

Cablefax Daily™

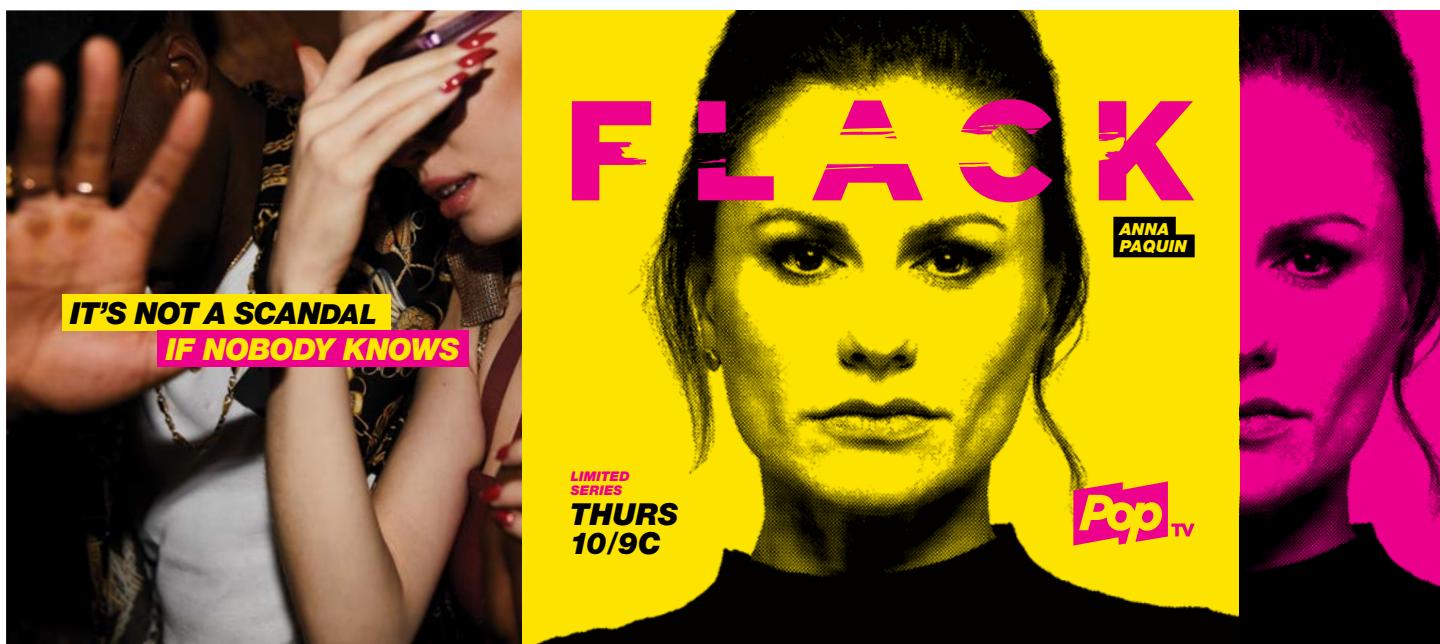
Tuesday — February 19, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 032

The Cobbler: Former Showtimer Looks to Help Consumers Filter OTT Options

It seems like there's a new OTT service launching almost every day. How's a consumer supposed to keep track of it all? While some see chaos, former **Showtime** marketer *Virginia Juliano* sees opportunity. Enter **CobbleCord**—a business she started more than three years ago that asks consumers a series of questions to make recommendations for free and subscription OTT services, as well as vMVPD services. It's an idea that came to her as she helped Showtime bring its OTT service to market. She realized many consumers will need some hand holding. "The average Joe or Mary doesn't know where to begin. We filter it down to some very simple questions and rankings of your entertainment, internet, device and price preferences," Juliano told **Cablefax**. From there, top recommendations are made as well as some other possibilities that might be outside of a consumer's price range but worth considering. Juliano knows given her operation's small size that every OTT service available isn't immediately listed on CobbleCord, but it's constantly being updated. As an OTT curator, she has a birds-eye view of the evolving space. "When I first launched CobbleCord, there were two skinny bundles available—**Sling TV** and **Sony Playstation Vue**," she said. "I think there's going to be a degree of a shakeout... However, there are a lot of these smaller niche players, and some medium ones too, that have a very sound model. They're not trying to create the amount of originals as a **Netflix** or they're keeping their backend very lean. It's really going to be interesting to see which are the winning models. I don't think there's going to be one-size-fits all, just like there isn't one-size-fits-all for a streaming combination." CobbleCord users have had a high interest in some of the expected categories—movies, sports, news and general TV programming. What Juliano found more surprising is the number of users who told CobbleCord that they're uncommitted and pretty open to hearing about anything. "It's getting quite a lot of traction, which shows me people are hungry for information and new choices. And looking for ways to discover things," she said. As for CobbleCord's business model, right now it makes money through referrals and some programmatic advertising, but Juliano has bigger plans. Currently, users have to take recommendations and sign up for services themselves. She wants those transactions to eventually happen within CobbleCord, with a revenue share model. "The consumer would have one place to go to manage all their subscriptions. Not watch—we don't want to serve video. We want to be a subscription management layer," she said, adding that she's also having



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conversations with others, including some cable operators. “The smaller cable guys—a lot of them are getting out of the video space because the margins are not making sense for them. They’re doubling down on broadband... [They’re] very interested in what we’re doing because it helps them sell broadband, it helps them with upgrades, and when they’re not selling video, it’s a great complement.”

New in Town: Funds managed by affiliates of **Apollo Global Management** have reached a deal to buy a majority interest in **Cox Media Group’s** broadcast TV stations, including its radio, newspaper and TV properties in Ohio. The stations reach a combined 31mln viewers nationwide. Cox Media Group parent company **Cox Enterprises** will maintain a minority stake and will join the Apollo Funds to form a new company to operate those stations. Apollo intends to maintain the management and operating structure of the established TV business.

Xfinity Latino: Comcast will be rejiggering its Xfinity Latino package in April. It will no longer carry **Bandamax, De Película, De Película Clásico, Telehit** and **RMS/Ritmoson**, with its carriage agreement expiring with **TuTV** on April 8. It is adding a new Spanish-language net to the package, **RCN Novelas**—designed for women with a focus on telenovelas and dramas.

Think OTT: For **CBS**, 4Q18 was the quarter of OTT. The company surpassed expectations by revealing it has reached 8mln direct-to-consumer subs through CBS All Access and **Showtime**. The milestone was reached two years ahead of schedule, leading the company to set a new target of 25mln combined domestic subs by 2022. The rest of the balance sheet was soft in comparison as CBS dealt with lower licensing revenues and higher programming costs. Operating income dropped 10% to \$647mln while revenues increased 3% to \$4.02bln. Its cable networks segment, made up of Showtime and **Smithsonian Networks**, saw revenues grow 8% to \$551mln, driven mainly by subscriber growth and a December PPV boxing event. **Barclays** said in a research note it believes CBS is attempting a valuation pivot, attempting to get investors to focus more on OTT growth rather than margin trajectory. It still has some work to do before it can pull everyone on board to the new idea. “In order for the company to get credit for this, we believe it will have to be more transparent about its legacy financials and split out the OTT segment to enable investors to value the two businesses separately,” Barclays said.

Measuring Progress: **NAMIC** and **WICT** are partnering to launch a joint workplace diversity survey. The results of the survey will be featured in the next editions of the NAMIC AIM and the WICT PAR Initiative. The duo have called on human resources consulting firm **Mercer** to conduct the survey, an effort funded by the **Walter Kaitz Foundation**. The survey

Cablefax: What’s Happening... February

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FEBRUARY

Not the Super Bowl

Yes, it’s the biggest sporting event of the year, but not everyone watches the Super Bowl. Cablefax will dive into how networks are counter-programming against the mega event—and its commercials.

Black History Month

Cablefax will honor early African American pioneers in the cable industry—profiling those who broke barriers to launch networks, joined the C-Suite and led the industry’s innovation. This report will look at trailblazers who helped create today’s industry and also examine how cable is recognizing Black History Month on TV and within their own companies.

NCTC Winter Educational Conference

We head to Atlanta to hear what key suppliers are doing to help operators stand out in a crowded marketplace.

Sports of Tomorrow

The sports arena is changing—from streaming to legal betting to advanced technologies that put fans at the center of the action. As we head into March Madness and with MLB Opening Day not far behind, we will look at how companies are taking sports coverage into bold new frontiers.

Awards

Cablefax People Awards
Entry Deadline:
February 22

will cover the current state of ethnic and gender diversity within the cable and communications industry while also benchmarking data critical to the advancement of that diversity. The survey opened on Feb 6 and will remain open until March 15. Top findings from the initiative will be presented at the NAMIC-WICT Diversity Town Hall on Sept 17 in NYC during Diversity Week.

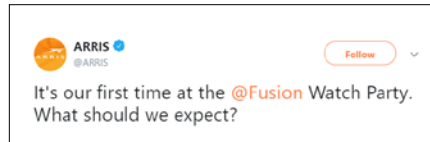
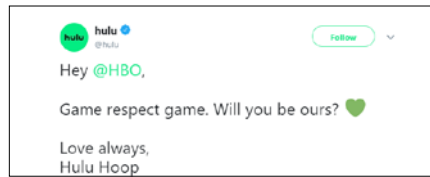
Ratings: Fox News Digital had a record-breaking January with its highest number of unique visitors, securing a multi-platform audience of 105.7mln. This marks a 16% YOY increase and the first month ever that its digital platforms surpassed 100mln uniques. In total minutes, it hit 3.8bln, a 48% YOY increase.

Community First: WOW! gave back in 2018, saying that its employees volunteered more than 4K hours in 19 markets through its WOW! In the Neighborhood program in 2018, a 30% increase over the previous year. The company also donated more than \$250K to organizations and communities through the year. More than \$40K were given to Panama City-based WOW! employees affected by Hurricane Michael while an additional \$150K was donated in the form of higher education technology grants.

People: Joel Miller, currently a staffer for Rep Brett Guthrie (R-KY), will join FCC commish Michael O’Rielly’s office on Feb 29. He’ll serve as chief of staff and media legal adviser, replacing Brooke Ericson who joined NCTA as vp, govt relations in November.

Cablefax Dashboard

Tweet Tweet



Up Ahead

- Feb 21:** MFM [Entertainment Finance Conference](#); L.A.
- Feb 25-26:** [NCTC Winter Educational Conference](#); Atlanta
- March 8-17:** [SXSW](#); Austin, TX
- March 19-21:** [ACA Summit](#); DC
- March 27:** [T. Howard Foundation Diversity Awards Dinner](#); NYC
- April 3-4:** [CableLabs European Conference 2019](#); London

Research

- > Disney beat out Apple for the first time to take the top spot in MLBM’s “Brand Intimacy 2019 Survey.”
- > Women voted for Amazon to instead take the top spot, followed by Disney and Apple, while men voted for Disney, Apple, and Chevrolet.
- > Those making \$35-100K placed Amazon as their top brand while those making \$100-200K favored Apple.
- > Adults 18-34 were more intimate with YouTube while all others chose Amazon.

(Source: [MLBM](#))

Quotable

“It’s an eerie place when there’s handfuls of people instead of a thousand. New items were not coming because most of the staff was furloughed... Some of the investigations did halt... I don’t worry. It did backlog some of our items... The staff will do great work to catch up, but there’s only so much catch-up you can do because you have a situation where all big decisions have to go through a review process.”

– **FCC commish Michael O’Rielly** on the effects of the government shutdown in an interview for **C-SPAN’s “The Communicators”** series.

Don’t miss this opportunity to get in front of small and mid-sized operators!

Find out the myriad ways Cablefax can help you maximize exposure before, during and after WEC 2019 in Atlanta Feb. 25-26. Contact Olivia Murray at omurray@accessintel.com