

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Plepler Speaks: HBO Chief Sees Big Growth Ahead in Merger's Wake

In his first public interview since **AT&T** closed its **Time Warner** acquisition, **HBO** chief *Richard Plepler* on Friday sounded like a man liberated from the financial restraints of the iconic network's past. "I used to say—almost because I had to say it—'more's not better, only better is better,'" he told attendees of **Mobile World Congress Americas** in L.A. "I've amended that to 'more is not better. Better is better. But we need more to be even better.'" The basic takeaway? AT&T's directive that **HBO** create more content to compete with OTT providers like **Netflix** doesn't bother Plepler one bit. "We were tethered, obviously, in the previous company, to an earnings-per-share model, which simply restricted our ability to make certain investments that we wanted to make," he said in the keynote Q&A session, noting **HBO**'s small size relative to AT&T's vast assets. "We were 25% of the company instead of 2% of the company." He predicted new content investments "will return an enormous amount of growth," especially in digital—as long as **HBO** maintains its quality and cultural relevance. "We're pretty comfortable that if we invest in the kind of content that we believe builds addicts and becomes contagious in popular culture, we're going to continue to grow, and we're going to continue to be a brand that people are drawn to," he said. In fact, he argued that "Netflix can do well. **Showtime** can have good shows. **FX** can produce some great shows. None of that gets in the way of us playing our game to our fullest capacity... Our digital momentum is a major part of our growth going forward." He noted that when **HBO** launched direct-to-consumer streaming in 2015, only 3mIn broadband-only homes existed vs. 26mIn today. "We just want to be available to everybody so they have the opportunity to buy **HBO** however they want to buy it," he said, hinting that the network may eventually convert much of its international distribution to OTT platforms. "I think you can assume that's part of our thinking and part of our strategy going forward," he said. In the end, **HBO**'s corporate culture encouraging dissent and honest conversations will be key to remaining competitive in the future, he said: "You can't have a creative culture where people are fearful."

Florence's Wrath: Hurricane Florence made landfall Friday morning, with officials declaring that the storm is already responsible for four deaths. Meteorologists warned that the hurricane is slow moving and could bring catastrophic flash flooding. "The center of Florence will linger near the coast for the next couple of days, continuing the life-threatening water and wind in communities near the beaches, sounds, and rivers of eastern North Carolina, that will increasingly worsen

Congratulate and Reach the Most Influential Minorities in TV, Cable and Broadband

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Save the Date: October 16, 2018

Cablefax and NAMIC Diversity Breakfast at the New York Marriott Marquis
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in coastal regions of South Carolina,” **Weather Channel** hurricane expert *Rick Knabb* said. Given the storm’s prolonged wallop, it’s early to get a feel for damage. The **FCC** released its first Florence status report Friday, but the voluntary outage info was submitted by communications providers before Florence made landfall, showing the impact only as of 11am ET Thursday. In that early stage, reports showed more than 66K cable subs without service in NC. **Cablefax’s** own designer, who lives about an hour south of Raleigh in Southern Pines, still had power Friday afternoon, but was seeing her internet connection go in and out (she has **CenturyLink**). Power outages, of course, are a huge problem when it comes to restoring service once it’s safe for operators to send in techs. Cable ops have opened up WiFi hotspots to non-customers, closed retail stores in heavily impacted areas and are limiting staffing to non-essential field ops.

DirecTV Drama: A panel of the **National Advertising Review Board** recommended that **DirecTV** discontinue its advertising claim that its service provides “worry-free” signal reliability, as the National Advertising Division found that the company did not show that the signal reliability met the claims. The panel found that a “signal will never go out” message is not reasonably conveyed by the challenged advertising, but noted that it was troubled by categorical denials that DirecTV’s signal would go out and recommended DirecTV consider modifications to the challenged advertising to avoid such denials. The issue was first raised to NAD by Charter Communications. DirecTV has appealed NAD’s recommendations to NARB. In a statement, the company said it would comply with the recommendations, but noted that it “respectfully disagrees with the panel’s conclusion that its claim of ‘99% worry-free signal reliability’ reasonably communicates that ‘DirecTV customers generally do not worry about loss of signal.’”

Public Access: **Dalton Utilities/OptiLink** launched next-gen video platform VidLink Wednesday. Dalton Utilities is one of the first public utilities to offer the cloud-based technology from **MobiTV**. VidLink allows users to stream content on their device of choice, including features like the ability to store customer preferences, universal search and intuitive learning.

Forging Ahead: **Synamedia**, the new company being formed from the sale of **Cisco’s** video processing and solutions business to **Permira**, revealed its vision and investment focus. The company is putting innovation at the forefront, with the priority being research and development into new approaches to combat illegal streaming and protecting various revenue streams. The goal is to not just develop another watermark, but to work in prevention, rapid detection and response. It’s going to forge partnerships with data analytics firms, network equipment providers and application developers supporting the Synamedia Infinite Video Platform as well, believing that Cloud DVR and Infinite Video will help grow its customer base. On this front, it will work on enhancing the user experience while also implementing multicast ABR streaming and broadcast-equivalent streaming latency.

Cablefax:

What’s Happening in October

www.cablefax.com • Cablefax Daily Digital Edition: www.cablefax.com/daily • Online Product Listing: www.cablefax.com/advertise

» Most Influential Minorities Magazine

Cablefax’s annual Most Influential Minorities magazine, celebrates the men and women who are shaping the industry and opening doors for minorities across all areas of business.

» Hispanic Heritage Month

This growing demo has a huge impact on every aspect of the industry. This series we’ll explore upcoming trends in the Hispanic marketplace, examine the latest research and look at what networks and distributors are doing to cater to this powerful segment.

» CTHRA

Cablefax looks at the HR side of the business. What do the hiring trends and needs say about where cable is headed? Coverage will include HR organization CTHRA’s annual Symposium and awards.

» Diversity Week

Cablefax will be on the ground in New York for all the Diversity Week happenings, including WICT’s Leadership Conference, NAMIC’s annual conference and The Walter Kaitz Annual Fundraising Dinner.

» SCTE Cable-Tec Expo

Daily coverage from the Expo show floor along with a preshow special report. We’ll look at the technology and standards development that you need to know about right now. Our preshow will also highlight SCTE, WICT and Cablefax’s Woman in Technology award winner.

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Events

**Cablefax &
NAMIC Diversity
Breakfast**
October 16
NYC

WICT PowerBrokers: WICT's DC/Baltimore chapter will recognize eight leaders at its annual PowerBrokers breakfast Oct 4 at the **National Press Club**. **NCTA** svp, association affairs Rob Stoddard will receive the Inspire Award, making Stoddard (long ago dubbed 'Nicest Guy in Cable' by **Cablefax**) the first man to receive acknowledgment through this award. This year's Geraldine B. Fearless Award goes to *Stephanie DeWald*, **Cox** vp, national inbound sales centers of excellence. Kudos also to **CTAM's Angie Britt** (Communicate Award), **T Howard** pres/CEO *Jo Pamphile* (Connect Award), **TV One's Lori Hall** (Know Yourself Award), **Comcast's Kelli Hill** (Catalyst Award), **Nat Geo's Melayne Cohen** (Listen Award), and **Charter's Christianna Barnhart** (Glenn Britt Emerging Leader Award).

Programming: The **Hollywood Foreign Press Association**, **dick clark productions** and **NBC** announced a multi-year broadcast deal for the Golden Globes. The eight-year deal kicks off with a three-hour telecast on NBC, Jan 6. -- *Monique Coleman* of "High School Musical" fame created and hosts the docuseries "GimmeMo." The series examines issues young people face and offers insight on how to offer support. It premieres on **Discovery Life** Oct 3.

People: *Richard Eng* has been named vp, creative, branding and design for **Freeform**. He previously served as an exec creative director at **Loyalkaspar**.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Up Ahead

September 20: [Media Institute Communications Luncheon](#) with FCC Commish Brendan Carr; DC

September 25-28: [CableLabs Innovation Boot Camp](#); Louisville, Colorado

October 4: [WICT DC/Baltimore PowerBrokers Breakfast](#), DC

October 15-16: [WICT Leadership Conference](#); New York

October 16-17: [NAMIC Annual Conference](#); New York

Research

- One-third of pay TV households in the US have downsized their packages.
- Pay TV operators have lost more than 7mln subs in the past 5 years while online video subscriptions have grown by more than 100mln.
- Cord cutters are four times as likely to connect a Fire TV device to their primary TV set than all Pay TV households, and six times more likely to connect a Roku stick.

(Source: IHS Markit's "Connected Devices & Media Consumption" Survey)

Quotable

"Charlie Rose had this place in our industry. Les Moonves has this place in our industry as an accomplished television executive. They also have these other aspects of these lives. What matters to me and what has to matter to everyone is that reckoning goes all the way... Now it's happening in the top ranks. It's not just happening in the media. The effect of it is to say these standards apply universally. When they apply at the highest echelon, that reinforces that they apply everywhere else"

- CBS News Chief White House Correspondent Major Garrett on the recent personnel changes at CBS on [C-SPAN](#).

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For rates and more information about other advertising opportunities contact: Olivia Murray at omurray@accessintel.com or 301-354-2010