Better Call Saul airs Mondays at 9pm on AMC.

Ratings: The premiere of **Disney Channel’s** TV remake of “Freaky Friday” on August 10 reached 7.2mln total viewers, including 3.1mln K6-14. It ranked as the No 1 telecast for K6-11 and tweens 9-14. -- **WE tv’s** “Mama June: From Not To Hot” scored season high ratings with its August 10 episode, delivering 1.4mln total viewers within three days of its showing. The show has seen four consecutive weeks of growth among A25-54 and two weeks of growth among W25-54 and total viewers.

Programming: A new late night talk show is coming to **E!**. “Busy Tonight,” hosted by actress *Busy Philipps* and covering pop culture, will premiere on October 28 at 10pm. -- **Travel’s** “Haunted Live” premieres Sept 14 at 10pm. The live show follows the *Tennessee Wraith Chasers*, a team of paranormal experts, as they investigate haunted spots. It will live stream on the net’s **Facebook Live** platform so fans can follow and comment on findings in real time. -- **Starz** acquired the exclusive rights to nine documentaries, including “Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood,” “Fail State” and “Half the Picture.” The docs will premiere early 2019. -- **Netflix** and **CBC** picked up the award-winning “Anne with an E” for a third season. The show, inspired by the novel “Anne of Green Gables,” debuted its second series on Netflix in July. Season 2 will premiere in Canada on CBC on Sept 23. -- **USA** announced its upcoming music showcase series “Real Country,” adding country music stars *Trace Adkins*, *Wynonna Judd* and *Big & Rich* as celebrity guests. In addition, country icon *Willie Nelson* will make an appearance, and *Graham* from radio station Go Country 105 will host. The show’s permanent panel of artists include superstars *Shania Twain*, *Jake Owen* and *Travis Tritt*. It premieres Nov 13 at 10pm. -- **TNT** ordered the new limited series “The Angel of Darkness” based on the sequel to *Caleb Carr’s* novel “The Alienist.” The Alienist earned six Emmy noms, and its cast includes *Daniel Brühl*, *Luke Evans* and *Dakota Fanning*. All three will return for The Angel of Darkness. -- **HGTV** ordered 13 additional episodes of “Boise Boys” following the renovation series freshman season success. The new season is slated to premiere in spring 2019. -- **Food Network** is following young, talented chefs *Sam and Cody Carroll* as they operate a pair of Louisiana restaurants, their family farm and feed their Cajun families in an upcoming six-episode series. “Cajun Aces” is set to premiere on August 25 at 12pm.

People: **Ovation** upped a number of execs as it prepares to expand Ovation Now and **Journey**. *Will Marks* becomes svp, business development and digital, while *Erica Henry* rises to vp, acquisitions, scheduling & program planning. *Edward Foreman* is now senior director, ad sales, and *Frank Vittori* is vp, post production. Ovation also added to its marketing team, naming *Maritza Berta* as marketing manager. -- **Fox News** tapped *Porter Berry* as vp and editor-in-chief of Fox News Digital. Berry joined the net in 2004 as an associate producer, most recently serving as ep of “Hannity” since 2014. He replaces *Noah Kotch*, who was named editor-in-chief of **DailyMail.com**.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'The Devil Speaks' Exemplifies True Crime

"This series includes graphic recreations of violent crimes." And indeed it does. Investigation Discovery's "The Devil Speaks," premiering August 21 at 10pm, uses real audio and video recordings to peel back layers of true crimes from across the country. "I love the jaw-drop moment where you hear the audio or you see the interrogation footage, and you realize what actually happened and the horror of the truth," executive producer *Liz Massie* said to **CFX**. "I think exposing a monster, that's the moment I get goosebumps." ID partnered with production company **Arrow** to create *The Devil Speaks*. "What this company does particularly well is deliver incredible archive," Massie explained. The first episode, titled "Dirty Little Secrets," dives into the murder of 83-year-old grandfather *Jack Rains* and features footage and audio of the 911 calls, police interview tapes and interviews with the victim and perp's family members. The episode is executed brilliantly, telling the story of the 2003 murder in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Twists and turns leave the viewer on the edge of their seat the entire time, especially when rumors emerge of an affair between the victim and a woman half his age and police start to investigate his close friends. "The drama isn't the super-star of this series, but it's really well done," Massie said. "In this series, it's also the emotional, absorbing the emotional gut punch of what it feels like to be a family member of these victims. I think it's really important. As much as we want to scare people and shock them, we also want to give them that emotional experience. It's so important to the family members, and to us." The six-episode series will investigate true crimes taking place all over the country, ensuring that each episode has an entirely different feel. — *Mollie Cahillane*

Reviews: "Mr. Mercedes," season II premiere, 10pm, Wednesday, **AT&T Audience**. Last year we devoured this series, which is based on the *Stephen King* trilogy, whose first book is "Mr. Mercedes." Tightly written, loaded with suspense and featuring a tremendous cast led by *Brendan Gleeson* as a retired detective and *Harry Treadaway*, playing a creepy, genius serial killer terrorizing a small OH town, each season I ep was an event. Admittedly the bar is high for Mercedes' sophomore year, still this week's opener was only so-so. True, it's wonderful to be back with the Mercedes cast, particularly Gleeson and *Holland Taylor*, who plays his feisty neighbor. And the writers *David E. Kelly* and *Dennis Lehane* introduce *Felix (Jack Huston)*, an ambitious surgeon who's determined to keep a vegetative patient alive. Overall, though, the season opener moves glacially. We're hoping this ep is a table setter for weeks ahead. -- "Minding The Gap," Friday, **Hulu**. The synopsis of this doc doesn't sound like much—three boyhood friends in Rockford, IL, united by skateboarding, come of age in the Rust Belt. Still, we couldn't take our eyes off it, due to the rawness of the footage and the characters' stories. It's easy to see why this first feature film of *Bing Liu* has racked up more than 20 awards at film festivals. — *Seth Arenstein*

| Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (08/06/18-08/12/18) | | |
|--|----------|-------------|
| Mon-Sun | MC US | MC US AA |
| | AA% | (000) |
| FNC | 0.699 | 2,128 |
| MSNBC | 0.562 | 1,712 |
| HGTV | 0.438 | 1,333 |
| USA | 0.400 | 1,217 |
| HIST | 0.357 | 1,086 |
| TBSC | 0.332 | 1,010 |
| TLC | 0.325 | 990 |
| CNN | 0.322 | 981 |
| A&E | 0.314 | 957 |
| ID | 0.309 | 940 |
| HALL | 0.307 | 935 |
| NICK | 0.301 | 916 |
| NAN | 0.274 | 835 |
| FOOD | 0.269 | 819 |
| DISC | 0.267 | 814 |
| DSNY | 0.267 | 812 |
| ESPN | 0.259 | 788 |
| NFL | 0.251 | 765 |
| ADSM | 0.247 | 751 |
| AMC | 0.244 | 742 |
| FX | 0.211 | 643 |
| HMM | 0.205 | 623 |
| TNT | 0.204 | 622 |
| BRAVO | 0.202 | 615 |
| TVLAND | 0.202 | 614 |
| NATGEO | 0.199 | 607 |
| DSJR | 0.180 | 548 |
| SYFY | 0.173 | 528 |
| HBO | 0.162 | 492 |
| LIFE | 0.161 | 490 |
| APL | 0.161 | 489 |
| INSP | 0.159 | 484 |
| MTV | 0.153 | 465 |
| VH1 | 0.152 | 461 |
| FRFM | 0.146 | 445 |
| TRAVEL | 0.143 | 437 |
| GSN | 0.142 | 433 |
| NKJR | 0.142 | 432 |
| CRN | 0.141 | 431 |
| PARA | 0.139 | 422 |
| WETV | 0.127 | 386 |

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

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