

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Going Lo(cast): Charter-Tribune Raises Broadcast Streaming Option

When we last heard from **Locast** founder *David Goodfriend*, he said companies were interested in using the free broadcast internet streaming service in retrans disputes, but that he had detected a bit of hesitancy out of fear of encouraging cordcutting. **Charter's** not advertising Locast directly, but it has noted its availability to reporters covering the **Tribune** blackout. "It's not what I would characterize as full blown support for Locast, but it's not full blown animosity toward Locast," Goodfriend told **Cablefax** Thursday. As the blackout approached the 24-hour mark, Locast usage data was inconclusive, according to Goodfriend, but he said it's safe to say there's been some new activity in **Tribune** markets. Locast is a nonprofit that offers broadcast signals over the internet for free, including in an app available via **Roku**. It's currently available in NYC, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Denver and Philly. While services like **Aereo** were stopped by the courts, Locast has avoided challenges thanks to its designation as a nonprofit digital translator service. US Copyright law allows nonprofits to retransmit broadcasters' signals. Locast has been around for more than a year now, but it hasn't been used much in retrans blackout disputes. Charter's consumer website doesn't go as far as to link to Locast, which it does do for the **NFL** and **Yahoo Sports** apps. The MSO's website also features the emails for Tribune's top execs—from CEO *Peter Kern* to board members and regional station management. Social media is full of people taking aim at both companies. Complaints included missing the premiere of **Fox's** "The Masked Singer" to the loss of favorite local news anchors. Meanwhile, **Verizon's** blackout with **TEGNA** ended Thursday, with the two announcing a multi-year deal that returned **WUSA** (DC), **WVEC** (Norfolk) and **WGRZ** (Buffalo) to Fios. Earlier in the day, Fios customers were given the option online to request a one-time \$5.99 "appreciation discount" as a credit to their accounts. The **TDS-Nexstar** blackout continued at our deadline, with the broadcaster already warning viewers that they could miss the Super Bowl if a deal isn't reached. Sometimes, lawmakers get involved or make statements during blackouts. But with a partial government shutdown underway, a broadcast shutdown is likely not top of mind. "I hope lots of people use Locast, but I do not think Locast can help solve the government shutdown," Goodfriend quipped. And so we wait...

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Full House: Just in time for the government shutdown to close most of the **FCC**, the agency has a full set of five commissioners. Late Wednesday, the Senate confirmed *Geoffrey Starks* to the Democratic seat previously held by *Mignon Clyburn*. His term runs through June 2022. The Senate also approved an additional term for Republican commish *Brendan Carr* that runs through December 2023. Starks has been waiting for confirmation since he was approved in June by the **Senate Commerce** committee. “The agreement to pair and confirm these nominees finally gives us a full FCC to decide important questions about spectrum management, the deployment of broadband to underserved communities, and building next generation wireless networks,” said Sen Commerce chmn *John Thune* (R-SD). Starks should be seated for the FCC’s January open meeting, which includes a report and order that establishes a schedule to end Connect America Fund Phase I support in price cap areas where winning bidders in the CAF Phase II auction will begin receiving support as well as in some other instances. Additional items on the January agenda include a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking aimed at implementing anti-spoofing provisions, including extending the FCC’s current Truth in Caller ID rules to include covered communications originating from outside the US. The FCC has noted that should the current lapse in funding end before Jan 9, additional items may be added to the tentative agenda. The agenda was released earlier than normal because of the shutdown. The agency suspended most operations at mid-day Thursday. Starks most recently served as assistant chief of the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau. And like chmn *Ajit Pai*, he’s from Kansas. During Starks’ June Senate Commerce nomination hearing, he pointed to bridging the digital divide as a key concern and expressed his support of the now defunct 2015 FCC order that classified broadband as a Title II service.

DISH Upgrade: **MoffettNathanson** upgraded **DISH** to “neutral” from “sell,” declaring that downside scenarios are priced into the stock. It lost 48% of its value in 2018. “Yes, there is still a great deal of downside risk if DISH Network doesn’t sell its spectrum. But there is now also upside risk if they do,” the analysts said, keeping DISH’s price target at \$29. Shares closed Thursday up 2% at \$26.42.

New Congress: With Democrats taking control of the House Thursday, new **Commerce** chmn *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ) released the topics for the committee’s first three hearings to take place this month. The communications/broadband sector is off the hook for now, with the committee to first tackle climate change, the Affordable Care Act and the separating of migrant families at the US/Mexico border.

Gracenote Discovers: **Nielsen’s** company **Gracenote** is launching a metadata solution to drive next-gen

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video search and discovery. Gracenote Video Descriptors, the first of the company's upcoming Advanced Discovery products, will enable pay TV providers, OTT services and connected device manufactures to have deeper user engagement and loyalty. The company says its dataset goes beyond traditional genres of content, including descriptors such as mood, theme, scenario and characters.

Blockgraph Launch: Comcast Cable Advertising launched the next phase of Blockgraph, and industry initiative intended to create a secure way to use data and share information. Comcast is also working with **Viacom** and **Spectrum Reach** in a collaborative effort to facilitate privacy in addressable advertising. The Blockgraph platform runs on a blockchain-enabled software allowing TV and media companies to control, connect and safely activate their data at-scale.

Arris Goes Mesh: Arris unveiled the SURFboard mAX Pro Mesh WiFi System and Router, which should be available in the first half of the year. The tech will be on display at **CES** next week. With WiFi 6 technology, Arris said the systems offers 400% faster speeds and 4x the range of Wi-Fi 5 (802.11ac).

Say Cheese: Cheddar partnered with **MightyHive** for its programming advertising services. MightyHive will work to extend the reach and impact of certain client campaigns, and implement and leverage Google Analytics 360 for performance tracking.

Power Support: The **FCC's** Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau is seeking info to help identify actions the agency, communications providers and power companies can take to encourage and increase coordination before, during and after an emergency disaster. Among other things, commenters are asked to relate experiences regarding which communications systems, including cable, broadcast, satellite, wireless and wire-line, were impacted by the loss of power leading up, during and after disasters. Comments are due Feb 2.

Programming: NBC Sports Chicago and the **White Sox, Bulls** and **Blackhawks** announced a multi-year media rights deal giving the RSN exclusive local media rights. It begins with the 2019-20 seasons. The deal doesn't include the Cubs, with the MLB team expected to launch their on media network. Previously, all four teams had a deal with the network that was struck in 2004. -- **Travel Channel** is rebooting iconic show "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" 100 years after *Robert L. Ripley* launched the brand. Actor *Bruce Campbell* will host 10 one-hour episodes showcasing real stories when it bows this summer. -- "Puppy Bowl" is returning to **Animal Planet** for its 15th year on Feb 3 at 3pm. Puppy Bowl XV will feature 93 puppies from 51 shelters in over 20 states and Costa Rica. In past years, 100% of participating animals have been adopted. -- **Fox Business Network** signed journalist *Susan Li* as a business correspondent. Li previously served as co-anchor of **CNBC's** "Asia Squawk Box" and "Worldwide Exchange." -- **YES Network's** original docuseries "Homegrown: The Bridge to Brooklyn" premieres Saturday at 9pm. The show dives into the behind-the-scenes of the **Brooklyn Nets'** affiliate **Long Island Nets**. -- "Killing Eve" will return to **BBC America** for Season 2 on April 7 at 8pm. -- The new season of "Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings" will premiere on **Discovery** on Jan 14 at 9pm.

Public Affairs: Freeform teamed up with the scholarship app **Scholly** for a student loan payoff of up to \$125K for current students and graduates ahead of the Season 2 premiere of "grown-ish" Wednesday at 8pm. First round submissions are currently open on the Scholly app and website, and winners will be announced at the 2019 Freeform Summit.

People: SeaChange International appointed *Yossi Aloni* as its svp and CCO. He comes over from **AT-EME**, where he served as chief of corporate operations. -- *Patrick Halley* joined **USTelecom** as svp of advocacy and regulatory affairs. He previously served as a partner at communications law firm **Wilkinson Barker Knauer LLP**. -- Congresswoman *Anna Eshoo* (D-CA) tapped *Asad Ramzanali* as its senior technology policy advisor. He previously served as a legislative fellow for Sen *Brian Schatz* (D-HI). -- Just two days after **Activision Blizzard** fired *Spencer Neumann* as its CFO, **Netflix** announced it snapped him up as its new CFO. Neumann had been CFO at Activision Blizzard since May 2017, and previously served as the CFO and evp of Global Guest Experience of **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts**. According to *Reuters*, Netflix poached Neumann from Activision Blizzard. On Monday, Activision said in its regulatory filing it was planning to terminate Neumann "for cause unrelated to the company's financial reporting or disclosure controls and procedures." Neumann replaces *David Wells*, who stepped down after serving as CFO since 2010.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Stay Golden...

The **Hollywood Foreign Press Association**, an international organization of mystery that wields enormous power, will once again host the Golden Globes Sunday—and it will be yet another night of Hollywood frivolity, nail biting and heavy drinking. It's all part of the awards machine that helps actors, writers and directors score bigger paychecks as studios reap the benefits in ratings or box office receipts. Of course, a Globe nomination or win not only pumps more money into the industry's coffers; it also ensures that certain stars, shows and movies stay top of mind among entertainment consumers and critics—not to mention voting members of the Motion Picture and TV Academies that control the Emmys and Oscars, respectively. For entertainment publicists, the Golden Globes is huge. Cold pitching more than 6,000 Oscar voters or a whopping 24K-plus Emmy voters is hard enough when starting from scratch. But the blessing of the HFPA's 90 members can make a huge difference when those Oscar and Emmy voters must decide which of the 300 screeners that landed in their mailboxes actually make it to their DVD players (yes, most screeners are still good old-fashioned DVDs) or get their votes. The Globes are like a hit of adrenaline right before the race begins—and sometimes you only need a few HFPA members on your side to get that nom. Of course, that doesn't mean it's easy. The targeted and personalized schmoozing that goes on during the Globes nomination period is beyond anything you could imagine. And even if the tiny voting pool tends to result in a few head-scratching noms and wins every year, the night can bring attention to some pretty incredible stories and performances. Who isn't rooting for "Roma," the kind of film that may not have received funding if not for **Netflix's** willingness to take risks that most other studios long ago abandoned? The Globes have become the first major taste filter in a long awards season. And in a town that values perception above all else, they're bound to stay Golden for many years to come. — *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "Travel Man," 10pm ET, Thursday, **Ovation**. Why does a travel series succeed or fail? Nearly all have a similar set-up: a celeb or two is whisked to a remote location, gets a grand tour and promises to show obvious tourist spots and hidden gems. In the case of this import, success comes from the charm and humor of the host, actor-comedian *Richard Ayoade*. A thespian of note in England, the 41-year-old is having way too much fun, so will viewers. In the initial ep of the four-show series, Ayoade spends a weekend in Barcelona with English actress *Kathy Burke*, whose plays the foil to the comic's shtick. With a voice reminiscent of another successful travel series host, the late *Anthony Bourdain*, Ayoade's narration is loaded with bone-dry English humor. His honesty also is hilarious. Touring Barcelona's football stadium, he pleads boredom and shocks the natives, telling them he has no desire to participate in a doctored photo with *Lionel Messi*. -- "You're the Worst," Season 5 premiere, Wednesday, 10pm, **FXX**. This opening ep of the final season illustrates some of the reasons this iconoclastic series has had such a loyal following. In this ep the casual viewer will be lost or at least penalized for not recalling details about the initial season. Sorry. -- *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (12/24/18-12/30/18)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA AA% (000)
ESPN	1.676	5,119
HALL	0.601	1,835
USA	0.411	1,255
FNC	0.407	1,243
HGTV	0.387	1,181
MSNBC	0.382	1,167
TBSC	0.358	1,094
ID	0.331	1,010
AMC	0.315	963
FRFM	0.313	957
TNT	0.287	876
HIST	0.286	874
DISC	0.286	873
A&E	0.284	868
FOOD	0.279	853
TLC	0.271	829
FX	0.264	807
LIFE	0.249	761
HMM	0.235	719
ADSM	0.221	675
TVLAND	0.221	674
NICK	0.220	672
CNN	0.211	644
NAN	0.199	608
DSNY	0.194	592
INSP	0.174	532
BRAVO	0.173	530
CRN	0.167	509
SYFY	0.163	499
NATGEO	0.145	442
NGW	0.143	437
GSN	0.142	433
PARA	0.140	426
MTV	0.139	426
WETV	0.137	419
TRAVEL	0.132	403
BET	0.131	401
DSJR	0.128	390
NKJR	0.127	389
LMN	0.126	386
COM	0.125	383

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.

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