

Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — March 12, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 047

Charter CEO: Rutledge Talks Home Management, Video Stickiness & CBRS

Charter's readying a home management product that will launch in Austin this fall, CEO *Tom Rutledge* revealed at a **Deutsche Bank** investor conference Monday. "My sense is that over the next few years, it will roll everywhere," the exec said. "It's not really a question of are we going to do it, but a question of getting it right, getting all the control apparatus right and security." Not a lot of details at this point on what the offering will look like, but based on Rutledge's comments, privacy is likely a major component. He believes cable is unique in that it can manage the privacy for other inputs that come into the house. "There are 300mln devices connected to our 28mln broadband customers. We have a tremendous connections business, and we have the opportunity to provide features in that connectivity business that do not exist today, that includes privacy, security, control over all the devices in your home... the ability to look through your network and see what the signal levels are throughout your dwelling," Rutledge said. *Light Reading* reported in January that Charter has been talking with companies in the smart home arena, including **Ring** and **Nest**. As for video, Rutledge said Charter's going to be where it's customers are. For programmers worried that ratings don't show their true worth, they may have a friend in Charter. "When we look at the value of content, we don't look at it from a ratings perspective. We look at it from an engagement perspective," he said. That sort of thinking bodes well for sports, which Rutledge says has a passion attached to it that's "totally disproportionate" to viewership. But he also praised ratings juggernaut **Fox News** as being high quality programming that's "sticky" with consumers, adding that religious channels also fit the bill for stickiness. Ultimately, the CEO believes the multichannel, big bundle video packages are "still going to be a primary service we deliver for television for years to come," predicting content owners are going to want to keep those products in tact because that's where the money is. He questions how easy it will be for brands to create companies outside of that model, noting that something like the Olympics would cost \$100 or more to have a la carte. Charter's willing to experiment though, this month launching its OTT Spectrum TV Essentials \$14.99/month video package. Rutledge said he thinks the company will try more on the OTT front. "If I can get 70 channels without broadcasting, and if I can use off-air antennas and integrate them into my set-top box like *Charlie Ergen* did, in some parts of some markets, I'll do that. I'm going to let our customers

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go where they go, and if the content companies don't control their streaming, my business will be more how to put it all together, how to buy it and how to manage it throughout your home and on devices," Rutledge said. "I don't know where it's going completely, but I don't think it'll be radically different over the next couple years. But the trend is ominous." On mobile, Rutledge said the economics are where the company thought they'd be. Looking ahead, he talked up the idea of using the CBRS band to handle MVNO traffic like WiFi is now. "We could deploy it very quickly," he said, comparing it to the external WiFi deployments that took place at **Cablevision** under his leadership. "We could do a similar type deployment with high-powered CBRS spectrum and in a couple years completely cover the United States with a high capacity, 5G-like product, and very inexpensively on a relative basis."

Dollars and Sense: Prepare to break out your piggy bank because **AT&T** is making some changes at **DirecTV** and with its DirecTV Now packages. It will replace the vMVPD service's current packages with a pair of new ones, while raising the price of the service by \$10/month, according to a report from **Cord Cutter News**. DirecTV Now Plus will include more than 40 channels for \$50/month, while DirecTV Now MAX will offer more than 50 channels for \$70/month. The merger with **Time Warner** is certainly part of the reasoning behind the revamp, as **HBO** will become a part of both packages. And while that's certainly attractive for folks invested in series like "Game of Thrones," DirecTV Now's packages are priced similarly to competitors **YouTubeTV** (\$40) and **Hulu Live** (\$45) while lacking **A&E**, **AMC**, **Discovery** and **Viacom**. "Those four channel groups represent a significant portion of watch time on current DirecTV Now packages," **BTIG Research** said in a research note. "It is true that you can add most of those networks back via **AT&T Watch** (which is free for certain AT&T Unlimited wireless users), but asking consumers to use two separate applications to watch what they get in one app today (DirecTV Now and AT&T Watch) sounds over-complicated and consumer-unfriendly." Customers preferring to keep their current packages are allowed to do so, but will still be subject to the price hike starting with next month's bill. As for DirecTV satellite customers, AT&T will reportedly start selling a streaming-only offering.

Tech Defense: Security continues to be top of mind for lawmakers, including that of the devices we use everyday. Bipartisan legislation was introduced Monday that would require any devices purchased by the government meet certain minimum security requirements. Sens **Mark Warner** (D-VA), **Cory Gardner** (R-CO), **Maggie Hassan** (D-NH) and **Steve Daines** (R-MT) introduced the Internet of Things Cybersecurity Improvement Act of 2019 while reps **Robin Kelly** (D-IL) and **Will Hurd** (R-TX) introduced companion legislation in the House. "The Internet of Things landscape continues to expand, with most experts expecting tens of billions of devices to be operating on our networks

Cablefax: What's Happening... April & May

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		Awards	Events
APRIL	<p>NAB Show Cablefax will preview and cover the hottest trends, panel discussions and show floor action at this massive annual gathering of the TV and broadcast industry.</p> <p>Customer Experience In a crowded marketplace, smart providers know that to stand out they must create the ultimate customer experience. This report examines what's working and what isn't when it comes to both traditional distribution and direct-to-consumer offerings.</p> <p>CFX Leaders Retreat Join us at this exclusive, off-the-record executive retreat designed to generate in-depth discussions on industry challenges and opportunities, leaving participants with actionable ideas to take back to the office.</p> <p>Cablefax: The Magazine – April Issue The Work Culture List *NEW* Cablefax: The Magazine's newest issue shines a spotlight on top employers who are making waves in areas such as veteran hiring, continuing education and diversity.</p>	<p>The FAXIES Entry Deadline: April 12 Final Deadline: April 26</p>	<p>CFX Leaders Retreat April 29-30</p>
MAY	<p>Cable Center Cable Hall of Fame & WICT Signature Luncheon Cablefax will provide the lowdown on this year's honorees and all the details surrounding these annual must-attend events.</p> <p>The Year Was 1979... It was a pivotal year for the industry that included the creation of WICT, ESPN, USA Network. Cablefax looks at what made this such a key year for the industry and how it has changed over the past four decades.</p> <p>The Gatekeepers A series of Q&As with MVPD programming and technology gatekeepers.</p>		

within the next several years,” Gardner said in a statement. “As these devices continue to transform our society and add countless new entry points into our networks, we need to make sure they are secure, particularly when they are integrated into the federal government’s network.”

Beyond Linear: Nielsen found that cable dramas benefit from digital consumption, which saw a 9% lift in viewing. The data comes from its Total Content Ratings solution, which examined how digital viewing is enhancing the viewer experience. Sitcoms and reality shows on broadcast network programming each saw an 8% increase as well. Digital audiences tend to skew younger, and Nielsen found that cable dramas saw a 22% lift in viewing among the 18-24 demo. Among all people for the episodes looked at, 64% of viewing was non-live via a DVR/VOD or digitally on a computer, mobile or connected device VOD.

Call for Data: Content & Connectivity Human Resources (**C2HR**, formerly **CTHRA**) is seeking survey participants for its annual compensation surveys. Last year, 58 employers submitted data on compensation, amenities and benefits for more than 200K incumbents. The 2019 survey results will be separated into two participant categories: content delivery providers and content developers.

Government Official: Arris-owned **Ruckus Networks** has received FIPS PUB 140-2 certification for its wireless access points, achieving compliance with the government security standard and expanding the offerings available to its federal customers.

Mad for March: **NCAA March Madness Live** will expand its video offerings for the 2019 tournament. The event will be available across 17 platforms this year, including **Android TV** and **Oculus Go** for the first time. **Turner Sports**, in partnership with **CBS** and the NCAA, will live stream all 67 games. It will also include new BracketIQ tools, with Matchup Analysis and Bracket Persona offering deeper insight into fan’s picks.

Streaming Options: **MyOutdoorTV (MOTV)**, a subscription-based streaming service, is launching on **Prime Video Channels**. The channel has more than 10K episodes from its library of programs from **Outdoor Channel**, **Sportsman Channel**, **World Fishing Network** and more, and is available for \$9.99 a month after a 7-day trial. -- **Loop Media’s** latest offering, **The Preview Channel**, is now live on **XUMO TV**. The 24-hour AVOD channel is devoted to film trailers, video game previews, cast and director interviews and behind-the-scenes footage from major films. The debut on XUMO makes it available to 30mln homes across the country.

Atlantic Broadband Says ‘Hey, Alexa’: **Atlantic Broadband** customers now can use **Amazon Alexa** voice through its **TiVo**-powered video platform. It works hand-free from anywhere in a room without the need for a remote control. In addition to pausing and rewinding content, customers can use Alexa to change channels or launch **Netflix**.

New to the Party: **Peabody** added five new members to its board of directors: *Susanne Daniels*, *Peter Roth*, *Jennifer Salke*, *Michael Schwimmer* and *Paul Telegdy*. Daniels is global head of original content at **YouTube**, Roth is pres/CCO for **Warner Bros Television Group**, Salke serves as head of **Amazon Studios**, Schwimmer is pres/CEO of **Fuse Media** and Telegdy is currently co-chmn of **NBC Entertainment**. Separate from the jurors that bestow Peabody Awards for digital media, the board of directors support the program’s current and future initiatives.

Programming: **DIY** renewed “Holmes & Holmes” for Season 3. Season 2’s ratings were 136% higher than the net’s overall prime average and grew nearly 30% over the first season. The 12-ep third season will premiere late summer 2019. -- **Hallmark** announced the 263rd installment of the Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation “Love Takes Flight” will premiere April 27 at 9pm. Hallmark Hall of Fame was first broadcast in Dec 1951 and it’s the longest-running series in the history of television. -- **Discovery** and **Science Channel** renewed “BattleBots” for Season 2, premiering this summer. -- The name is Bond, James Bond. **Paramount Network** is debuting a week-long lineup of James Bond films in its “007 Mission Marathon” programming event kicking off March 18. The schedule includes classics such as “GoldenEye,” “Casino Royale” and “Die Another Day.”

People: **Bleacher Report** tapped *Sam Toles* as its CCO. He comes over from **MGM**, where he served as svp, gm of **Vimeo’s** Entertainment Group. -- Former **FCC** commish and ex-**Frontier** evp *Kathleen Abernathy* has joined **DISH’s** board as an independent director. She was placed on the audit and executive compensation committees.

On the Bookshelf: Former **Atlantic Broadband** CEO *Dave Keefe* has published a novel, “[Rock Island: A Trilogy](#).” After Atlantic Broadband was sold to Canada’s Cogeco, Keefe stayed on as chief programming officer and Florida’s svp, gm until August 2016. -- April brings the release of “[The Presidents: Noted Historians Rank America’s Best—and Worst —Chief Executives](#)” from *Brian Lamb*, *Susan Swain* and **C-SPAN**. The book is a deeper dive into C-SPAN’s Historian Surveys of Presidential Leadership, complete with rankings and stories behind the leaders.

CFX TECH

Colorblind

Whether the first thing you do in the morning is reach for your phone, turn on a light or open your fridge to grab something to eat, technology is a part of your ritual. But even in 2019, it's fairly likely that the people behind that technology have a fairly similar look.

It's no secret that white men have traditionally been at the top of the world's most powerful tech giants. *Mark Zuckerberg* leads **Facebook**; *Steve Jobs*, *Steve Wozniak* and *Ronald Wayne* founded **Apple** and *Jeff Bezos* has been **Amazon's** CEO since 1996. And while they've been the brains behind some of today's most popular innovations, the lack of diversity across the industry has been a topic of conversation everywhere from college campuses to the meeting rooms of government agencies.

"I've walked around some Silicon Valley offices and they don't look like this room to be candid," **FCC** chmn *Ajit Pai* said at **MMTC's** Broadband and Social Justice Summit in DC last week. "To the extent that the future is one driven by algorithms, we need to make sure that those algorithms reflect the richness of American society."

The gaping holes that exist in those algorithms due to the lack of variance in those that create them was at the center of a **House Commerce** hearing last week.

"People of color, women and older Americans have all been notably absent from the tech workforce and the corresponding problem that creates has been that the technology itself reflects that lack of diversity," *Rep Jan Schakowsky* (D-IL) said in her opening remarks.

Even the most widely-used consumer technologies have these biases. Fitness trackers can have difficulties operating properly when trying to detect activity on individuals with darker skin. Voice assistants like Amazon's Alexa struggle to adapt to accents from different parts of the world. And while those instances are annoying for folks just looking to get a good workout in, the flaws in

the technology can cause some real harm when recruiting tools rate certain candidates higher for technical jobs based on their gender or when programs meant to detect crimes are consistently sending police to neighborhoods with a high proportion of people from minority groups, even if the true crime rate is low.

"At the end of the day, it is not the technology or the data sets or the algorithms, but the people who create, apply, analyze, and improve them who are responsible," **Rutgers Law School** co-dean *David Lopez* said.

It isn't all doom and gloom, **Disability:IN** pres/CEO *Jill Houghton* told the committee. Some companies are moving to close these holes as quickly as they've been opened. **Comcast's** X1 talking guide allows customers with visual disabilities to navigate its catalog of TV shows and movies. Should customers have any issues, they can contact a specially-trained support team via Comcast's Accessibility Support Center.

But how, aside from greater oversight, can the government use its weight to move the needle in a more positive direction?

"Congress should consider a review and the potential modernization of civil rights laws and apply them to certain online cases," **Brookings Institution** Center for Technology Innovation, Governance Studies fellow *Nicol Turner Lee* said. "We did it in the case of housing, we did it in the case of civil rights, we've done it in the case of equal opportunity and we should do it in the online space." – *Sara Winegardner*

Testing, Testing: Twitter is calling on its community to help it build new features through a test platform. The social network rolled out its prototype app **twtr** to the first group of participants Monday, it announced via a post on the @TwitterSupport account. The #LetsHaveA-Convo hashtag in the tweet points to the first feature to be revamped: conversations. Twtr users will help Twitter clean up the interface to make conversations easier to read and understand.

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