

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Say No: Sprint, T-Mobile Opponents Rise Up at Comment Deadline

As the formal comment period on the proposed merger of **Sprint** and **T-Mobile** came to a close Wednesday, opponents of the combination came out swinging. **The Communications Workers of America** committed to its fight against the merger earlier this week, launching a website and Twitter handle (@TMSprintFacts) to offer its take on the merger's effects. The site's home page contends that the merger would result in the loss of 30K jobs while combining two companies "with a long history of labor and employment law violations." "We do believe that no merger should go through without verifiable conditions that no jobs are lost... as well as that these companies that have a long history of fighting their workers' interests in having union representation, that they respect workers' rights," CWA research director and telecommunications policy director *Debbie Goldman* said in a press call Wednesday. In its Q3 earnings call Tuesday, T-Mobile reiterated its claims that the joining of the two companies would only lead to positive change for 5G and the creation of new jobs. "This combination will enable us to build America's best nationwide 5G network that is both broad and deep and that will ensure that America retains its global leadership in wireless and that American-based companies and entrepreneurs are at the forefront of the explosion of innovation and economic growth that 5G is going to spawn," T-Mobile CEO *John Legere* said. "The New T-Mobile will supercharge competition in wireless, broadband and beyond, which will result in lower prices for consumers and create jobs starting on day one." CWA's current analysis shows that T-Mobile and Sprint would close competing retail stores, leading to a loss of more than 25K jobs. *Carri Bennet*, Rural Wireless Association general counsel, refuted Legere's claims on the earnings call that jobs would be created, adding that he told both the Senate antitrust committee that he anticipated the closing of retail locations. CWA wasn't alone in raising its continued concerns. Representatives from **Free Press**, **Public Knowledge** and the **Rural Wireless Association** joined CWA on the press call, with many saying the implications of the deal on 5G advancement is being overestimated. "Both carriers have independently promised to deploy 5G nationwide networks, both prior to and since the announcement of their merger," *Phillip Berenbroick*, Public Knowledge senior policy counsel, said, adding that these statements mean that 5G advancement should not be seen as a merger-specific benefit. Bennet had

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significant doubt that T-Mobile would be consumer-friendly post-merger, pointing to continued issues with rural call completion. *Gaurav Laroia*, Free Press policy counsel, pointed to a potential lack of innovation post-merger as Sprint and T-Mobile would no longer be competing over customers and constantly looking to provide the best service, particularly to their low-income customers and people of color. Everyone on the call was firm in their belief that nothing would change their stance that the merger should be blocked, even if conditions were placed upon T-Mobile. "In short, the harms posed by the transaction are so substantial that conditions will be unable to remedy those harms and make the transaction serve the public interest," Berenbroick said. For some, it's not about believing that conditions could or could not remedy harms. It's about believing that those conditions would be upheld over time. "From a rural carriage perspective, we don't trust the current T-Mobile's behavior and we don't trust that they would keep to their conditions," Bennet said. "Those conditions over time would fall apart."

**Hollywood Charter:** Charter continues its preparation to launch original content with the hire of *Julia Franz* as head of development and production for Spectrum Originals. In the newly created role, Franz will oversee the upcoming slate of original series available first to Spectrum customers. She comes over from **Platform One Media** and **STX Entertainment**, and previously spent 15 years at **The Walt Disney Company**. The MSO tapped Katherine Pope as head of original content in January.

**C-Band Harm:** The **ACA** issued a statement today warning the **FCC** that missteps in C-Band proceeding would harm millions of pay-TV customers. "The national communications regulator should proceed carefully in light of what is at stake: Disrupting video content to millions of Americans, especially in rural areas, and harming thousands of small businesses in the process," the statement reads. The ACA also filed comments with the FCC on Monday in connection with proposals related to alternative uses of the C-Band, stating that a spectrum reallocation, if compounded by a reduction in interference protection, could result in dramatic shortages of backhaul capacity. "Diminution of satellite operations across the C-Band would have a hugely disruptive impact on the video programming distribution industry, and ACA members in particular, that rely in many cases exclusively on the C-Band to deliver programming content to their customers, as many are concentrated in rural America where fiber delivery is not available," ACA pres/CEO *Matt Polka* said.

**Constant Entertainment:** **CBS** has launched **ET Live**, a free 24/7 DTC streaming network. The service expands "Entertainment Tonight's" brand from beyond television and features live, anchored coverage of breaking news, behind-the-scenes exclusives and special coverage. Hosts include *Lauren Zima*, *Denny Directo*, *Cassie DiLaura*, *Tanner Thomason*, *Jason Carter* and *Melicia Johnson*. It is available online and on apps on **Android**, **iOS**, **Apple**

## Cablefax Industry Jobs

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**TV and Amazon Fire TV.**

**Measure Up:** Nielsen is giving more attention to the impact of social media by transforming its Social Content Ratings. The measurement will now also provide insights into how owned social strategies, including the contribution of talent, are being used to promote TV programs by launching Owned Account Performance. Nielsen claims that by adding Owned Account Performance via Social Content Ratings, it provides the first and only syndicated cross-publisher measurement of talent's contribution to the social footprint of their programs. In key insights released with the announcement, Nielsen revealed that talent accounts across all genres generated nearly 20m engagements for associated TV programs, totaling to 30% of all owned engagement for series and special programming.

**Add-Up Add-Ons:** Hulu continues to expand its Live TV options with the launch of two additional add-ons, Entertainment and Español. Entertainment will set you back \$7.99 a month and includes live network feeds of **LMN**, **FYI**, **DIY Network**, **Cooking Channel** and **CNBC Worldwide**. Español costs \$4.99 a month and offers live programming to Spanish-language news and sports nets. -- In similar news, **PS Vue** added **Tennis Channel** and **Stadium** to its Elite package, **Comet** to its Core package, and three Stadium event channels to its Sports package.

**mmWave Auctions:** The FCC on Wednesday announced the final qualified bidders for the upcoming mmWave auctions. An initial list of applicants was released earlier in the month, revealing **Cox Communications** as the only cable company planning to participate. The prevailing thought is cable will be more interested in the CBRS band. The FCC deemed 58 applications complete for its 24GHz spectrum auction. Those include Cox, **T-Mobile**, **Verizon Wireless**, **Windstream**, **AT&T** and **Frontier**. The 28GHz auction ended up with 40 approved applications.

**Horsing Around:** **Breeders' Cup** and **NBC Sports Group** announced a three-year extension of the Breeders' Cup Challenge Series. The group will continue exclusive presentation of the series across all media platforms through the 2021 season.

**Advanced Attribution:** The **Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)** released its "Advanced TV Attribution Buyer's Guide," designed to provide buyers with an overall understanding of attribution, how it works, and best practices. The four-page doc follows the previously released "OTT Video: An Overview" and "Advanced TV Targeting Guide." It walks buyers through attribution process workflow, matching exposure data to household, common challenges and more. IAB is introducing the guide to the marketplace through Q+As with **Xandr's** svp corporate strategy & business development *Mike Welch* and *Michael Lawrence*, evp, managing director of US media investment for **Amplifi-Dentsu Aegis Network**.

**Public Affairs:** **Charter** announced the winners of its second round of Spectrum Digital Education grants. The initiative is designed to support nonprofit orgs that educate the community around broadband. The company awarded 23 grants after receiving 170 applications, and it fulfills a \$1m commitment to provide digital education in Charter communities. -- **Ovation** will feature local Bronx and Brooklyn artists in PSAs as part of its "Stand For The Arts" initiative. The campaign works to raise awareness, protect access and encourage action on behalf of arts and culture.

**Programming:** **BBC America** greenlit a new punk rock thriller "The Watch." The original scripted series is based on *Terry Pratchett's* "Discworld" novels. -- The "E! People's Choice Awards" will broadcast live across **NBCU's** cable nets on Nov 11 at 9pm. The red carpet will air exclusively on **E!** starting at 7pm. -- **Freeform** is developing "Joyland," based on the *Stephen King* novel. -- Season 7 of "Vanderpump Rules" is premiering Dec 3 at 9pm on **Bravo**, followed by the series premiere of the new docuseries "Unanchored." Unanchored follows nine friends above a large catamaran for three weeks in the Bahamas. -- **SEC Network** will debut "Saturdays in the South: A History of SEC Football" over the course of eight weeks, starting September 3. The multi-part documentary will tell the story of how SEC grew to the conference it is today. -- **Netflix** renewed "Bojack Horseman" for Season 6 and "Paradise PD" for Season 2. -- **IFC** announced five new original comedies in development that it described as "slightly off." "Almost Asian" will chronicle the life of a mixed-race millennial in LA, "Annika Erotica" follows a young Colorado pastor who secretly writes erotic novels, "Art Thieves" features three misfit criminals in the art world, "Beth" will tell the story of an agoraphobic man re-entering the world and "The Middle Passage" is a satirical and political sketch comedy.

**People:** **Smithsonian Channel** promoted *Kelli Herod* to vp, post production. She previously served as director of post production. -- **ESPN** upped *Russell Wolff* to evp, gm of **ESPN+** from his role as evp and managing director of ESPN International. -- **Entravision**, a media and advertising tech company serving Latino consumers, appointed *Mark Garcia* to svp of integrated marketing solutions. Garcia previously was director of sales at **Nexstar Broadcasting**. **Pulpo Media**, a subsidiary of Entravision, appointed *Laura Willis* to vp digital sales, effective immediately. She comes over from **People en Español**, where she served as director of integrated sales.

## Think about that for a minute...

### '10G'

Commentary by Steve Effros

I don't know if we can do it, there are all sorts of trademark issues and presumably different industry concerns, but I want to join those who have already suggested that the new, ultra-fast, symmetrical service to be offered by cable broadband systems simply fly under the banner of "10G".

Yes, I know, lots of problems with that given that there are computer and WiFi standards that also use the 10G label, but wouldn't it be nice for once for the cable industry to have a clean, simple branding of our technology that also conveyed the idea that we are ahead of the pack? The telephone folks are all over "5G." Now granted, that allegedly refers to the fifth generation of their wireless technologies, but so what? Consumers don't know that, they just think it's "better" than "4G." Well, what do you think they would assume "10G" is? Answer: a whole lot better, and faster than "5G," and they'd be right!

We've always suffered from getting stuck with the names coined by the engineers. Now there's nothing wrong with engineers. Heck, some of my best friends are engineers. But they always come up with names for things like "Data Over Cable Service Interface Specifications (DOCSIS)." Sure, it's accurate, but it doesn't have the ring of something like "FiOS" (Fiber optic service). Was Verizon's delivery of digital video over fiber visibly different in any way from the HFC delivery folks were already getting? Nope. But you're never going to hear anyone consider "HFC" a sexy moniker!

So here we are at a crossroads again. New technology is moving very fast, and the cable industry is leading the way, but what is it? Well, in a recent issue of this publication you can get the flavor of what I'm con-



cerned about in just one sentence: "Remote PHY is the first push in DAA, with the next steps including Flexible MAC Architecture, Access Network Virtualization and Full Duplex (FDX) DOCSIS." Go ahead, hand that to a "consumer reporter" from USA Today and see what results!

Hey, I get it. Establishing brand names or technology shorthand that the public understands is hard. Last time we tried it was to replace "DOCSIS" with "Gigasphere!" We saw how far that went. But all the gibberish you just read about PHY, MAC and FDX DOCSIS isn't going to get much farther. So let's start thinking about how we explain this stuff to our customers now, not after each company has picked their own name, like "Gigablast" which always reminds me of the name of Transformer action-figure toys my son played with when he was 10. We can do better.

Notice, for instance, that Comcast's "X1" branding of their box and navigation system gives them a whole lot of leeway for however many "new" iterations they may come out with. It works. That's the type of thinking we have to apply as an industry to the next level of service we are going to offer. After all, it's going to be two or three or five times faster than just about anything else (forget about the fact that the consumer may not really need all that speed, we're just going to have to concede that's what they have been taught to be attracted to.) It will also have the capability of being "symmetrical." Again, not sure what the average consumer needs multi-gig upstream capacity for, but hey, we're going to be able to supply it! If we can get away with it, "10G" sounds good to me.

*Steve*

T:202-630-2099  
steve@effros.com

*(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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