

Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — April 2, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 062

Planet Earth: Discovery, BBC Partnering on Natural History Streamer

They may be an ocean apart, but **Discovery** and **BBC Studios** are now closer than ever. The two announced a series of agreements that includes a 10-year, multi-million pound global content deal that includes programming for a new Discovery streaming service. That service, launching by 2020, will be the exclusive digital home of BBC franchises including “Planet Earth” and “Blue Planet” in all territories outside the UK, Ireland and Greater China, but only after their linear runs. Yep, that means the content is coming off of **Netflix**. It will be coming off the service at a time when Netflix is seemingly ramping up its own investments in the natural history genre with nature documentaries like “Our Planet.” But it would be wrong to think of this service as a direct competitor to Netflix. Instead, it’s an attempt by Discovery to build the **GOLFTV** for natural history lovers, a one-stop shop for the folks that want to “view and do,” according to Discovery CEO *David Zaslav*. “It’s really offensive in that we have almost all of the great natural history content in the world right now,” Zaslav said in an interview on **CNBC’s** “Squawk Box.” “A lot of the content that we’re getting is coming off of Netflix now and won’t be going back on in the time with us. The Netflix brand, the **HBO** brand, the **Disney** brand, they stand for entertainment. Maybe on the edges they’ll do a documentary, but this is core to what we do.” **BBC America** will continue to serve as the first-run home of natural world content from the BBC in the US for the foreseeable future, with **AMC Networks** recently extending that partnership for five more years. The net is gearing up to launch “Planet Earth III” in 2022 and “Frozen Planet II” in 2021. As for Discovery, BBC director-general *Tony Hall* described it as the largest content deal the BBC has ever done, with the two pairing up to jointly fund and develop new content across factual genres. “It will mean BBC Studios and Discovery will work together to take our content right across the globe through a new world-beating streaming service,” Hall said. Zaslav called the BBC content the natural history equivalent of the **Marvel** library, adding that some of the jointly-funded programming would include spin-offs and series to some of the BBC’s biggest franchises. While yes, it’s another streaming service begging for a dollar, this one won’t cost you an arm and a leg. Neither name nor price point is set in stone at this point, but Zaslav said it will likely come in under \$5/month. He’s not counting out the chance that some portion of it would be ad-supported, but is expecting at least most of it will be based on a subscription model.

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Cablefax

Leaders Retreat

April 29-30, 2019
Ocean Reef Club, Key Largo

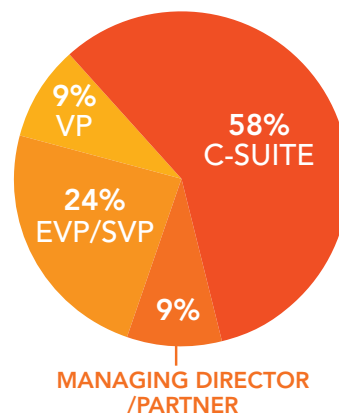
The Cablefax Leaders Retreat is a private, high-level, off-the-record event scheduled for April 29-30 at Key Largo's incredible Ocean Reef Club.

It's the one event this year where you'll be immersed in peer-to-peer conversations tackling the topics you care about most in a comfortable setting—and on a schedule that allows for networking and breaks so you come back to the office refreshed and invigorated by the future of your business.

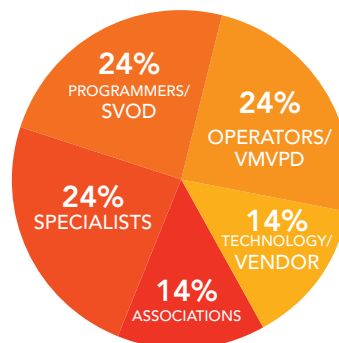
How is the Cablefax Leaders Retreat Different from Other Industry Events?

- Everyone will be a full participant in a series of interactive discussions among peers, carefully curated for the people in the room.
- Topics include technology, regulation, competition and the future of the content and broadband business—but the specific areas of focus will depend on our participants.
- The Leaders Retreat format enables us to pack more information into a curated hour-and-a-half interactive discussion than most venues could impart in an entire afternoon.
- More time for excursions and networking time, so all of our participants can pow wow individually and in smaller groups in a more unstructured environment.
- Share innovative ideas and take part in the kind of creative collaboration that can make a real difference for your company, as well as your personal career.

2018 PARTICIPANTS BY TITLE



2018 PARTICIPATING COMPANY TYPES



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TESTIMONIALS FROM 2018 PARTICIPANTS



DANE SNOWDEN
COO | NCTA

Found the Retreat to be a good and strategic use of time and look forward to the next one.

LORI LEBAS

SVP, Affiliate Partnership Development & Operations | **The Walt Disney Company / ESPN**

Beautiful venue for an important conversation on the state of our industry.

JIM GLEASON

CEO | **Vast Broadband**

The Cablefax Retreat was a great way to hear a wide variety of opinions on industry issues and challenges. I was really impressed with the people who attended as well as the topics of discussion. I definitely had good takeaways from the meeting.

DAVE SHULL

CEO | **The Weather Channels**

The Cablefax event was unique — a beautiful, low-key event where I was able to have honest, interesting conversations with peers in the industry. This is a type of event that has been sorely missing in the cable world.

BETH MAIN

SVP, Domestic Network Distribution | **HBO**

A unique gathering of contributors, within and around the industry. Presented a great opportunity to pause and look up — and made for an invigorating exchange.

PAUL GLIST

Partner | **Davis Wright Tremaine**

Cablefax has succeeded in creating a unique forum for leaders in the cable, OTT and programming industry to candidly discuss the industry's future and the technology, business, investment, marketing, programming, and political paths to take us there.

RICH FICKLE

President | **NCTC**

Great forum to help improve the collaboration in the industry, understanding differences, making it better. It provided me with several great ideas and created new relationships that will be highly valued. The venue and vibe were terrific.

MARCI RYVICKER

Managing Director | **Wolfe Research**

The 2018 CableFax retreat was an intimate and unique experience that brought a variety of constituents together to air their views as well as brainstorm on how best to tackle the various challenges and issues facing the television ecosystem. Meeting and talking to people of all levels in such an open and relaxed environment was absolutely invaluable to me. I look forward to the next retreat!

JEFF WEBER

CEO | **Zone.TV**

The Leaders Retreat was very valuable for me — a great group of senior leaders that could mix and debate in a safe, relaxed environment. Looking forward to next year!

MARK GREENBERG

President & CEO | **MSGCI**

The inaugural Cablefax Leaders Retreat was an incredible event. An amazing opportunity to meet with industry leaders to discuss the issues and opportunities for our industry. The cross-section of people from the many companies that were represented allowed for a deep conversation that reflected multiple perspectives. I was great to see that everyone was trying to find a way to build our respective businesses together and grow our industry.



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While the BBC and Discovery have a long history of working together, it was Discovery’s acquisition of **Scripps Networks Interactive** last year that opened the door for the expansive new partnership to come to fruition. Discovery inherited Scripps’s 50% stake in multi-channel broadcaster **UKTV**, a joint venture with BBC Worldwide. Another of Monday’s agreements will see Discovery and the BBC splitting UKTV’s channels. By late spring, Discovery will have taken full control of lifestyle channels **Good Food**, **Home** and **Really** while BBC Studios would acquire the remaining seven entertainment channels, the digital player **UKTV Play** and the overall brand. “Our discussions had already been underway, but it allowed us to do a much broader deal because we had the UK piece we could rationalize,” Zaslav said. As part of the UKTV deal, BBC Studios will make payments totalling £173mln to Discovery. Overall, not too shabby of a Monday for Discovery, with stocks seeing a 2.7% boost by closing time.

Growing the Family: **Cable ONE** continues to ride the M&A train, entering into a definitive agreement to buy **Fidelity Communications’** data, video and voice businesses for \$525.9mln in cash. Missouri-based Fidelity’s network passes 190K homes in Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. The acquisition of Fidelity comes less than three months after Cable ONE closed its \$357mln acquisition of **Clearwave Communications**, and that’s no surprise. Cable ONE CFO **Steve Cochran** made it clear on the company’s 4Q18 earnings call in February that it wouldn’t be pressing the brakes if it saw another chance to grow its balance sheet and create long-term value. “We look for opportunities for a strategic fit and heavily focused on business that is providing HSD service, either residentially or commercially in more real time markets,” he said. Cable ONE acquired **New Wave** for \$735mln in 2017, adding more than 214K residential PSUs.

Comcast Dropping Univision Lifestyle Nets: **Comcast** plans to drop a suite of **Univision** digital lifestyle channels, including **Bandamax** and **Telehit**, when its contract expires this month. Also impacted are **De Pelicula**, **De Pelicula Clasico** and **RMS/Ritmoson**. DISH dropped several of the channels in April of last year and did not renew them in last week’s carriage deal with Univision. That deal ended a 9-month blackout of Univision, Univision Mas and other nets that began in June 2019. Despite the loss of Comcast and DISH, five of Univision’s seven largest distribution partners still carry the suite of channels.

E&C to Get Net Neutrality Bill: **House Commerce** will markup Democrats’ bill to restore Title II net neutrality regulation on Wednesday. In addition to the “Save the Internet Act,” the committee also is slated to take up bills aimed at prescription drug expenses, lowering healthcare costs and a proposal to prevent President Trump from withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement. The fun starts at 9:30am ET.

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- Cablefax Publisher Michael Grebb.

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Comcast Goes After Feds: Comcast Business launched a new segment targeting the US Government and Public Sector organizations. The unit will be led by *Ken Folderauer*, who will serve as vp, federal government sales. Prior to joining Comcast Business he led **Oracle's** National Security Group's Communications Services Division.

ComScore Shakeup: Two top **ComScore** execs suddenly left the company, citing "irreconcilable differences" with the board. CEO *Bryan Wiener*, who took the role last April, stepped down alongside pres *Sara Hofstetter*. Wiener is being replaced by interim CEO *Dale Fuller*, who is also a board member. The company also announced three new board members: *Irwin Gottlieb*, *Joanne Bradford* and *Kathi Love*. Shares plunged Monday after the announcement, down nearly 30% to \$14.24.

Tweet Tweet: For advertisers worried that social media might distract viewers from TV ads, have no fear. Researchers from **Indiana University** and **Emory University** found that advertisers actually get a boost from "media multitasking," such as live tweeting while watching TV. In 2014, **Nielsen** found that an estimated 80% of US TV viewers simultaneously used another device while watching television, prompting concern from advertisers. The study found that ads that aired during programs that had more social TV activity also saw an increased ad responsiveness in terms of online shopping behaviors. The research analyzed 1,600 ad instances for five retailers on 83 programs.

Ratings: Even though it's April, the madness in March continues. **Turner Sports** and **CBS Sports'** to-date coverage of the 2019 **NCAA** Tournament ties for the third highest-rated in 26 years, up 8% over 2018. NCAA March Madness Live set all-time records in live streams and live hours of consumption, with both seeing increases of 30% or more throughout the Regional Finals. -- **MSNBC's** "The Rachel Maddow Show" is the No. 1 cable news program in A25-54 for 1Q, delivering the show's highest-rated quarter ever in total audience (L+SD). The program averaged 552K in that demo, vs **Fox's** 542K for *Hannity*.

Keep it Fresh: **Discovery Channel** has a new look, and that's no joke. The network launched its "The World is Ours" campaign Monday with an on-air graphics package and a global logo re-design. The tagline and the re-designed logo are meant to represent the globe continuing to be the heart of Discovery as it moves into the future.

Go Gig: **Atlantic Broadband** expanded its Gigabit speed internet this week, launching the service in its eastern Pennsylvania service area. It's the first of a number of launches planned through the end of the summer in Western Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. When it's all said and done, gigabit speeds will be available to over 90% of Atlantic's footprint.

No April Foolin': It's editors' least favorite day of the year. When their inboxes are inundated with April Fools' press releases announcing everything from a "PressPaws" remote control for dogs (**Roku**) to **T-Mobile's** Phone BoothE (a soundproof booth to use your mobile phone in without distraction). So we were a little dubious when **Philo** CEO *Andrew McCollum* announced on **Reddit** that the vMVPD would now take sign-ups via fax machine (philo.tv/fax). But while it's obviously an April Fools stunt, this is no fake news. If you can fire up your fax machine (or an app like **Turbo Fax**), you can really sign up for the \$16/month streaming service via fax. It'll take a bit longer than the 10 seconds it takes to enter your mobile number and start a free 7-day trial. But the fax free trial lasts 28 days. "We wanted to do an actual April Fools' Day stunt, but being who we are, we wanted to make sure it actually worked. And if you did it, that you got a little bonus," McCollum told us. "We like people to be pleasantly surprised by things." **Cablefax** always appreciates a good fax campaign...

Programming: **Smithsonian Channel** is premiering a one-hour doc following a team of international scientists attempting to document the first-ever image of a black hole. "Black Hole Hunters" airs April 12 at 9pm. -- **CuriosityStream** is developing "The Woodstock Bus," a doc following the search for and restoration of the psychedelic VW bus, premiering this summer in honor of the music fest's 50th anniversary.

People: *Radhika Bhat* and *Jamie Houton* have joined **NCTA**. Bhat will serve as vp, associate general counsel and joins from the firm **Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo**, where she was an associate since 2015. Houton's new role is vp, government relations. He previously served as assistant vp, external affairs at **Union Pacific Railroad**. -- **AMC Networks** upped *Josh Reader* to evp, business development. He most recently served as svp of distribution and new content partnerships. -- *Christina Kolbjornsen* joined **NBCU Telemundo** as svp, corporate and external affairs. She most recently served as svp, corporate communications at **Wells Fargo**. -- Following *Preston Padden's* recent decision to step back, the **C-Band Alliance** has named ex-**Intel** govt affairs exec and former **FCC** chief of staff *Peter Pitsch* (1987-1989) as the new head of advocacy and govt affairs.