

# Cablefax Daily™

Thursday — June 27, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 123

## Fast Break: Verizon Building Out 100G Fiber in All NBA Stadiums

Good news, basketball fans. Though Canada may be dominating one of America's favorite sports, all **NBA** viewers are about to get a major upgrade. **Verizon** announced it will be building a high-speed fiber network that will connect all 29 NBA arenas (the league has 30 teams, but the LA Lakers and LA Clippers both play in the Staples Center). By the second half of 2020, the league will be able to support 1080p resolution across all future broadcasts and install 30 new cameras in each building, offering a variety of viewing angles. Each arena will be connected with two diversely routed 100G fiber circuits, increasing the network bandwidth by tenfold. Verizon's not just passing the ball to the NBA when it comes to managing the network. "Not only are we providing 100G of capacity for the NBA, we're also providing the actual equipment at the edge of the network. Our handoff to the NBA isn't the 100G service, it's the interface to the camera. We're actually managing the video solution for the NBA themselves," *Tony Recine*, svp, commercial management, told **Cablefax**. "The pros are the outcomes of what the NBA wants to achieve, and that is a very high-speed network in order to provide more flexibility and bandwidth in order to provide distribution in a way that they haven't before. When you look at the enterprise business, we have an ability to leverage a lot of the fiber that we hadn't even built in our former franchise, but now we're building out a network nationally for not only 5G but we're also providing fiber access to business and the public sector. We have an opportunity to expand our business." The fiber network will be managed using Verizon's Wavelength Services, and each arena will be connected to network hubs in Newark, NJ and Atlanta, GA. A dedicated virtual network operation center in Dulles, VA will be operated by Verizon Media during game time to monitor real-time video traffic quality and data across the network. The second fiber circuit should provide redundancy measures, meaning the game-watching experience wouldn't be interrupted with technical difficulties. "Customers like the **NFL**, the **NBA**, they continue to redefine the fan experience, I see it every year. When you look at the **NBA** particularly, they told me they're running out of gas on their old network with what they're trying to do. Providing 10 times the speed provides them the flexibility to offer a fan experience they have before," said Recine. He added that having the fiber available for the 2021 season is a huge priority for the **NBA**. Indeed, the **NBA** doesn't seem to be satisfied just with HD. In the 2018 season, the league

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broadcast several regular season games, the All-Star Game and the Western Conference Final in VR. The NBA also signed a deal with **AT&T** this year to broadcast 13 games in 4K HDR on **DirecTV**. That deal also included VR support through **WarnerMedia's Turner Sports** and **Intel**. Even though 5G has been top of mind for Verizon, fiber will continue to be the backbone of broadcasting technology moving forward. "Whether it's 5G, wireless access for the last mile, hundreds of feet, you still need fiber densification given the amount of capacity that's being generated at a local location. Whether it's a metro area, 5G home users, they've now consolidated internet users for business, as we continue to build out fiber," Recine said. "In just the cities we've announced, we're covering half the NBA locations. Fiber is a big component of our buildout, but having spectrum and the network flexibility, it'll allow us to build out networks, not only with fiber but also with the ability to very quickly and dynamically shape how we transport data across our backbone."

**DISH Targets MDU Market:** DISH is breaking into the MDU market with DISH Fiber, offering property owners a bulk service including premium managed Wi-Fi and live streaming TV with no upfront cost. DISH Fiber would offer residents high-speed internet in their units and anywhere else on the property without needing to switch to a different network. Residents in DISH Fiber communities would also receive a live streaming service powered by SMART-BOX, DISH's headend video distribution platform for commercial applications. The configuration eliminates the need for individual satellite dishes and a separate coax network for video. Customers are able to choose from any of DISH's standard programming packages, which start at \$25/month, and will also have the option of upgrading to a full DISH experience with one of the company's Hopper receivers.

**Charter Shakes Up C-Suite:** Charter CFO *Chris Winfrey* and chief product officer *Rich DiGeronimo* are expanding their areas of oversight in anticipation of some major retirement-related departures. Winfrey will now oversee Spectrum Enterprise as well as Spectrum Reach, Charter's advertising business. Current evp/pres, Spectrum Enterprise *Phil Meeks* and Spectrum Reach pres *David Kline* will report to Winfrey starting on July 1 with Meeks set to retire in January 2020. Winfrey will continue to report to Charter chmn/CEO *Tom Rutledge*. Charter's DiGeronimo is adding technology officer to his title, overseeing engineering and IT in addition to leading the company's product team starting on July 1. Charter evp, IT and engineering *Jim Blackley* will continue to report to Rutledge and assist on the transition until his planned retirement in 2020. *Cliff Hagan*, svp, shared services, customer operations, will be upped to evp, customer operations, succeeding *Kathleen Mayo*, who is retiring in August.

**Matsui Accelerating C-Band Reuse:** Rep *Doris Matsui* (D-CA) has released draft legislation that proposes the



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FCC work together with satellite operators to quickly reallocate spectrum in the C-band. The WIN 5G Act would see the Commission designate C-band satellite operators that would work to craft a transition plan for the spectrum between the frequencies of 3.7GHz and 4.2GHz. "The US needs to win the race to 5G and beyond. The WIN 5G Act will get us there," Matsui said in a statement, arguing that the legislation is "an efficient and equitable way" to facilitate the nationwide deployment of 5G. The plan would designate spectrum to be made available in the continental US and determine how current and future users would receive a comparable quality of service after the repurposing of the band. The transition will also need to ensure that the amount of spectrum proposed for repurposing is the maximum amount that can be made available. The legislation also incorporates a framework for reallocating the spectrum between 3.45GHz and 3.55GHz for commercial wireless use while creating and funding a new rural broadband deployment fund.

**SPECTRUM NOW Introduced:** A bipartisan group of leaders in the Senate have come together to introduce legislation aimed at freeing up additional midband spectrum for 5G. The Supplementing the Pipeline for Efficient Control of The Resources for Users Making New Opportunities for Wireless (SPECTRUM NOW) Act has received backing from both the Senate and the House with Sens *Roger Wicker* (R-MS) and *Brian Schatz* (D-HI) and Reps *Doris Matsui* (D-CA) and *Brett Guthrie* (R-KY) teaming up on the legislation. The bill claims that it "creates a pathway for agencies to modify their operations on federally-held spectrum to make those frequencies available for commercial wireless broadband use." It would also open the door for agencies to utilize funds from the Spectrum Relocation Fund to study how spectrum efficiency can be increased, freeing up additional spectrum for commercial use. If passed, SPECTRUM NOW would require a plan to be submitted repurposing the 3450MHz-3550MHz band of spectrum for commercial wireless use and a timeline to be created for a formal auction. "Importantly, the bill sets up a process to consider unlicensed sharing in specific federal spectrum bands that cannot be auctioned," **NCTA** - The Internet & Television Association said in a statement, arguing the approach could help ensure that our nation's spectrum resources are put to their highest and best use.

**Vivicast Signs Distribution Deal with beIN Sports:** **Vivicast Media** and **beIN Sports USA** have signed a multi-year distribution agreement to make the latter's content available to Vivicast's roster of operators in the US as well as those in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Vivicast Media will also make beIN content available for IPTV, SMATV, MMDS and DBS systems.

**Pogue Set to Keynote Cable-Tec:** Technology expert, host and author *David Pogue* is set to keynote the annual awards luncheon at this year's **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** in New Orleans. Pogue, a New York Times columnist and Emmy winner for "CBS Sunday Morning," will share his views on technology disruption at the October 2 luncheon beginning at 11:30am.

**Philo Arrives on Android, Amazon Fire:** There are a few more ways to access **Philo** with the streaming service launching an **Android** mobile app and an app for **Amazon Fire** tablets Wednesday. The service is now available via the web, Amazon Fire TV and tablets, **Apple TV**, **Roku**, iOS and Android for \$20/month.

**Refinery29 and Kate Spade Launch Pilot Season:** Media brand **Refinery29** and fashion company *Kate Spade* have teamed up to create "Pilot Season," intended to celebrate, mentor and launch a new class of female content creators. Each day this week, Refinery29 and Kate Spade will debut a new 'pilot' from a filmmaker, first available via Refinery29's **Instagram**. The videos will then roll out across screening across Refinery29 and Kate Spade's digital channels as the two brands determine which creator's 'pilot' will be selected for further development as a potential series.

**Programming: USA Networks'** "Miz & Mrs" is returning with new episodes on August 6 at 10pm, rounding out the series' first season. The show has already been renewed for a second season scheduled to air in 2020. -- **Warner-Media** has ordered two series from showrunner *Patrick Somerville* ("Maniac") for its upcoming streaming service: "Made for Love" and "Station Eleven." -- **Paramount Network** has ordered a 10-episode first season of scripted drama "Coyote." It is scheduled for a 2020 debut. -- Divorced couple *Christina Anstead* and *Tarek El Moussa* are coming back together as business partners in the upcoming 19-episode season of **HGTV's** "Flip or Flop." The season is set to premiere August 1 at 9pm.

**People:** Healthcare company **Deepak Chopra** is rolling all of its businesses into a new company under the name **Chopra Global** with former **Univision** pres/CRO *Tonia O'Connor* being named CEO of the new company. She'll also serve on the board.

# Think about that for a minute...

## Short Takes

Commentary by Steve Effros



In anticipation of a brief hiatus next week in honor of Independence Day... in other words, you won't be getting this column next week, I thought I would give you a brief look at some of the things I think you might want to "think about" as you enjoy the long holiday weekend.

I come across so many things in my reading that spark curiosity, amusement, or astonishment. This runs from our technology, to tech in general, to, of course, policy issues, politics and just general craziness. That last category applies to just about anything, especially corporate, political and consumer press releases, and efforts to explain or "pump" the latest thing. I don't Twitter and I'm not on Facebook, so at least I'm spared that non-sensical overload. Here are some of the things that have triggered my thinking lately and will likely lead to longer commentaries after the July 4 break.

As anyone who reads this column consistently knows, I'm constantly trying out new ideas for how to deal with the firehose of information, opinion, spam, and much worse that has developed because of our new technologies. What should we do about it? I've talked about antitrust changes and enforcement, speed restrictions, curation and lots of other things. But the real world always intrudes. A recent article reminded me of that when talking about trying to deal with robocalls, a somewhat analogous problem. Check out these numbers!

According to an article in the Washington Post, about 4.7 million robocalls were made to cell phones in the month of May. The FTC is getting 10,000 robocall complaints a day! Now relate the current discussions about Google and Facebook curating the information they get in the way of interactions. The estimated numbers for Google are staggering: 5.6 billion searches per day, 63,000

searches per second! 1.47 billion folks worldwide log in to Facebook every day.

Considering all that, and the fact that even the government can't seem to deal with an issue like robocalls with far less, although still massive interactions, you can start to appreciate that maybe we have to look for different solutions. Anyone have any new ideas? I suspect we will all be "thinking about" this problem for quite some time!

Here's another; again, one of my favorites. The consumer press tries its best to report on new "upcoming" developments in technology, but too often they report just one side or the other in policy debates surrounding those developments. 5G is the current example. A recent article commented on how amazing the speed was during a "demonstration" of 5G. But that demonstration was in an outdoor area surrounded by buildings with transmitting antennas specifically focused on the phones! Yup, amazing! And it's going to "be here soon!"

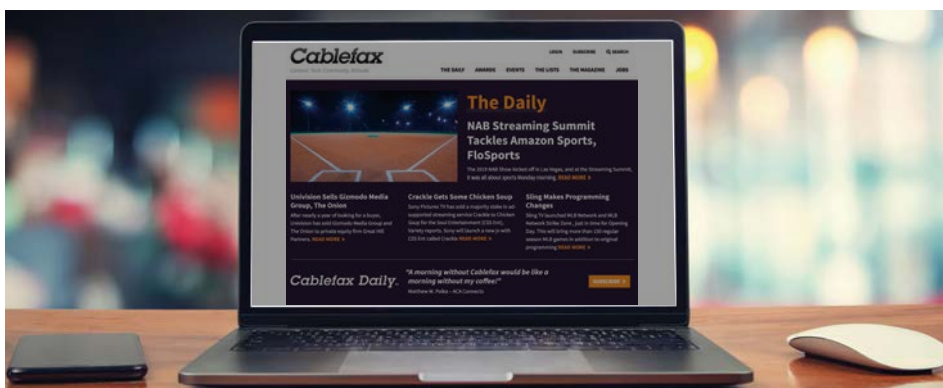
That always reminds me of the 1995 quote from Bell Atlantic's former CEO Ray Smith; "Every year for the past five years we have said we will be delivering a video product two years from now. I still stand by that."

Then there's always a need to think big. Here's one to leave you with, as reported in Axios. It puts a lot of "our" issues in perspective for me; If you compare the volume of space we're able to search (in the universe) for signs of advanced technology to the volume of the Earth's oceans, then "so far since 1960, we've searched about one hot tub's worth of the ocean," says longtime SETI researcher Jill Tarter. Now think about that for a moment!

*Steve*

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*(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)*



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