

Cablefax Daily™

Monday — June 10, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 110

Out West: Comcast Ruled in Violation of Washington Consumer Protection Law

Comcast was ordered to pay \$9.1m in penalties and refund nearly 50K Washington state residents after the King County Superior Court ruled that the provider violated state consumer protection law. Judge *Timothy Bradshaw* found that Comcast violated the Consumer Protection Act more than 445K times when it charged Washingtonians for its service protection plan without their consent. While the court found in Comcast's favor on some claims, the case still represents the largest trial award in a consumer protection case brought forth by a Washington attorney general. "We're pleased that the Court ruled in our favor on several of the Attorney General's key claims and awarded less than 5 percent of what he was seeking in damages," Comcast said in a statement. "The Judge recognized that any issues he did find have since been fully addressed by Comcast through the significant investments we have made in improving the customer experience and consent process, and that throughout Comcast acted in good faith. We will continue to make significant investments in how we serve our customers because it is the right thing to do and are fully committed to our customers in Washington." The court found that Comcast added a service protection plan to nearly 31K accounts without their knowledge and did not tell an additional 18K the actual cost of the plan. Comcast must refund affected customers while also paying 12% interest on the restitution. The refunds must be issued within 60 days and Comcast must report to the state on the specific details and amounts. Washington Attorney General *Bob Ferguson* originally filed the lawsuit in August 2016, accusing the company of more than 1.8m violations of the state's Consumer Protection Act. He alleged that those violations included misrepresenting the scope of Comcast's service protection plan, charging customers improper service call fees and improper credit screening practices. He also accused Comcast of violating consumer protection 1.2m times through its customer guarantee, which states: "We won't charge you for a service visit that results from a Comcast equipment or network problem." Ferguson claimed that Comcast charged thousands of customers for service calls resulting from such problems, including issues with Comcast HDMI and component cables or the installation of drop amplifiers to fix Comcast signal problems. He then amended the lawsuit in December 2017 to include recorded sales calls where customers had refused the service protection plan. The amended lawsuit alleged that Comcast signed them up for the plan anyways.

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!

www.cablefax.com/awards

Deadline: June 7

Questions? Mary-Lou French at mfrench@accessintel.com

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Awards Season: **Cablefax** held its Celebration of Leadership gala Thursday evening in NYC, honoring the Cablefax People to Watch, Top Lawyers, Tech Awards, Top Ops, and of course, the Cablefax 100. The full house featured executives from all over the country, sharing seasoned wisdom and friendly banter. Cablefax recognized several big categories throughout the evening, including Salesperson of the Year, *Jason Brown* of **Xandr**; Sales Team of the Year, **Newsmax TV**; and R&D Team of the Year, **National Geographic** Data & Insights team. The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the Cablefax 100, and all honorees in attendance were recognized on stage. *Ann Carlsen*, founder/CEO of **Carlsen Resources**, said the quickest way to get things done in negotiations is to “just ask.” **Smithsonian Network** evp & Chief Programming Officer *David Royle* gave a fitting acceptance speech on the anniversary of D-Day, calling out his family members for their service in World War II. The magazine, which includes the ranking of the Top 100, was available at the end of the evening. Check out the digital issue [here](#). -- Over on the other side of the country in LA, **CNN Worldwide** was named Global Excellence Marketing Team of the Year and **FX Networks** took home North America Marketing Team of the Year at the 2019 **Promax Awards**.

VR Viewing: **Oculus** and **Sling TV** have partnered together to launch a co-watching beta feature. Oculus Go users will be able to watch Sling TV together on their VR headsets. Users will also be able to speak to each other while watching. Sling was the first vMVPD to launch on Oculus Go and says it is also now the first vMVPD to offer a co-watching feature on the device.

Progress Measured: The **FCC** Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment will hold a meeting on June 24 at 10am at FCC headquarters. The agenda includes a report from the Digital Empowerment and Inclusion Working Group on access, adoption and use of broadband and new technologies by under-resourced communities as well as the submission of a best practices guide from the Diversity in Tech Working Group pertaining to hiring, promotion and retention of women and minorities in tech industries.

Ahead of the Premiere: **Showtime** is offering up the series premiere of drama “City On A Hill” for free ahead of its linear premiere. Starting today, viewers will be able to view the premiere online, on streaming platforms and on demand. The series is set to premiere on Showtime on June 16 at 9pm.

Now on Amazon: **EPIX** is available on **Amazon** Prime Video Channels as of Friday. Amazon Prime customers will be able to sign up for a subscription across smart TVs, Fire TV sticks, tablets, Android and iOS mobile devices for \$5.99/month.

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4K Cup: DISH customers will be able to watch the Women's World Cup live in 4K. To take advantage of the 4K quality, viewers require a Hopper 3 and a 4K television. The 4K coverage will kick off Friday at 3pm with France taking on the Korea Republic.

Power Up: Ahead of Starz's season 6 premiere of "Power," the net is hosting a one night event at Madison Square Garden in NYC on Aug 20. The event features a performance by 50 Cent, appearances by series creator Courtney A. Kemp and the cast, as well as the world premiere of Season 6. The 15-episode season premieres officially Aug 25 at 8pm.

Ratings: Nat Geo's three-night series "The Hot Zone" is now the most-watched scripted series of all time for the net, beating previous record holder "Genius: Einstein." Last week's debut averaged a .82 in L+3, and viewership was 350% higher than the previous six week's average in primetime.

Programming: Oxygen's three-part series "Murder and Justice: The Case of Martha Moxley" kicks off June 15 at 7pm. -- BBC America is celebrating the 50 year anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission with "Space Week" programming. On July 19 "Wonders of the Moon" premieres at 10pm, and on July 20 "Moon Landing Live" at 9pm re-tells the story of the landing. The net will also marathon "Doctor Who" and "Star Trek," as well as air space-themed films. -- BYUtv renewed comedy "Dwight In Shining Armor" for its third and fourth seasons.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Research

- > In 2018, marketers spent \$479mln to advertise on podcasts in the US, an uptick of 53% from \$314mln in 2017.
- > It is forecasted that US podcast marketplace revenues will double by 2021, surging to over \$1bln.
- > Total market year-over-year revenue is estimated to grow by 42% in 2019, from FY 2018's total market estimate of \$479mln.
- > Dynamically inserted ads increased from 41.7% to 48.8%.

(Source: IAB)

Up Ahead

June 12: Senate Commerce Hearing on Oversight of the FCC

June 13: Videoscape Europe; London

June 17: FCC Webinar on Network Resiliency for Small and Rural Communications Providers

June 17-19: SCTE-ISBE DOCSIS 3.1 Boot Camp; Denver

July 18-21: Comic Con; San Diego

July 28-31: The Independent Show; Chicago

Quotable

"I think we can do better than what we have done. I think what we've seen here is a whole series of mergers and acquisitions in the tech sector... I'm not sure we understood exactly what was happening in the digital marketplace. We applied antitrust principles, but I think what we're seeing unfold now are tendencies towards tipping markets to dominance, and possibly monopoly. I'm hoping the antitrust officials will wake up and use their tools officially, but I'm not sure they're enough." -- **Public Knowledge pres/CEO Gene Kimmelman** in an interview for C-SPAN's "The Communicators" series

Cablefax: What's Happening... June

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

JUNE	AWARDS	EVENTS
<p>Cablefax: The Magazine – June Issue Cablefax 100 Cablefax's annual power list, ranking the most influential executives in the industry.</p> <p>HDR/4K report A look at the latest developments around 4K and HDR, as well as how ATSC 3.0 may change the game.</p> <p>Commercial Services It's the little engine that could for cable operators. While some are established in the space, others are still in early stages. Our report will examine the different strategies for reaching enterprise customers, as well as the opportunities 5G presents for cable.</p> <p>A Celebration of Leadership Cablefax will recognize the Cablefax 100, Top Ops and the People Awards in this one-of-a-kind reception and dinner celebrating leadership and the importance of giving back through mentorship and corporate citizenship. Sponsorships available.</p>	<p>EDITORIAL: Amy Maclean Sara Winegardner Mollie Cahillane Olivia Murray Mary-Lou French</p> <p>ADVERTISING:</p> <p>AWARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amaclean@accessintel.com • swinegardner@accessintel.com • mcahillane@accessintel.com • omurray@accessintel.com • mfrench@accessintel.com 	<p>Most Influential Minorities Nomination Deadline: June 7</p> <p>Most Powerful Women Nomination Deadline: June 7</p> <p>Program Awards Entry Deadline: June 14 Final Deadline: June 21</p> <p>Cablefax's Celebration of Leadership Reception & Dinner June 6 NYC</p>