

# Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — November 27, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

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## Fan Club: Opinion-Driven Fox Nation Ready for Direct-to-Consumer Debut

When streaming service Fox Nation goes live Tuesday (11/27), Fox News execs are counting on the loyal viewers who propel the network to the top of the ratings chart week after week to be there. "It's a fan club for Fox News fans," explained Fox News' digital svp John Fiedler. The service is an OTT product, but he stressed that it's more than that, offering everything from discounts on Fox News merchandise to yet-to-be announced live events, with it all intermingled with short- and long-form on demand opinion and documentary programming. Fox Nation, which retails \$5.99/month or \$64.99/year, has a launch slate that includes a talker dubbed "Un-PC," hosted by Britt McHenry and Tyrus. Fox News talent such as Brit Hume and Laura Ingraham will appear on the service, as well as conservative social media stars Diamond & Silk. Fox Nation will also be the only service to offer on demand audio of Fox News 30 minutes following each program. Check out edited excerpts from our interview with Fiedler on the service. **What makes you confident there's a market for a subscription service like this?** We've seen some pretty solid examples in the industry. With our audience in particular, there's always been this sort of need for more. We hear from our fans all the time that they want more of our personalities. With a linear feed, there's only so many hours in a day. This gives us a way to give those super fans an unlimited amount of content to peruse and browse on their own time. **Is Fox Nation more for those who currently watch Fox News vs a service for cordcutters?** There is certainly some percentage of our users who may be cordcutters who want Fox News-like content, but by and large, we expect our audience for Fox Nation to be made up of the folks who are currently watching the linear channel. **Did you look at Glenn Beck's TheBlaze in creating the Fox Nation model?** We were more targeted on products and models that reflected a super fan experience, like WWE Network. ESPN+ to a certain extent is an interesting model. They're clearly targeting sports fans who want more than they can currently offer on TV. We have all this great content, all these great personalities—how do we put them in to a place where people can browse and watch at their leisure? **How is the presale process going?** I'm not prepared to share specific numbers, but it has exceeded our estimates. We've seen a lot of great velocity when we do on-air mentions. It's turned into a powerful megaphone for the product. **What will Fox Nation do for big events like Election Day?** We actually had Fox



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Join Cablefax for this unique mentoring experience merging the best of our popular event platforms – the executive roundtable, speed networking & awards recognition.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 PEOPLE TO WATCH HONOREES

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- **Dara Behjat**, Cisco Systems
- **Miguel Blanco**, EPIX
- **Tony Brown**, Newsy
- **Jonathan Bullock**, Hotwire
- **Cory Carpenter**, MOBITV
- **Michael Chesterfield**, The Weather Channel
- **Laura Dechant**, Philo
- **Rebecca Fabbri**, Boingo Wireless
- **Austin Gaddis**, T-Mobile Home + Entertainment
- **Brittany George**, Alkemy -X
- **Katherine Gessner**, MCTV
- **Cecelia Gordon**, Starz
- **Katherine Grandy**, Jupiter Entertainment
- **Annie Hovland**, DISH
- **Lauren Johnson**, MOBITV
- **Lora Kantorovich**, Comcast Cable
- **Travis Kohlrus**, Eagle Communications
- **Jennifer Kramer**, Crown Media Family Networks
- **Esther Lee**, IFC
- **Toby Leung**, Boingo Wireless
- **Ruben Martino**, Mediacom Communications Corporation
- **Heather McHale**, BBC AMERICA
- **Gabriela Medellín**, Corning Incorporated
- **Rachel Meskin**, GammaRay
- **Emily Moffatt**, MTV
- **Jason Nealis**, RCN Communications & Grande Communications
- **Rob Rader**, Ovation LLC
- **Cathy Reyes**, CNN en Español
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- **Rachel Skidmore**, Skybound Entertainment
- **Henrik Soerensen**, EPIX Entertainment LLC
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- **Brian Weiss**, Cooper Media Television Networks
- **Chad Winters**, Cass Cable
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Nation talent on Fox News on election night. It was a great sample of what that experience may be like. We weren't showing the live data coming in and the maps, but we were having discussions around what was happening in general. And providing some light humored analysis of results and the state of affairs. We expect people will be glued to the television, watching the live results coming in, but this product would give another channel of discussion of analysis. **So, after you've heard Florida is really close for the 100th time, you can take a break and shift to Fox Nation?** Yes, there's going to be times during election night where say we're waiting for the next polls to close. That could be 30 minutes or an hour. It's an interesting time for folks to tune in and see what's streaming on Fox Nation during those moments. **How are you doing as an organization in terms of getting TV and digital groups to collaborate?** That's been a huge focus for us over the last two years. A while ago, there were a lot of issues with the digital side talking to the TV side. We've made huge strides. One of the biggest visual examples of that is the new newsroom we built within Fox News. We have digital people sitting directly with television people. There's more cohesion than there's ever been before. **Has there been much feedback from traditional distribution partners?** It's not my area directly. I will say some of the feedback I've gotten is that traditional distribution partners want to get involved. They want to help us with this product, so we're actively working on how we can best do that. **It could be something like subscribing through your cable box, right?** Those are the types of ideas we're exploring.

**The Match Refunds:** The question Monday was who wasn't offering refunds for Friday's *Phil Mickelson-Tiger Woods* PPV "The Match." **Turner's B/R Live** allowed people to view the event online for free following technical problems that blocked some from being able to view it after paying \$19.99. It sounds like the problem was that a lot of people signed up near tee time and overwhelmed the system. Video delivery wasn't impacted. B/R Live is offering refunds as are various MVPDs, including **Comcast, DISH/Sling** and **Charter**, since the telecast was made free online. Spoiler alert: Mickelson won the \$9mln match. While early reports said **Verizon** and **Altice USA** hadn't announced plans to refund, @VerizonSupport tweeted Monday that it was actively and "automatically" refunding customers who bought the PPV event. Altice USA's **Optimum** Twitter account said Monday afternoon that the matter was "escalated for a decision," with a spokesperson telling **Cablefax** that the company is indeed crediting customers.

**Leading the DTC Charge:** *Brad Bentley* is jumping onboard the **WarnerMedia** train as gm and evp for direct-to-consumer development at WarnerMedia, according to a *Variety* report. Most recently head of marketing for **AT&T Entertainment Group** and **DirectTV**, Bentley will report directly to WarnerMedia CEO *John Stankey* and

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head the launch of the company's upcoming DTC streaming service. AT&T has targeted the launch for 4Q2019. Before coming to AT&T, Bentley spent more than 10 years at DirecTV and helped to launch DirecTV Now in 2016. Also taking on additional duties is **Turner** CTO *Jeremy Legg*, who will take over responsibilities for Turner and **HBO** technology operations. Stankey said in an internal memo that the initial changes are designed to build a DTC organization and execution capability that will be able to answer the many questions needing to be addressed prior to the service's launch, Variety reported.

***The Good Place:*** Cinedigm's family-focused **Dove Channel** is now available on **Comcast**. Customers can subscribe to or watch the channel by saying "Dove Channel" into their X1 voice remote or in the networks section of Xfinity On Demand. Dove Channel can be added to a package for \$4.99/month.

***Joining the Party:*** **Amazon Studios** continues to grow its talent pool, signing an exclusive first-look production deal with *Viola Davis* and actor/producer *Julius Tennon's JuVee Productions*. The pair will create features for the streaming service.

***CTHRA Survey:*** HR association **CTHRA** put out the call for participation in its annual compensation surveys, which looks at industry specific benchmarks, such as salaries, incentives and bonuses. Last year's surveys included 14 MSOs and 45 programmers. The research is conducted by consulting firm **The Croner Company**, which will facilitate meetings with programmers (Dec 5) and MSOs (Dec 6) at Turner's HQ in Atlanta to discuss survey design. To ensure confidentiality, results from any given company cannot be seen, and only summary information pertaining to all survey participants is available. To register to attend or request more information about CTHRA's Compensation Surveys, contact *Laurie Krashanoff* at [laurie@croner.biz](mailto:laurie@croner.biz) or 415.485.5521.

***Prepare for Kickoff:*** **Disney** and the **NFL** have worked together to expand this year's coverage of the NFL Draft. ABC will broadcast all three days of the "2019 NFL Draft" (April 25-27) with two nights of primetime coverage. The prime-time draft specials on ABC will be anchored by ESPN's "College GameDay" and will focus on the personalities and backstories of the draft picks. **ESPN** and **NFL Network** will stick with a traditional football analysis-themed production. ABC will simulcast ESPN's presentation on Day 3.

***Ratings:*** **ESPN** and **ABC** had plenty to be thankful for over the holiday weekend with their back-to-back prime-time presentations of Oklahoma at West Virginia and Notre Dame at USC for college football's rivalry week. ESPN's telecast of Oklahoma at West Virginia at 8pm on Black Friday earned a 3.4 overnight rating, marking it as the network's highest-rated Friday game since 2010. The overnight rating was a 162% increase YOY from a similar game window last season. ABC's "Saturday Night Football" airing of Notre Dame at USC at 8pm earned a 5.1 overnight rating, becoming Saturday Night Football's highest-rated Thanksgiving week game since 2012 and the highest-rated November prime-time game on an ESPN network or ABC since 2014. -- The Nov 16 episode of **Disney Channel's** "Andi Mack" at 8pm saw ratings grow 24% among Tweens 9-14 (421K/1.7 in L+3) to reach a season high. This marks the third week of growth for the show with Kids 6-11 (394K/1.6 rating vs 369K/1.5 rating). Following Andi Mack, "Coop & Cami Ask the World" also reached new highs with 16% gains in Kids 6-11 (347K/1.5 rating vs 298K/1.2 rating) and 895K total viewers in L+3.

***Programming:*** The second half of "The Walking Dead" Season Nine will return to **AMC** on Feb 10 at 9pm. The third season of "Ride with Norman Reedus," a series where The Walking Dead star explores local biker culture, will air at midnight on the same night. -- **Starz** has picked up "P-Valley" (working title) and "Hightown" from *Rebecca Cutter* ("Gotham"), *Gary Lennon* ("Power") and **Jerry Bruckheimer TV**. P-Valley will examine the lives of strip club dancers in the Mississippi Delta while Hightown takes a deep dive into the current opioid epidemic in the US. Starz owns all domestic multiplatform pay TV and SVOD rights to both series while parent company **Lionsgate** retains all international and domestic distribution and home entertainment rights. -- **Food Network** will transform another group of the "Worst Cooks in America" when the show returns on Jan 6. The nine-episode season, kicking off at 9pm, will see one chef rise to the top and win \$25K.

***People:*** *Kristin Corrigan* was upped to engagement marketing, **Disney Channels**. She will oversee the teams responsible for outreach campaigns across **Disney Channel**, **Disney Junior** and **Disney XD**, with a focus on paid media planning, social media, event activations and promotional partnerships.

***Editor's Note:*** Don't forget to submit your nominations for the **Cablefax Digital & Tech Awards** by the Dec 7 deadline (late deadline is Dec 14). Categories include best use of AI/machine learning, best tech sales/marketing campaign and Engineer of the Year.