

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Mic Check: Voice to Take Smart Homes to New Heights

2018 was a breakout year for smart home technology, and **CES 2019** is signaling that this year could very well follow in its footsteps. Whether people are speaking to their TV remotes or asking their smart speakers to play a favorite song, homes are only becoming more connected. "Smart home has been around for a long time," **Google** smart home ecosystem senior director *Michele Turner* said during a **CES** panel Tuesday. "We're moving into that early mainstream market." The research backs her up, with CTA's latest reports predicting that smart home category sales will reach 29.4mln in 2019 (+23%) and \$4.6bln (+17%). Similarly, voice-controlled smart speaker sales are expected to reach \$3.2bln in revenue (+7% YOY). The key to ensuring that growth will be transforming the experience people have with voice-integrated smart devices from one of commands to one of conversation. "When you prove you have something to say, the consumers will start to take you into different parts of their lives," said *Ed Doran*, co-founder of **Microsoft's** Cortana voice assistant. Doran predicted that the future of voice will likely include the introduction of sentiment, pose and gesture analysis so that a system can better assist a consumer. By understanding the intricacies of the voice, a TV could better understand the content a consumer is looking for or what channels are that person's favorites. Before any of that can happen, new adopters have to get the conversation started. Later in the day, *Shuvankar Roy*, **Comcast Cable's** Xfinity Home vp, said that it is vital to remember that many customers may not even know what a smart home really is. It's all about explaining the use cases they have in their own lives and how a device could change how they operate. Where there are new opportunities, old concerns continue to rear their ugly heads. 2018 also brought GDPR in Europe and a plethora of conversations regarding regulations around the use and sale of consumer data. **KB Home** sustainability vp *Jacob Atalla* said it's important to recognize the value of that data, as it could help a smart home builder better serve the individuals who are going to live in that property through simple pattern recognition. Still, Turner believes that some power must remain with the consumer if smart home tech is going to grow. "Data privacy is critical and they have to be able to say this is how much data I'm willing to share with you," Turner said, saying that there needs to be a recognition of what rooms require greater privacy within the home. "The consumer privacy piece is fundamental to us being successful in this space." -- Worth noting in the space... *Light Reading's* *Jeff Baumgartner* reported Tuesday that **Charter** is in talks with **Ring**, **Arlo** and **Nest**. That's significant

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WHERE WE'LL BE

1/8/19 CES in Vegas (Jan. 8 - 11)
1/22/19 NAPTE in Miami (Jan. 22 - 24)
1/28/19 ReelScreen Summit in New Orleans (Jan. 28 - 31)
1/29/19 TCA in Los Angeles (Jan. 29 - Feb. 13)
2/25/19 NCTC Winter Conference in Atlanta (Feb. 25 - 26)
3/8/19 SXSW Interactive in Austin (March 8-12)
3/19/19 CFX Roundtable at ACA
3/19/19 ACA Summit in DC (March 19-21)

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because Charter has been absent from the smart home/security market.

Another Retrans Blackout: DirecTV lost Independent Communications-owned Fox affiliate in Sioux Falls, SD, Monday at 6pm ET. United Communications' CBS and Fox affils in Mankato, MN, and Watertown, NY, also went down at the same time. The language on each station site is similar, beginning: "We sincerely regret that DirecTV has forced [station] off your programming package. Our family owned company has worked diligently to prevent this interruption, and our work continues to ensure the return of [station] as soon as possible. But this also requires Directv to work just as hard." KTTW's site is [here](#), and KEYC's is [here](#). Mediacom lost Independent's Sioux Falls station KTTW in October 2016, and it remains off to this day. During negotiations with Mediacom, former Nexstar exec Duane Lammers was working for Independent Comm. He has set up shop with a broadcast consulting group called Max Retrans. It wasn't clear if he's in the mix this time around.

Shapiro Speaks: Every company is, or is becoming, a tech company. That's according to CTA pres/CEO Gary Shapiro, who took to the CES stage Tuesday to kick off the first official day of the conference. "The only certainty about the future is disruption," Shapiro said. That disruption is already evident, with 8K UHD TVs dominating conversation on the show floor. Don't panic just yet if you happened to finally pick up a 4K UHD TV over the holidays. The latest CTA reports predict that 22mln (+14%) 4K units will be sold in 2019, generating \$16.4bln (+8%) in revenue. 8K is still in its infancy, with CTA predicting TVs to reach \$545mln in revenue in its first year. Keep OLED on your radar as well, with shipments set to reach 1.4mln with double digit growth through 2022.

Fox Filing: Pivotal Research put a price target on New Fox of \$47 based on incremental information that was released in a Form 10 with pro forma data for the entity that will exist pending the close of the Disney transaction. One data point from that SEC filing that the analysts consider noteworthy is that cable network affiliate fee revenue for New Fox grew by 13% in 3Q vs 21CF's domestic cable segment growth of 9%. That indicates much faster growth for Fox News, FS1 and FS2 vs the other cable nets that Disney is taking. Ad revenue growth came in at 6% for New Fox vs 7% for 21CF.

CES Round-Up: Nearly every industry has some news coming out of CES this week. Verizon and Walt Disney Studios are using the show to announce a partnership to explore 5G together, with the companies giving Variety the lowdown ahead of the official announcement. The two finalized their partnership just ahead of CES (could it have been incorporated into the recent carriage agreement for Disney nets on Fios?). Disney Studios' Jamie Voris suggested to Variety that 5G could be used for filming in remote environments as well as mobile AR/VR. -- For broadcasters, the show has

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been a chance to show the latest advancements for ATSC 3.0, the voluntary next-generation standard that could bring 4K broadcasts, targeted advertising and other interactive features. **Sinclair** subsidiary **ONE Media 3.0** and **Saankhya Labs** in collaboration with **VeriSilicon** and **Samsung Foundry** announced the launch of a multi-standard demodulator System-on-a-Chip supporting ATSC 3.0. -- **DISH** revealed plans to build the **Google** Assistant into its Hopper DVR. In the next few months, customers will be able to use the voice remote to ask the Assistant to control smart home devices, provide updates, see photos and more. -- **Verizon** and **TiVo** extended their partnership in a multi-year agreement. Verizon will have access to the latest version of TiVo's personalized content discovery platform, allowing the company to deliver personalized carousel-based user-interfaces.

Double-Digit Gains: **Hulu** said it added 8mln subscribers in 2018 and closed the fiscal year with more than 25mln subs across its SVOD and live TV plans in the US. This marks a 48% subscriber YOY increase, with the streamer expanding its on-demand library to over 85K episodes in 2018.

Advanced Advertising: **Nielsen** is launching an enhanced cross-platform campaign measurement of ad inventory, enabling it to deliver clients deep insights into de-duplicated audiences across TV and digital ads. This is the first time Nielsen will include mobile audiences within its Total Ad Ratings reporting and will expand its coverage to include OTT audiences from Digital Ad Ratings. -- Six months after merging under **AT&T**, **Turner** and AT&T's advertising business **Xandr** are working together to improve relevancy in advertising. The teams are working on four initiatives, including more relevant advertising across Turner's TV brands with AT&T's first-party set-top-box data, using Xandr's data capabilities to fuel more relevant digital advertising for Turner, expanding the reach of branded storytelling to addressable TV and proving the impact of advertising through attribution. Marketers can now access Xandr Audience Segments through Turner's digital content properties, providing a new level of first-party consumer insight. To date, Turner has already closed and executed eight campaigns using this enhanced capability across the financial, luxury, auto, and travel categories on CNN Digital.

Sky's in for Synamedia: **Sky** has taken a stake in indie video software provider **Synamedia**, joining majority shareholder **Permira funds**. Permira created the company last year after acquiring **Cisco's** service provider video software solutions business. Both Sky and **Comcast** are Synamedia (and previously Cisco) customers. Other customers include **AT&T**, **Cox**, **Disney**, **Liberty Global**, **Verizon** and **Vodafone**.

Comcast's WiFi Protection: **Comcast** continues its quest to provide peace of mind and interconnection for customers' entire home network. The MSO is rolling out a supplemental AI-powered security service that monitors, blocks and informs customers of online threats to connected devices. Xfinity xFi Advanced Security uses AI and machine learning technology to monitor and analyze WiFi traffic in the home, and will automatically block identified suspicious activity in real time. It's powered in part by a platform developed by **Cujo AI**. Protection is automatically extended to any device that is connected to the home network wirelessly or by ethernet. The service is available nationally to customers that rent an xFi Gateway for \$5.99/month (it may be part of a package in some markets).

Wi-Fi Alliance: With buzz surrounding the upcoming launch of Wi-Fi 6, **Wi-Fi Alliance** introduced Wi-Fi CERTIFIED 6 coming in the third quarter of 2019. The certification program will provide capacity, coverage and performance required by users to experience next-gen Wi-Fi

Ratings: The CFB National Championship between **Alabama** and **Clemson** Monday delivered cable's best overnight in 12 months. The game earned a 14.6 on **ESPN** despite it being the most lopsided national championship in the era's history. The underdog prevailed, however, with Clemson thumping Alabama 44-16. -- The Season 2 premiere of **Freeform's** "grown-ish" became cable's top comedy telecast since March 2018 among females 12-34, with 1.124mln total viewers tuning in. The premiere improved its Season 1 finale by 42%, according to L+3 ratings. -- **Lifetime** reached 18.8mln viewers across all linear telecasts of "Surviving R. Kelly." Live+3 data isn't even available yet. The six-parter averaged 2.1mln total viewers in premieres in L+SD. It was also the No. 1 most social primetime program across broadcast and cable for three consecutive nights (excluding sports), delivering 1.4mln interactions across **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram**.

Programming: **Insight TV's** linear channel is now available on **Samsung's** linear, live streaming service in the US. With this update, Insight will now reach 10mln Americans via smart TVs. -- "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" will host a live State of the Union episode on Jan 29 at 11pm on **Comedy Central**, immediately following *President Trump's* address. This is only the eighth time *Trevor Noah* has aired his show live, the most recent being the 2018 Midterms. -- **Fox News** signed **Bret Baier** in a new multi-year deal where he will continue as anchor and executive editor of "Special Report."

People: **Disney** continues to gear up for the Disney+ launch, this time tapping **Joe Earley** as evp, marketing and operations for the upcoming streamer. He previously served as pres of **The Jackal Group**.