

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Black Friday: Cable, vMVPDs Come Out Look to Cash in on Tech Buys

It's not just the turkey that folks are excited about as Thanksgiving approaches. Customers looking to make the switch to a new cable package or cut the cord will find some of the best deals come Black Friday. As in recent years, MVPDs are coming out swinging. **PlayStation Vue** is making a play for new subscriptions with a 50% discount on one month of its 65-channel Core plan, which is regularly priced at \$49.99/month. The offer began on Nov 16 and runs through 8am on Nov 26. Customers who have never subscribed with **Sling TV** will be able to receive a \$35 credit for the streaming service and a 30-day free trial of **Showtime** when they purchase and activate any **Roku** streaming device or Roku TV before Jan 13. Sling is working with Best Buy to expand the offer, with customers receiving 30-day free trials with select streaming devices (**Amazon Fire TV**, Roku, **Apple TV** and **NVIDIA Shield** devices) and smart TV purchases (**Samsung**, **LG**, Roku TV and **Android TV**). The Roku Ultra's price is cut in half to \$50 for those willing to prepay for three months of Sling. Sling's not the only one to integrate tech into its new customer offers. **Comcast** also is getting into the shopping frenzy, offering \$200 off select phones, including iPhone X, for Xfinity Mobile customers. While its TV and internet deals differ based on region, it's offering \$100 prepaid cards with various bundles. Those purchasing certain residential packages from **Optimum** will be able to nab a \$100 **American Express** gift card along with a **Nest** security camera. Bringing the two worlds together offers huge opportunity to those looking to build their subscriber base, as 85% of US shoppers plan to buy tech devices between Thanksgiving Day and Cyber Monday, according to the **Consumer Technology Association's** holiday outlook. Tied as the most in-demand tech devices during the week are smartphones and TVs, followed by portable bluetooth speakers. Video game consoles and laptops are tied for the third rank while streaming devices wiggled into fourth place. And although 93% of tech shoppers are looking to do some online shopping, that doesn't mean mass merchants will be swarmed any less. CTA noted that 98% are still planning on making the journey to a brick-and-mortar store. Voice technology has made the online purchase process even easier, and 42.4mln adults are preparing to rely on their voice-enabled digital assistants to make their holiday buys. This buying season, customers may not just be looking for the cheapest price. Security



Cablefax
DIGITAL & TECH AWARDS

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline: Friday, December 7, 2018

Late Deadline: Friday, December 14, 2018

Entries are now open for the annual Cablefax Digital & Tech Awards, honoring those people, shows, and networks who excel in digital content, marketing, advertising, social media, and online content.

The Tech categories recognize the outstanding products, strategy, implementation and people in broadcast, cable and digital technology.

Enter Now at www.cablefax.com/awards

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and privacy protections could have some leaving their carts empty. More than 25% of Americans are anxious that their conversations may be recorded or listened to through their smart TVs, according to a survey from **ExpressVPN**. Other products of concern include Amazon Alexa products (29%) and **Google Home** (25%).

Getting into the Game: Amazon is the latest to join the hunt for the 22 **Fox** RSNs, according to a **CNBC** report. The giant's bid includes **YES Network**, which the **New York Yankees** have also been rumored to have placed a bid on. **BTIG Research's Rich Greenfield** laid out why Amazon would enter the race back in October. "Amazon would have to continue offering YES to MVPDs/vMVPDs until current contracts expire. But assuming the Yankees and MLB were okay with it, YES could simply not renew its MVPD deals and make YES Network content exclusively available to Amazon Prime subscribers or offer it as an add-on Amazon Channel," Greenfield wrote in a blog post. "What makes that so interesting to us is that diehard fans will find/seek out the content. If you are watching YES Network nightly to watch the Yankees, you will seek it out on Amazon." Amazon's not the only one to go all-in. **Apollo Global Management, KKR, The Blackstone Group, Sinclair** and **Tegna** have also made first-round bids for the full slate. Missing from the list of bidders is Fox, but sources told **CNBC** that it may still join in the second round of bidding. The second round of bids will come by the end of the year while due diligence will begin next week. Bid amounts remain a mystery at this time.

On The Agenda: There's a little more than turkey and stuffing on the mind of **FCC** chmn **Ajit Pai**. The Commission will kick off its quadrennial review of broadcast ownership rules at its December 12 meeting, the chmn announced in his monthly blog post. "The 2018 Quadrennial Review... will begin with a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which seeks public input on the relevant rules, such as the Local Radio Ownership Rule, as well as several diversity-related proposals," Pai wrote. Also on the agenda is making even more spectrum available for use. "I'm circulating an order that would enable the Commission to move forward with an auction of the Upper 37 GHz, 39 GHz, and 47 GHz bands by the end of 2019," Pai wrote. "In combination, the Upper 37 GHz and the 39 GHz bands offer that largest amount of contiguous spectrum in the millimeter-wave bands for flexible-use wireless services—a total of 2400 megahertz—and the 47 GHz band will provide an additional 1000 megahertz of millimeter-wave spectrum for such services." Combined, these auctions will free up more spectrum than is currently used to offer terrestrial mobile broadband by all providers combined. Also up for a vote at the meeting will be the creation of a single comprehensive database with reassigned number information to cut down on robo-calls and changes to the USF aimed at making it a more "efficient, effective way of distributing funding to close

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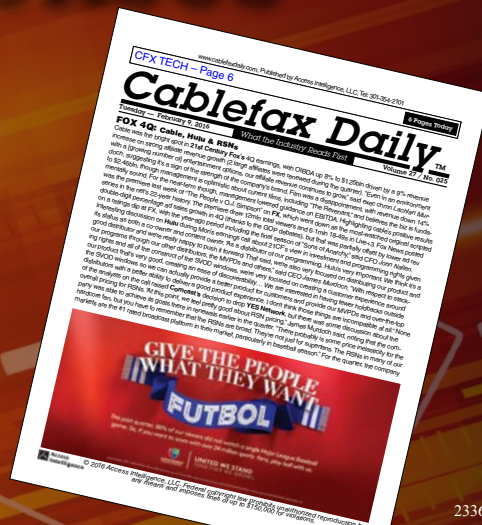
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the digital divide.”

ESN-Comcast Moves Forward: *Byron Allen's* **ESN** didn't only get a victory in its **Charter** suit. It can also move forward in its complaint against **Comcast** after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court's decision to reject the MSOs' attempts to dismiss the claim. ESN, along with the **National Assn of African American-Owned Media**, filed the complaint against Comcast in 2015 and Charter in early 2016, alleging that Comcast and Charter's refusal to enter into a carriage contract was a violation of the Civil Rights Act. "These two decisions against Comcast and Charter are very significant, unprecedented, and historic," said Byron Allen. "The lack of true economic inclusion for African Americans will end with me, and these rulings show that I am unwavering in my commitment to achieving this long overdue goal." Comcast responded with a statement of its own, saying "We respectfully disagree with the Court's decision, and are reviewing the decision and considering our options." The racial discrimination lawsuits will now proceed against the two cable giants.

Go Green: **Comcast** completed the installation of 950 ground-mounted solar panels at its Northeast division headquarters office. The parking lot-based array is set to generate 40 homes' worth of electricity annually, and allowed for the installation of two dual-port electric vehicle charging stations. This is just the latest step in an ongoing series of efforts by the division, which is also expanding its use of single-stream recycling and kitchen waste composting. The Northeast division serves customers in 14 states from Maine to Virginia/DC.

Coming Soon: We learned last week that **TV One** is launching a new channel. Now we know when. **CLEO TV** will bow Jan 19. Comcast revealed that it will launch CLEO and **Afrotainment's** AFRO to meet a public interest commitment to launch minority-owned networks. CLEO TV is a lifestyle net that targets millennial and Gen X women of color.

On the Hill: The **Senate Subcommittee on Consumer Protection** will convene an **FTC** oversight hearing on Tuesday at 2:30pm. Topics include whether the FTC should have expanded authority with respect to privacy and data security

Go Go Discovery: **HGTV**, **Food Network**, **Travel Channel**, **DIY Network** and **Cooking Channel** have all been added to **Discovery's** TV Everywhere "GO" apps on all platforms. These former Scripps nets join the ranks of 12 existing Discovery GO apps and increase the number of titles available on the platform to 45K.

Commitment Time: *Maya Rudolph* and *Natasha Lyonne* agreed to a first-look TV deal with **Amazon Studios**. The deal will see the pair develop original series under their **Animal Pictures** production banner. Rudolph is already involved with Amazon, starring in and producing original series "Forever" alongside *Fred Armisen*.

Ways to Watch: **Journy**, **Ovation's** digital travel and lifestyle channel, has arrived on **Fire TV** and **Apple TV**. Last month, the channel launched on **Android** and **iOS** devices, including iPhone, iPad, iPad Pro and iPad Mini.

Programming: **ESPN** will open its **MLB** coverage in 2019 with 14 season-opening games, beginning with an Opening Day tripleheader on March 28. The **New York Yankees** will host the **Baltimore Orioles** at 1pm, the **LA Dodgers** will welcome the **Arizona Diamondbacks** at 4pm and the defending World Series Champion **Boston Red Sox** will host the **Seattle Mariners** at 7pm. All games will also be available on the ESPN app. -- **Discovery Channel** is celebrating Thanksgiving with a six-episode marathon of "Life Story." Starting Thursday at 6pm, the block will document unique animal behaviors as they move through the stages of their lives. -- **ID** will air a two-hour special diving into the disappearance of *Susan Powell*. The show will examine her husband *Josh*, eventually leading up to the murder-suicide of her sons and Josh. "Susan Powell: An ID Murder Mystery" premieres Dec 12 at 9pm. -- **Showtime** PPV will offer customers the opportunity to purchase the blockbuster WBC Heavyweight World Championship *Deontay Wilder vs Tyson Fury*. Subs and non-subs will be able to buy it for \$74.99, and it airs 9pm on Dec 1. -- **Ovation** will air an extended 90-minute ep of the drama series "Versailles." The final episode will premiere Dec 8 at 10p and will be available on **OvationNOW** on Dec 12. -- **Travel Channel** is launching a seven-ep series focusing on explorer *Pat Spain* exploring the world trying solve mythic events and historic conundrums. "Legend Hunter" premieres Jan 8 at 10pm. -- **Golf Channel** greenlit a second season of "Driven." The four-part doc series follows the competitive journeys of college golf's top programs. -- **Science Channel** is diving into the life of legendary magician *Harry Houdini*. A four-part series "Houdini's Last Secrets" will premiere Jan 6 at 10pm.

Editor's Note: **Cablefax Daily** will take a short break to enjoy Thanksgiving with our loved ones. Your next issue will arrive Monday evening, but Cablefax.com will keep you up-to-date on any breaking news during our hiatus.