

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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T-Mobile/Sprint: Merger Has a Friend, FCC Pauses Review Clock

Herring Networks, operator of **One America News Network** and **AWE**, has voiced its support of the proposed \$26bln T-Mobile/Sprint merger. Meanwhile, the **FCC** on Thursday paused its voluntary 180-day clock for reviewing the deal. The agency stopped the clock on Day 122 to seek comment on additional info about network integration plans for 2019-2021 that was filed on Feb 21 and March 6 by the companies, as well as additional info on claims related to fixed wireless broadband services. "These filings contain substantial new material and reach conclusions about the effects of the transaction that were not previously in the record," the FCC said, setting March 28 as the deadline for interested parties to file comments on the additional info. Also this week, Herring Networks president *Charles Herring* met with FCC commish *Michael O'Rielly* to talk up the combo, saying he believes the deal would accelerate the provision of video services and deployment of 5G. "Mr. Herring maintains that 5G promises to be a 'game-changer' for the video and internet marketplace, benefiting consumers, independent programmers, and the national security," Herring Networks said in an ex parte at the Commission. "For these reasons, Mr. Herring stated that One America News Network and AWE support the merger and look forward to the roll-out of video and 5G by a combined T-Mobile and Sprint." Herring has been a frequent commenter at the FCC on mergers. It initially was pretty supportive of **Charter's Time Warner Cable** and **Bright House** acquisition, but later came back and said it's highly concerned about the treatment in store for independent networks post-merger. Herring supported the **AT&T-DirecTV** merger, but sued post-merger claiming the company reneged on a promise to carry its channels on DirecTV. The lawsuit went away and OANN and AWE gained carriage on DirecTV and DirecTV Now in 2017. Seems like all is well now, with the meeting including a discussion on the "historical benefits of enhanced video competition to consumers and independent programmers provided by AT&T's and Verizon's entry into the video marketplace with U-verse TV and FiOS TV," which both carry Herring Nets broadly. On Wednesday, **Fox Business** reported that Sprint and T-Mobile "have convinced White House economic and national security policy makers to OK their proposed merger" on the grounds they'd create a formidable competitor for foreign entities in the battle to build a 5G network. The report goes on to note that the FCC and DOJ still have to give their OK. Earlier in the week, the *NY Post* reported that **DOJ** staffers aren't keen on some of the deal promises,

Cablefax

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CRAIG MORRIS
CEO
Ride TV

“The retreat was great. It allowed time for me to get to know several very interesting and influential people within the cable industry and to have open dialog about issues with our business totally off the record. This exchange of viewpoints from across all sectors really offered a unique opportunity to better understand the why's and how's that everyone is considering when developing a go forward strategy for the future.”

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- Salesperson of the Year
- Engineer of the Year
- Innovator of the Year
- UX Designer of the Year

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Teams of the Year

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- R&D Team of the Year
- Tech Team of the Year

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Cablefax is looking for the next generation of cable, media and broadband leaders. Cablefax's People to Watch exhibit qualities that ensure future success, including:

- Innovative thinking and strategic curiosity
- Extraordinary work ethic, passion and drive
- Superior social and interpersonal skills
- Creative problem solving and intellectual curiosity
- Top-notch performance that inspires others

All areas of discipline are in the running, including PR/marketing, digital, social, technology, HR, finance, legal, regulatory and beyond. There are no age parameters.

BONUS: The Cable Center and Cablefax will select one outstanding People to Watch honoree to become a Cablefax IA Scholar, which includes free attendance of the May 7-June 26 Cable Center Intrapreneurship Academy—a nearly \$6,000 value.



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including a three-year cap on prices. **NewStreet Research** analysts issued a note on the reports, declaring that “they generally confirm our view that the deal is facing opposition at the staff level but there is one silver lining: the possible intervention of Attorney General Barr, though that intervention raises the litigation risk related to the states.” If there was such a state suit, the analysts believe a court would tend to favor the DOJ position. All of this makes for a nice set up for next week’s House Judiciary Antitrust subcmte hearing on the deal.

AT&T TV Trademarks: AT&T filed a few interesting trademarks on March 1—“Amp By AT&T TV,” “Liquid By AT&T TV,” “Optiv by AT&T TV” and “Pulse by AT&T TV.” While they may sound like potential monikers for the upcoming three-tiered streaming offerings from **WarnerMedia**, we’re told they are not related. It’s not clear just what they are about—all four are described as entertainment services providing content (movies, TV programs, etc) via mobile app for streaming on a variety of devices. Companies file trademarks all the time that could fit various products and service offerings so there are a variety of options available. In December, AT&T filed a similar trademark application for Verge TV, first noted by TV Answerman.

Broadband Adds: There’s no such thing as too much internet, as research from **Leichtman Research Group** found that the largest cable and telephone providers in the US (95% of the market) added about 2.4mln internet subs in 2018. This is a 15% increase from 2017, which saw a gain of 2.1mln subs. The top broadband providers now account for 98.2mln subs, with top cable companies representing 64.3mln of the subs. **Comcast** and **Charter** each added over a million broadband subs, and top telephone companies lost about 470K subs, compared to a net loss of 620K in 2017. **MoffettNathanson** analysts noted this week that broadband growth has been helped by new household formation, pegging new home formations as accounting for 44% of industry net additions in 2018.

Sparks Fly: **CTIA** certified the first device through its Internet of Things Cybersecurity Certification Program. The **HARMAN Spark**, a connected car device offered exclusively by **AT&T**, was granted the certification after testing was carried out at the Ericsson Device and Application Verification lab in Richardson, Texas. The program is designed to help device suppliers, enterprises and government organizations ensure that cellular-connected devices are secure.

Couchsurfing: It’s not all happening on mobile screens. OTT video is transitioning back into the living room, with 52% of US broadband households watching online video on a TV that is connected to the internet. That’s according to the latest report from **Parks Associates**, which also found that watching TV or movies at home is the most popular leisure activity among US broadband households, with 55% choosing it as one of their top two favorite activities.

Cablefax: What’s Happening... March

Cablefax Daily Digital Edition: www.cablefax.com/daily • Online Product Listing: www.cablefax.com/advertise

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MARCH

ACA Summit

Cablefax will cover this annual gathering in Washington, DC, where small- and medium sized operators make their voices heard in the halls of Congress and beyond.

T. Howard Foundation Diversity Awards Dinner

After two decades, the Foundation has become a key pipeline for supplying diverse and expert talent in media and entertainment. As we gear up for T. Howard’s annual fundraising dinner, we’ll look at some of the executives who began as interns and have worked their way up to vital roles within their organizations.

SXSW Conference & Interactive Festival

Cablefax will preview what’s happening in Austin at one of the coolest digital conferences around.

C-SPAN’s 40th Anniversary

If cable builds a public affairs network, will they come? Forty years after its launch, the answer is a resounding yes. This report will look at not only C-SPAN’s origins, but where it’s headed.

Awards	Events
Cablefax People Awards Final Deadline: March 1 Top Ops Nomination Deadline: March 29	ACA Roundtable March 19 DC

They're not watching for quite as long, viewing 25.7 hours of video per week in 2018 vs the 29.5 hours per week they watched back in 2016. They're not just choosing from one service's library either as 19% subscribe to either **Netflix**, **Hulu** or **Amazon Prime Video** and another OTT service, up from 13% in 2017.

Under Watch: House Commerce Dems are continuing to keep a close eye on the **FCC**. Thursday, chmn *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ) and *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) wrote to *Ajit Pai* requesting details on FCC policies regarding the retention and disposition of electronic communications. The request stems from concerns it may be in violation of the Federal Records Act and other regulations. "Since NARA has yet to approve the FCC's approach to records management, we are concerned that the FCC may not be managing its electronic records in accordance with federal law and guidance, potentially thwarting the public from an understanding of the FCC's decision-making process and how it conducts its business," the letter read. They've requested answers to their questions by April 4.

Esports Gains: Gamers, rejoice! Esports TV programming is up by 50%, according to a study from the **Video Advertising Bureau (VAB)**. The report found that 65% of esports fans are millennials (62% male) with an average age of 26. More than 11 TV nets now present esports leagues and tournaments, with more than 230 telecasts of esports programming on linear TV in 2017-2018. This included more than 300 hours of programming airing on linear TV from 2017-2018, a jump of nearly 50% from the prior season. The report also discovered that esports fans spend 4.3 hours watching TV weekly, compared to spending 2.4 hours with multiscreen esports content. There's definitely a space for advertising in the market, with 63% of fans trying products shown during esports games.

New TV Spotlight: Comcast Spotlight released research (an unusual move for the company) regarding what its calling "The New TV." The whitepaper dives into how fundamental shifts in the TV viewing experience have opened new opportunities for advertisers, and defines new TV as encompassing linear, OTT, TVE, SVOD, AVOD, IP Video and others. The ad sales arm identified five myths that it believes are holding the industry back, and announced a three-step process advertisers can use to take advantage of advanced ad capabilities. Myths include that only top networks get reach, whereas in reality the top five ad supported cable nets make up only 14% of total time spent viewing, and the average household watches an average of 17 different cable nets a month. It also found that two-thirds (66%) of all viewing occurs outside of primetime. The paper states that three steps advertisers should take in order to take advantage of New TV: translate customer knowledge into actionable data, follow that data to whichever premium content it leads, and measure the results with accountable metrics. The paper does acknowledge that change will be hard for some advertisers, but provides examples of results achieved from the new tactics.

In the Courts: Comcast tech talent supplier **OC Communications** has agreed to pay out \$7.5mln split amongst 4500 techs to settle a federal class-action lawsuit in San Francisco that alleged both Comcast and OC had violated state and federal laws, including not paying techs for the hours they had worked, overtime wages or minimum wages.

Purple Power: TBS and **TNT** are "going purple" on Friday to celebrate International Women's Day with social platforms and programming dedicated to spotlighting female creators. A curated slate will showcase programming written, directed and produced by women, including TBS and TNT original series such as "Claws" and "Full Frontal with Samantha Bee." The nets are collaborating with other brands in **WarnerMedia's** portfolio, including **CNN's** "Great Big Story," "Friends" and "Charmed," as well as **Refinery29** and TNT's joint film series "Shatterbox." **DC Comic** fans will also be treated to a special presentation of "Wonder Woman" on TBS and TNT at 8pm. -- **NBCU Telemundo** is kicking off Women's History Month with the launch of a new company-wide initiative dedicated to celebrating the achievements of women in all aspects of life and business. "Mujeres Imparables" (Unstoppable Women) will include PSAs, the launch of on-air and digital campaigns, and a speaker series at Telemundo Center featuring a conversation with *Lupita Nyong'o*. The campaign is going into 2020 and will advance a long-term commitment concentrating on civic engagement and the census as well as a program focused on the power of storytelling by women.

Programming: The Flagship Six strikes again... "Wife Swap" will head to **Paramount Network** instead of sibling **CMT**, with the reality TV reboot to debut April 4 at 9pm. -- **ESPN's** coverage of the 2019 Special Olympics World Games will begin March 14 from Abu Dhabi with three-hour special of the Opening Ceremony. Each evening beginning March 15 through March 21, *Kevin Negandhi* will anchor the coverage, airing on **ESPN2, ABC** or **ESPNEWS**. **ESPN3** will feature multiple live feeds each day throughout the Games, with more than 175 hours of live coverage.

People: Netflix CMO *Kelly Bennett* is stepping down from after seven years in the role. His successor is yet to be named, and he'll stay in the role for a transitional period until a new CMO is named. Before joining Netflix, Bennett had risen to vp interactive, world wide marketing at **Warner Bros**.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

History Finds Treasure With 'Lost Gold'

Ever wanted to be *Indiana Jones*? With **History Channel's** upcoming "Lost Gold of World War II," you can join in on the adventure. The eight-part series premieres March 19 at 10pm and follows the quest to uncover one of the last great mysteries of World War II: the alleged Japanese treasure buried in the Philippines. "Obviously linear history as we know it is just a version of events that we were taught in school," *Ari Mark*, ep of the series, told **Cablefax**. "We had heard about this legend. It's not made up that the Japanese were notorious for some of the most systematic lootings across Asia and across the world, and what they had taken was potentially in the billions or even more. Really there's no documentation as to what happened to it, so right there you already have a mystery on your hands, where did it all go?" In the premiere episode, the team travels across the world to meet "Grandpa"—a local who remembers the Japanese occupation. "We were blown away with the casualness of what he said, that 'they were here, the army came, they killed my neighbors, I gave them my caribou, and I watched as they brought crate after crate up these mountains,'" Mark said. "The mystery unravels and the story got bigger and the implications and potential CIA involvement gets bigger." He emphasized the care the production and research teams took in developing *Lost Gold*. "We were working with the locals to make sure they were comfortable that we were there," he said. "When you come into a place you need to be very mindful that you're a disruption, so we spent a lot of time building relationships with the community and government. The more that we explored the property, we realized regardless of if there's trillions of dollars of treasure here, something happened, and it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. There's actual significance to this story and there's actual implications. You don't feel like you're just a producer who's manufacturing things or feel like you're one step ahead of everyone." — *Mollie Cahillane*

Reviews: "The Case Against Adnan Syed," premiere, 9pm, Sunday, **HBO**. We're in a storytelling moment in this country. From corporate boardrooms to courts of law, never mind in more traditional storytelling venues such as nursery schools, the form is gaining tremendous stature. Networks such as **Investigation Discovery**, **MSNBC** in the wee hours and now **HLN** are making money practicing a subset of storytelling, relating legal cases and crime sagas. This has spawned podcasts such as "Serial." From there you have this new doc series, which, when it's effective, adds meat to *Serial's* coverage of *Adnan Syed*, who allegedly murdered his high school girlfriend, *Hae Min Lee*, near Baltimore 20 years ago. It's a good story, though it's fair to wonder why it was chosen for the spotlight. You'd think there are many other cases like this. The doc succeeds when it concentrates on the story of how a murder still touches families and friends 20 years later. — "Shameless," 9pm, Sunday, Season 9 finale, **Showtime**. The network sent us the season finale as a preview, not to review. So we'll spare too many details except to say this usually excellent, though sometimes depressing, series ends on an upbeat as it bids adieu to Fiona (*Emmy Rossum*). Finally, we glimpse Fiona's smile. It was worth the wait. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (02/25/19-03/03/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.782	2,390
MSNBC	0.666	2,035
USA	0.418	1,276
HGTV	0.411	1,257
HIST	0.383	1,170
DISC	0.383	1,168
ESPN	0.380	1,161
CNN	0.376	1,149
A&E	0.338	1,033
TLC	0.338	1,033
TBSC	0.335	1,025
ID	0.320	976
HALL	0.319	974
TNT	0.314	958
FOOD	0.284	869
AMC	0.251	766
NICK	0.249	762
BRAVO	0.233	711
FX	0.224	685
TVLAND	0.212	647
INSP	0.204	624
ADSM	0.201	615
NAN	0.191	582
HMM	0.174	531
DSNY	0.161	493
FRFM	0.157	480
LIFE	0.154	470
TRAVEL	0.153	466
DSJR	0.152	464
APL	0.150	458
WETV	0.146	447
MTV	0.144	441
NKJR	0.143	438
VH1	0.141	430
NATGEO	0.138	421
CRN	0.134	409
GSN	0.132	404
HBO	0.129	393
E!	0.125	382
SYFY	0.123	377
PARA	0.123	375

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

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- Cablefax Publisher Michael Grebb.



Space is selling quickly! Contact Olivia Murray at omurray@accessintel.com or 301.354.2010