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What the Industry Reads First

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Come Together: Tech Minds Gather to Dissect DAA at Expo

As cable pushes gigabit speeds out to more of its footprint, engineers are looking at how to do it quickly and efficiently. Enter Distributed Access Architecture (DAA), a subject of a **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** pre-conference seminar Monday morning that drew more than 600 registrations. It's a follow-up to last year's popular seminar on Remote PHY, which was standing-room only at the annual tech conference. Remote PHY is the first push in DAA, with the next steps including Flexible MAC Architecture, Access Network Virtualization and Full Duplex (FDX) DOCSIS. About 18 months ago, only 4% of US households were gigabit capable; today, it sits at about 56%, according to stats from *Jon Schnoor*, lead engineer for **CableLabs'** Wired Technologies. CableLabs principal architect *Doug Jones* thinks the internal 56% figure may be conservative. **Cox** has said it expects to have the service available to more than 90% of its footprint by year-end. **Comcast** announced last week that gigabit speeds are available to virtually all of its 58mln residential and business customers. **Charter** has been steadily lighting up gig service to reach its goal of 1Gbps for essentially all customers by the end of the year. Now, cable is eyeing an offering of 10Gbps symmetrical through FDX DOCSIS in 1Ghz plants. Ten gigs downstream isn't much of an issue, but the plant doesn't support that speed upstream yet, which is why FDX DOCSIS is important. 2019 will be the year of interops at CableLabs. The itinerary includes 10 Full Duplex DOCSIS events, along with various mobile backhaul interops, low latency interops, distributed C-CAP architecture interops, according to Jones. His focus is primarily coax, which he strongly believes can be mined for more capacity. "Coax does have a lot of life," Jones told the crowd. "Three years ago, there was a lot of talk about PON [passive optical network], but now the focus is back on coax. DOCSIS technology is not out of gas in any way." That's important as operators look to extend the life of technologies. "We have to optimize what we have out there and simplify it," explained *Jeff Finkelstein*, **Cox's** executive director of advanced technologies. With something like Flexible MAC Architecture, operators can put the MAC where it make sense for the network—in the cloud for a cloud CMTS environment or it could be put with the PHY, Finkelstein said. The **Open Networking Foundation** has primarily worked in the telco space, but it's hoping that 2019 is a year to build some bridges more broadly with the cable community. The seven-year-old, operator-led consortium was driven in its early days by **AT&T**, but now counts **Comcast** and **Google** as board mem-



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bers. ONF's mission is to drive network infrastructure transformation leveraging network disaggregation, white box economics, open source software and software defined standards. The nonprofit began at a time when "things were becoming too consolidated, too locked up and it was too hard to innovate," said ONF marketing & ecosystem vp *Timon Sloane*. "By operators driving this forward, the supply chain is starting to step forward and offer the different capabilities and components that are needed to build these solutions. This is absolutely what I would expect to see in the cable space as well." Comcast joined ONF two years ago. "What we really liked about it is that it is very operator centric," said *Robert Howald*, vp, network architecture for Comcast. "There's a lot of good work there that had already been done..." Ultimately, he sees DAA as an important stepping stone on the path toward virtualization, which could mean less facilities being built, less power consumption, etc.

Gaming to Watch: What sort of impact does your child's "Fortnite" addiction have on the cable network? Not too much, it turns out. But there are other games to worry about. Unlike many other games out there, Fortnite does pretty well on even a mobile network. The most online popular game in the world has low latency, minimal jitter and no or very low packet loss, according to **Momentum Telecom's** advanced services svp *Scott Helms*. He has analyzed some of the most played games in the US and put together a briefing on them during an **SCTE-ISBE Expo** workshop Monday. Something to keep an eye on is remote rendering, which relies on the cloud for the rendering. Remote rendering has a very high bit rate and reliability needs. "It has the potential to be as disruptive as **Netflix** was 10 years ago," Helms said. He noted that **Google** has a console on the way that will be entirely remote rendering. "There is about a dozen confirmed **Nintendo** Switch games that will only be played this way," Helms said. "Imagine each [gamer] using a 50Mbps+ sustained for a gaming session... It doesn't take a whole lot of people doing this to change economics on networking." The biggest player in this space is **NVIDIA**, which announced its remote rendering service "GeForce Now" last year. While remote rendering is a different animal, gaming itself tends to be pretty light on networks. "Don't think Netflix. Think more like **Vonage**," said Helms, who is a gamer himself. He advises operators to keep in mind that gamers have a lot more info than regular subs. Often time performance metrics are baked into the game. "It's important to know this kind of data is being put in front of your customers" so CSRs can prepare for comments such as 'I had 3% packet loss during a gaming session,' Helms said. First-person shooter and action games tend to have a high sensitivity to latency and packet loss. Games that fall into that category include "Battlefield 1" and "Counter Strike Global Offensive."

Expo Notebook: **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** is beginning to get into the swing this week, but the group announced long-term strategies to be implemented starting in New Orleans next year. The 10-year plan outlines



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multiple forces harnessed to continue the event's important role, including strategic locations, partnerships with operators and collaborative relationships with the vendor community. After New Orleans 2019, a schedule of September or October dates through 2029 are planned, including visits to Denver, Atlanta, Philadelphia and DC. SCTE-ISBE, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year, also emphasized increased commitment by MSOs, which will include MSO sponsors in each city that will take the lead on program content. The strategic plan also looks to enhance value for exhibitors, featuring increased interaction with prospects and customers as well as free admission for Fall Technical Forum speakers and reconstitution of the Cable-Tec Expo Exhibitor Committee. -- Meanwhile, **Liberty Global** technology vp *Bill Warga* and **Charter** evp, field operations *Tom Adams* have been re-elected as chairman and vice chairman of the board, respectively, for the 2018-19 term.

AMC Changes: As the media world digests the news that longtime **AMC** pres *Charlie Collier* is setting sail for New **Fox**, where he'll take over the broadcast network as CEO of entertainment as *Gary Newman* exits, we're left wondering what happens over at **AMC Networks**. After all, Collier has transformed AMC through series such as "Breaking Bad" and "The Walking Dead." The good news for AMCN is that it has a deep bench of talent, with *Josh Sapan* and *Ed Carroll* leading the company for three decades. Possible contenders for the job could include *Dave Madden*, who joined a year from Fox as pres, programming for AMC, **SundanceTV** and **AMC Studios**. There's also *Sarah Barnett*, who has been with the company for more than a decade and has an impressive track record that includes originals such as "Orphan Black" and "Killing Eve." As for Collier, AMCN wishes him the best. "This is a great opportunity for him and we know he will make an enormous contribution to this new venture," Carroll said. "We will miss him and are so thankful for his many achievements here over the past decade, helping to build AMC into a powerful brand and force in original programming, and to build AMC Studios into a robust entity producing outstanding content across our portfolio of national networks."

CBS Scramble: **CBS Corp** interim chmn *Richard Parsons* has stepped down due to health reasons. The former **Time Warner** chmn/CEO was named interim chair of the company in September after *Les Moonves* exited following multiple allegations of sexual misconduct and harassment. **Take-Two Interactive Software** chief and CBS board member *Strauss Zelnick* will take interim chairman position, effective immediately.

Turner Tossup: **Turner Ignite**, the content and data solutions component of **Turner Ad Sales**, followed through on a tease from the 2018 upfront. The company unveiled **Turner Ignite Studios**, a brand studio dedicated to the company's entertainment studios. It will partner with creators and advertisers to develop original content across **Adult Swim**, **TBS**, **TNT** and **truTV**. It will be run by vp and creative director *Greg T. Gordon*, who joined the company for this new role in October. He formerly served as head of video operations at **Vox Media**.

Big Spender: Just when you thought you had caught up on your binge list... **Netflix** said it intends to take on \$2bln in debt for corporate purposes, including content acquisitions, production and development, capital expenditures, investments, working capital and potential acquisitions and strategic transactions. As of September 30, Netflix reported total debt obligations of \$11.8mln.

News from Expo: **Cisco** is announcing what it says is the industry's first 'FDX-ready' node. The GS7000 FDXi is a remotely programmable, Remote PHY node that can turn on Full Duplex DOCSIS services when needed. The company also revealed it will soon make its Cisco Cloud Native Broadband Router (cnBR) available in two versions: high-availability and lab-evaluation configuration. **Midco** is using the cnBR CCAP solution in trials to deliver Gigabit services to Mobridge, SD. -- **Arris** is showcasing how its using **Amazon's** new Alexa Smart Screen and TV Device SDK in support with the Alexa Presentation Language (APL). APL is a new design language and tool, and Arris is working to bring APL into the home in multiple ways, including through its smart media device (SMD) concept. SMDs and Alexa Skills will allow service providers to deliver unique offerings such as energy management, home automation, visual smart assistant feedback, education and aging in place. Much of the voice-based interactions can now be combined with visual components.

Thinking Out Loud: **CTAM** launched a new podcast, hosted by pres/CEO *Vicki Lins*. "Thinking Out Loud" features conversations with media and entertainment leaders, with new episodes released bi-weekly. Ep 1, available now on **iTunes**, **Google Play**, **Stitcher** and **TuneIn**, features **TNT** original programming evp *Sarah Aubrey* discussing programming for today's sophisticated audiences.

People: **Disney Television Animation** promoted *Jay Francis* to vp, current series and diversity, and *Angi Dyste* to vp, production and artist management. -- **MTV** tapped former **LEGO** exec *Lars Silberbauer* for a newly-created content role. He will serve as svp, MTV Digital Studios, effective Nov 1.

Think about that for a minute...

Internet Bill of Rights

Commentary by Steve Effros

As I mentioned last week, the industry's prior strategy for dealing with movement toward legislation of our business was to stonewall. We lost that one badly. The "consumer groups" linked up with the broadcasters and the result was retransmission consent, which is decidedly anti-consumer. The flip response to why they would do that, when I asked publicly, was "legislation makes strange bedfellows!" Indeed.

We are at another inflection point. The pressure for legislation and/or at least clarification of the current statutes is increasing exponentially, and our industry is one of the proponents this time. Things have gotten so out of kilter with increasing controls on the last-mile ISPs but no controls on "edge" providers who have far more access to personal data, and use it with abandon, that the calls for new thinking and new legislation will only increase. It may not happen in one year, complex telecommunications legislation never does. But it's coming, and we have to be an active participant in the debate.

Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill have recently released what they are calling an "Internet Bill of Rights" which I think neatly characterizes the core issues that will be vetted. It's a useful starting point. It contains ten items that everyone should have the right to:

1. Access and knowledge of all collection and uses of personal data ("PD").
2. Opt-in consent to the collection and/or sharing of PD.
3. A fair process to obtain, correct or delete PD.
4. PD must be secured, and there must be timely notice of breach or unauthorized use.
5. The ability to move PD from one network to another.
6. Access and use of the Internet without ISPs blocking, throttling, engaging in paid prioritization or otherwise unfairly favoring content, applications, services or devices.



7. No collection of data not needed for provision of the requested service absent opt-in consent.

8. Access to multiple viable, affordable internet platforms with clear and transparent pricing.

9. Not to be unfairly discriminated against or exploited based on PD.

10. PD collectors must have reasonable business practices and accountability to protect privacy.

As you can see, that's pretty far-ranging, and a lot of it could be applied to just about any industry. The local gas station, for instance, knows from your credit card who you are, how much and how regularly you buy gas, etc. Would item 10 apply to them? I'm not trying to pick a fight here, I'm pointing out that several of the 10 "rights" are very broad. They're what I would call "trade and commerce" desires on the part of individuals. They may be well grounded, but are they exclusive to telecommunications, or broadband or "Internet?" I don't think so. Maybe, in this case, the "wish list" should be broadened into a new category of "information use" law that applies to everyone. Don't know, but it's a good place to start the discussion, nevertheless.

Clearly I will be going over all these points in far more detail as this all proceeds. Obviously, point 6 encompasses the entire "Net Neutrality" debate we have been having for many years. I think with the exception of a very clear definition of "paid priority" that will be one of the easier ones! "Unfair" favoritism is one thing, Differentiated service offerings is another. But those are the types of civil discussions we should be having, and I am very hopeful that this time our industry will always be at the table and actively involved.

Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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