

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — June 7, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 109

## New Rules: FCC Votes to Drop Leased Access Regulation

Leased access rules as the marketplace knew them are no more. The **FCC** adopted a report and order at its open meeting Thursday to streamline the existing leased access rules, dropping the requirement that cable operators make leased access available on a part-time basis and requiring cable operators of all sizes to respond only to bona fide requests from prospective leased access programmers. The FCC also voted to vacate the 2008 Leased Access Order, which never went into effect due to a judicial stay and disapproval from the Office of Management and Budget. “Today, our leased access regime is basically the Betamax or New Coke of FCC video regulation,” FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* said at the meeting. “It’s long past time to sync our leased access rules with the times.” For commish *Brendan Carr*, it was all about concerns with potential infringement of First Amendment rights and promoting the idea of a diversity of sources and information being delivered to the American public. “Consumers now see robust video competition not just from broadcasters, but from online streaming services like **Sling**, **Hulu** and **Amazon**, not to mention platforms like **YouTube** and **Vimeo**,” Carr said in comments during the meeting. “All of this undermines the constitutional foundation of our leased access regime. Democratic commish *Jessica Rosenworcel*, who approved in part, dissented in part, agreed that the FCC needed to consider the First Amendment in its decision, but believed the conclusions being drawn were misinterpreting the First Amendment values supporting leased access rules. “The First Amendment does more than protect the speech interests of corporations,” Rosenworcel said. “Our leased access rules are not content-based, and the purpose and effect is to promote free speech... They are not at odds with the First Amendment, but instead help effectuate its purpose for all of us.” The elimination of the rules quickly earned support from industry associations that called the existing regulatory framework a “relic of the past.” “Today’s vibrant, hyper-competitive, and increasingly internet-connected video marketplace supports an ever-growing range of pathways for content producers to reach consumers,” **NCTA - The Internet & Television Association** said in a statement. It also encouraged the Commission to continue finding ways to clear away outdated regulations that don’t make sense in today’s marketplace. “Eliminating part-time leased access—combined with extending the deadline for responding to leased access requests and allowing all cable operators to respond only to bona fide requests— will do a lot to reduce burdens,” **ACA Connects** pres/CEO *Matt Polka* said in a statement.

## Who Are The Most Influential Minorities and Powerful Women?



Cablefax is accepting nominations for the Most Powerful Women & Most Influential Minorities. It’s free to enter both of these prestigious programs!

**Two Amazing Programs—One Easy Nomination Form!**

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**Deadline: June 7**

Questions? Mary-Lou French at [mfrench@accessintel.com](mailto:mfrench@accessintel.com)

Sponsorship Opportunities: Olivia Murray at [omurray@accessintel.com](mailto:omurray@accessintel.com)

# Cablefax TECH AWARDS

# Congratulations!

## TECH TEAM OF THE YEAR



**NCTI**

### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Boingo Wireless
- The EPIX Digital Team
- MOBITY

## INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR



**George Ionita**  
OWNZONES

Entertainment Technologies

### HONORABLE MENTION

- Virginia Juliano, CobbleCord

## ENGINEER OF THE YEAR



**Alberto Campos**  
CableLabs

## RISING STAR



**Christian Nascimento**  
Comcast Business

## AI/MACHINE LEARNING

### Meet Molli, Mediacom's Virtual Assistant

#### HONORABLE MENTION

- Boingo Wireless Reimagines Broadband with Machine Learning and AI

## CLOUD SOLUTION

### Ascendon, CSG

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- IBM Aspera
- OWNZONES Entertainment Technologies
- SNAPS Software Program - CableLabs
- The Panoramix Platform - SeaChange International

## COMMERCIAL PRODUCT, SERVICE OR SOFTWARE

### Cobble Together Your Own Personalized Streaming Bundle & Get The Most From Streaming, CobbleCord

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Ascendon - CSG
- Content Value Management (CVM) - A new industry category - Mediamorph
- Advanced Media and Advertising- TiVo Corporation

## IOT PRODUCT OR SERVICE

### Creating Mass-Market Availability of Wi-Fi-based IoT Devices Aptilo Zero-touch Wi-Fi IoT Connectivity

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Apple TV App - First Network to stream 4K Ultra HD Movies - EPIX
- Ooyala
- SVOD - Canoe
- T-Commerce: Movie Tickets - BrightLine

## NEW PRODUCT AWARD

### BOLT OTA for Antenna, TiVo

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Clear Track Hallway Fiber Pathway, Corning Optical Communications
- eSTREAM 4K, Powered by Android TV
- Evolution Digital
- Ooyala
- OWNZONES Entertainment Technologies
- The Managed Service, MOBITY

## OVERALL TECH INNOVATION AWARD

### The Managed Service, MOBITY

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- eSTREAM 4K, Powered by Android TV - Evolution Digital
- OWNZONES Entertainment Technologies
- Next-Gen Platform - TiVo

## OTT/SVOD SUPPORT PRODUCT OR SERVICE

### WWE Network

## TECH PARTNERSHIP

### The Panoramix Platform SeaChange International

## VIRTUAL REALITY/AUGMENTED REALITY

### The Weather Channel Transforms Forecasting Through Immersive Mixed Reality (IMR) Storytelling

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

- NIGHTFLYERS VR - SYFY
- Screens Up - Nickelodeon

## WIRELESS/WIFI SOLUTION

### Boingo Wireless

#### HONORABLE MENTION

- Aptilo SMP Consent & Personal Data Management Solution - Aptilo Networks

Read Profiles of the Winners at [www.cablefaxtech.com](http://www.cablefaxtech.com)



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“Responding to leased access requests—even those that are bona fide—can be particularly burdensome for small providers, so allowing small providers 45 days to respond is especially appropriate.” ACA Connects also showed support for the FCC’s decision to take another look at the formula for determining leased access rates.

**Caller ID:** The war against robocalls continued Thursday with the **FCC** voting to approve two measures to designed at combating unwanted calls. The Commission first approved a declaratory ruling affirming that voice service providers may block unwanted calls as long as their customers have the opportunity to opt out of the blocking. Many providers offer blocking options now on an opt-in basis, but the ruling clarifies that they can now offer them as the default option. Also getting the thumbs up was a NPRM requiring that voice service providers implement the SHAKEN/STIR caller ID authentication framework by the end of 2019. Chmn *Ajit Pai* and commishs *Geoffrey Starks* and *Brendan Carr* approved the measures while commishs *Michael O’Rielly* and *Jessica Rosenworcel* approved in part, dissented in part. O’Rielly called for more clear language on what data was allowed to be gathered from voice service providers in the preparation of reports on the state of call blocking while Rosenworcel wanted language to be incorporated guaranteeing that customers would not be footing the bill for blocking against robocalls. **Consumer Reports** agreed that while the FCC’s orders are a good step forward to ending robocalls, they’re only the beginning of a longer battle. “We support both of these steps by the FCC today, but there is still much work to be done—including getting phone companies to implement anti-robocall technology, and ensuring that this service is provided to consumers free of charge,” Consumer Reports policy analyst *Maureen Mahoney* said in a statement. “The FCC also needs to issue strong rules clarifying the Telephone Consumer Protection Act’s coverage, to stop robocallers from attempting to evade it.” **House Commerce** chmn *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ) also found fault with the FCC ruling not ensuring consumers aren’t footing the bill to put a stop to robocalls. “The Committee will markup consumer-focused legislation soon to stop the robocall epidemic,” Pallone said in a statement.

**WarnerMedia Reportedly Shifts Streaming Strategy:** WarnerMedia is said to be ditching plans to launch a three-tiered streaming offering and will instead create a single, fat service for \$16-\$17/month. That’s according to the *WSJ*, which cited people familiar with the matter. The streaming plan would likely include **HBO**, **Cinemax** and a large helping of **Warner Bros** TV shows and movies. The company has long said it will launch a beta service later this year, and that seems to still be on track. *WSJ* said WarnerMedia is contemplating a less expensive version that includes ads. The reported price tag may sound like a lot next to the \$6.99/month bill for upcoming **Disney+**, but keep in mind that **HBO Now** retails for \$14.99 by itself. That brings us to the traditional MVPDs, with **DISH** already unhappy and not carrying

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**Content & Design Categories**  
(Formerly the Program & Trailer Awards)

- Early Bird Deadline: June 14
- Deadline: June 21



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HBO since October. The Journal suggests the company will work with distributors, possibly lowering the price of HBO in traditional pay TV package or by having MVPDs market the service and taking a revenue cut. Last fall, WarnerMedia CEO *John Stankey* suggested the company would launch a three-tiered offering. The first tier was described as an entry-level movie-focused package. The second was seen as a more premium service with original programming as well as some blockbuster movies, and the third would bundle together content from the first two tiers while also building out an extensive library of content from WarnerMedia as well as third-party partners.

**Down on Paper:** The FCC's approval of the **T-Mobile/Sprint** deal is all but official, but one commish isn't onboard with the agency's review of the deal thus far. "My colleagues have all publicly voted on a transaction that we have absolutely no paper analysis or materials in front of us," commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* said at the press conference following Thursday's FCC meeting. "I don't think it is appropriate, but is how we chose to do it. I think we should make decisions on the basis of analysis and paper and detail... not just some announcement by press release that gets a chorus from some portion of this agency. There is something odd about how this all happened and I want to say, as a procedural matter, it makes me uncomfortable." Thus far, chmn *Ajit Pai* and commish *Brendan Carr* have announced their support of the deal's approval. Commish *Michael O'Rielly* is likely to offer up the third and final vote for approval, tweeting that he is inclined to give the deal a thumbs up. Fellow Democratic commish *Geoffrey Starks*, who has not announced his support or opposition to the merger, was also present at the press conference, but offered no comment.

**Broadband Bill:** The Senate on Wednesday passed a bill aimed at providing reliable data on the economic impact of broadband and the digital economy. The bill, sponsored by Sens *Amy Klobuchar* (D-MN) and *Shelley Moore Capito* (R-WV), would require the Bureau of Economic Analysis, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Technology, to conduct a study on the impact to the US economy.

**Rocco's Soccer World:** It's been something watching **Mediacom** founder/chmn/CEO *Rocco Commisso* build out a soccer empire. On Thursday, news came that he acquired Italian soccer club **ACF Fiorentina**. No word on the financials, but reports put the deal between \$150mIn-\$200mIn. Commisso, 69, immigrated to the US at 12 years old from Marina di Gioiosa Ionica in the Province of Reggio Calabria. He earned a full scholarship to Columbia Univ. He founded Mediacom in 1995 from the basement of his house. For the first couple years after Mediacom went public in 2000, he pulled an annual salary of just \$100K, according to SEC filings (it jumped to \$800K in 2003; the company went private in 2011, with annual revenues of nearly \$2bn today). Commisso purchased the NY Cosmos soccer club in 2017. **JP Morgan Securities LLC** and **Chiomenti** acted as financial and legal advisors for Commisso on the Fiorentina deal, while **Credit Suisse** and **Bonelli Errede** served in the same capacity for sellers *Diego and Andrea Della Valle*.

**The Secret Life of Pets:** **Comcast** launched a pet filter feature on its Xfinity Camera, allowing owners to more easily check in on their pets when they're not at home. About 44% of pet owners check in on their pets at least four times a day while 65% found it to be a major hassle to search through their video clips and live feeds to find those with their pets, according to a study commissioned by Comcast and conducted by **Wakefield Research**. The filter uses AI to sort through hours of camera footage to identify only those with pets in them.

**Winds of Change:** **Noticias Telemundo** will start using the term "climate emergency" instead of "climate change" or "global warming." "The use of clear and accurate language in covering critical subjects such as the climate emergency is not merely an option for journalists; it is their duty," said *Luis Fernández*, Telemundo's evp of network news. Britain newspaper *The Guardian* and Spanish news agency **EFE** have made similar changes.

**Done and Dusted:** **Altice USA** completed its acquisition of digital news company **Cheddar** Thursday. Cheddar is joining the Altice News division, which includes **News 12 Networks** and international net **i24NEWS**. Cheddar founder/CEO *Jon Steinberg* will serve as president of Altice News, leading all three nets.

**Ratings:** **Tennis Channel** netted 260K viewers on average during the first week of live coverage of the two-week French Open. That's up 47% compared to the same period last year. *Serena Williams'* first-round win over *Vitalia Diatchenko* on May 27 averaged 446K viewers, while *Madison Keys'* victory over *Anna Blinkova* in the third round on June 1 average 448K.

**People:** *Ahil Jhingan* is joining **Discovery** as evp, corporate development, EMEA & APAC. Based in London, Jhingan will report to chief development, distribution & legal officer *Bruce Campbell*. Jhingan most recently served as group director, M&A and international development for **Sky plc**.

**Editor's Note:** Friday is the deadline for nominations for **Cablefax: The Magazine's Most Powerful Women** and **Most Influential Minorities** issues. It's free to enter, but you must do so this week!

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

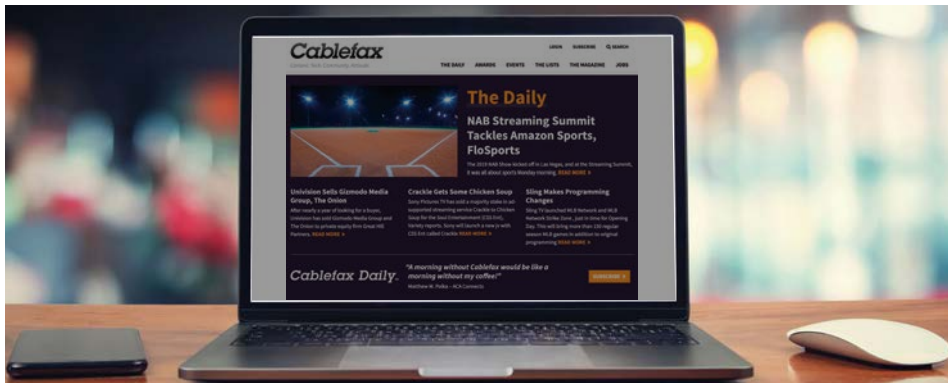
## Disney Junior's Special Delivery

Growing up, *Travis Braun* noticed that just about every cartoon had a stork delivering a baby at some point during the show. "I remember wondering even back then, 'why do only those birds get to deliver babies,'" he mused. "Why is it always these white regal storks?" So, the idea behind **Disney Junior's** latest preschool series "T.O.T.S." (premieres June 14, 9am) has been percolating in creator Braun's brain for quite some time. T.O.T.S. does have those distinctive storks, but it focuses on friends and delivery birds in-training Pip the Penguin and Freddy the Flamingo. Wait, penguins can't fly you say? The show addresses that, with Freddy having to give Pip a lift (pssst, storks don't really deliver babies either). Flamingos aren't exactly known for taking to the skies, but it turns out they can fly, but generally choose not to. Maybe there's a reason for that. "They're perfect for each other. Freddy's always getting lost. Pip is a great navigator, but can't fly," Braun explained. "They exemplify teamwork." One of the things parents and children alike can appreciate about T.O.T.S. is that it's not cramming pseudo-educational content on shapes and the alphabet down their throats. "The thing that separates Disney Junior ... to me is that the emphasis is on story," Braun said. "We can put story first and still make it educational and acceptable to a younger audience, but within the context of story comes first." The admiration is mutual with Disney already picking up T.O.T.S. for a second season before its debut. Every ep of the series features an original song with multi-award winning performer *Vanessa Williams* and Broadway star *Megan Hilty* among the voice cast. Braun hopes kids embrace the show's message that no matter how different you are, you can work together. "For me, there's no more important time than now for us to hear this message." — *Amy Maclean*

**Reviews:** "Big Little Lies," season II premiere, 9pm, Sunday, **HBO**. You're right, this dark story about five women who bond at their kids' school was supposed to be a one-season wonder, a limited series. Thing is, when you have actors like *Reese Witherspoon*, *Nicole Kidman* and *Laura Dern* as 60 percent of the cast, you almost gotta bring the story back to the screen. An octet of Emmys for what now is season I (but was classified as a limited series for Emmy purposes) also added to the pressure for a sophomore campaign. OK, so you have this great group of actors, who clearly are having way too much fun working together. What do you need to put season II over the top, at least star power-wise? How about *Meryl Streep* and her record 21 Academy Award noms? In a rare TV appearance (remember her in HBO's "Angels in America" in 2003?), Streep merely adds another outstanding performance to her brilliant body of work. Working in a frumpy wig and eyeglasses, Streep is a doozy—a passive-aggressive titan of a grandmother hunting for bear. Viewers who missed season I will need a Sherpa to understand the plot. Or devote the weekend to binging season I. There'll be other weekends, but finding Streep leading a group of all-stars? That's rare. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (5/27/19-6/2/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.733	2,239
MSNBC	0.473	1,445
HGTV	0.422	1,288
USA	0.375	1,144
HALL	0.358	1,092
NBCSN	0.344	1,051
HIST	0.344	1,049
A&E	0.342	1,046
TBSC	0.318	970
ESPN	0.313	955
DISC	0.297	907
ID	0.297	906
TLC	0.275	840
FOOD	0.270	824
TNT	0.257	786
CNN	0.240	732
NICK	0.213	651
TVLAND	0.202	617
INSP	0.198	605
BRAVO	0.195	596
NATGEO	0.194	591
AMC	0.186	567
FX	0.185	566
ADSM	0.183	559
NAN	0.165	505
APL	0.163	499
DSNY	0.160	490
WETV	0.159	486
ESPN2	0.159	486
SYFY	0.156	478
LIFE	0.151	462
HBO	0.146	446
VH1	0.141	429
GSN	0.139	425
PARA	0.139	425
MTV	0.136	415
TRAVEL	0.132	403
DSJR	0.131	400
NKJR	0.131	400
CRN	0.126	384

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



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