

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Evolution Time: Vast Broadband Distributing IPTV Solution By 2020

Vast Broadband is switching up the way it offers video, partnering with **Evolution Digital** to launch an app-based IP solution to its customer base. Vast will utilize Evolution Digital's eVUE-TV IP content delivery platform and the eMERGE user interface to offer the complete product to more than 57K residential and business customers in the US by year-end. In a statement, Vast CEO *Jim Gleason* called Evolution "our trusted IPTV partner." And Evolution Digital evp, sales and marketing *Marc Cohen* told **CFX** that Vast was in many ways the perfect match. "They have the type of footprint that puts them in a position where they need to have a very competitive product, and the video marketplace is only becoming more and more competitive," he said. For customers transitioning away from traditional video, Cohen believes one of eMERGE's biggest benefits is the ease in which users can transition from the interactive guide to the primary user interface and other areas without having to switch TV inputs. The full eVUE-TV IP video deployment will give customers access to more than 300 linear channels, VOD, network DVR and PPV. Customers will be able to access the video offering through Evolution's managed device eSTREAM 4K, powered by **Android TV**, but that won't be the only way to gain access. They'll also be able to utilize their own third-party devices, including those from **Roku, Apple TV, iOS** and **Android**. More devices will be made compatible post-launch. The announcement comes as the "future of video" conversation rages on, with more operators looking towards IPTV as an option that frees up more resources to focus on broadband and connectivity services while taking advantage of technical advancements in the network. "The time to utilize the investments that have been made in the DOCSIS networks over time to deliver a video service that is going to take the user interface to that next level is very important," Cohen said, noting the ability to take set-top-related expenses off of the balance sheet: "It starts to make a lot more financial sense for the operator with all of the advantages that it provides to them on top of a much better user experience," Cohen said. Evolution told us that more Tier 2 operators could announce eVUE-TV deployments within the next two months.

FCC Probing Sinclair Over Tribune Deal: The **FCC** has opened a new investigation into **Sinclair Broadcast Group** over its failed attempt to win approval for a \$3.9bln bid to buy **Tribune Media's** broadcasting stations. The Commission is investigating whether Sinclair "engaged in misrepresentation and/or lack of candor," according



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to a letter of inquiry dated June 25. The LOI came from the Media Bureau addressed to *David Gibber*, svp and general counsel of the broadcast group. The agency has directed Sinclair to answer a series of questions and provide documents by July 9, and “failing to respond accurately and completely to this (letter) constitutes a violation of the act and our rules.” The Bureau is investigating “whether, in light of the issues presented in the HDO, Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. (Sinclair or Company) was the real party-in-interest to the associated WGN-TV, KDAF, and KJAH applications, and, if so, whether Sinclair engaged in misrepresentation and/or lack of candor in its applications with the Commission.” The FCC’s concerns about the deal last spring caused Tribune to terminate the sale of 42 stations and 33 markets to the broadcaster. **Nexstar** then took advantage of the failed deal and purchased Tribune Media for \$4.1bln last December, in a deal still pending DOJ and FCC approval. Remember, this isn’t the first time Sinclair has been hit by the FCC. In 2017, the Commission fined Sinclair \$13.38mln after it failed to properly disclose that paid programming that aired on local TV stations was sponsored by a cancer institute. Sinclair could face new fines, pending the results of the latest inquiry.

O’Rielly Encourages Examining 4.9 GHz: Operators and telcos around the world are waiting for governments to free up prime spectrum for 5G and Wi-Fi advancements in the 6GHz band, but **FCC** commish *Michael O’Rielly* thinks they’re overlooking another underused band that could ease current congestion levels: the 4.9 GHz band. O’Rielly told an audience at the **Dynamic Spectrum Alliance’s** Global Summit in DC Thursday that the 4.9GHz band, which has primarily reserved for public safety uses, remains dramatically underused and likely will continue to be unless it’s made available to new licensees. “We’re at 3% of usage, and no one is rushing to fill it... It being right next to 5GHz makes a lot of sense,” O’Rielly said. “We could go up [to 6GHz], but we can also go down and provide a lot more opportunity.”

Fox Shakes Up Top Exec Role: **Fox Corp’s** evp and corporate general counsel *Rita Tuzon* has stepped down from her role after over two decades at Fox. “I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished in my 22 years at Fox,” said Tuzon said in a statement. “Building our businesses and serving as counsel to the incredible executive team here has been an honor. I am most proud of the diverse, inclusive and brilliant global legal and human resources teams I managed.” Following her exit, Fox expanded *Claudia Teran’s* role, giving her the new title of evp and corporate general counsel. Teran will continue to serve as **Fox Sports** general counsel.

Facebook Called Out For Child Gaming Policies: Sens *Ed Markey* (D-MA) and *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT) of Senate Commerce are calling for **Facebook** to change its policies after evidence showed that third party game

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developers on the social platform are allegedly manipulating children to spend their parents' money. A report from the **Center for Investigative Reporting** previously showed that Facebook personnel knew children were spending large sums of money on in-app purchases without permission. At the heart of the debate is Facebook's policies surrounding "chargeback rates," a percentage of the charges from in-app purchases that a credit card company disputes at a Facebook user's request. The senators are calling for Facebook to lower that rate from 5% to 1% while putting a punishment system in place for those developers who violate the policy.

Verizon's 5G Service in Two More Cities: **Verizon** is expanding its 5G mobile service to Denver, CO, and Providence, RI, the company announced Thursday. In parts of Denver, wireless subs who have or buy a compatible 5G phone can start using the service immediately, and Providence subs will see service on July 1. Verizon's 5G service first launched in parts of Minneapolis and Chicago in April.

Sports Fans Get a Boost: **AT&T** is donating \$500K to non-profit advocacy group **Sports Fans Coalition NY**. The org operates the Locast public service app that gives users access to local broadcast TV stations through the internet. The free streaming service retransmits **ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox** and others to more than 32mln users in 13 cities. Last month, AT&T added Locast to its **DirectTV** and U-verse receivers, and Locast added new service last week in LA and San Fran.

Streaming Basketball Heads to Europe: **ViewLift**, a global streaming technology platform, partnered with **Lega Nazionale Pallacanestro** to launch the European basketball league on **Amazon Fire TV, iOS** and **Roku** apps. The subscription service will be available on smartphones, tablets and the LNP website. The league has 28 teams that compete for the championship and additional trophies.

Roku on the Rise: Roku's streaming TV platform accounted for more than 30% of US sales of connected TV devices in 1Q19, according to **Strategy Analytics**. **Amazon's Fire TV OS** came in second with 12% of sales followed by **Samsung's Tizen** at 11% and **Google (Android TV and Chromecast)** at 9%. Some 41mln Roku-based devices are now deployed, including the company's media streamers and smart TVs, which account for 15.2% of all media streaming devices. Strategy Analytics predicts that by the end of 2019 more than 52mln Roku-powered devices will be in use, accounting for 18% of all connected media devices.

Motorsport Network Expands with Joint Venture: **Motorsport Network** is heading into the Middle East and North Africa region thanks to a jv with Triangle Media. The Middle East communication and event management company for motorsport and automotive event organizers. The newly formed properties are intended to localize products, services and digital destinations operated by Motorsport Network across racing, automotive, live experiences and esports.

Ratings: The first presidential primary debate of the 2020 campaign Wednesday night averaged a combined 15.26mln viewers. More than half the total TV audience (8.67mln) tuned in on **NBC**. **MSNBC's** simulcast drew in 4.7 for an average of 5.87mln, and **Telemundo** with 0.6 (719K viewers). The first Republican primary debate in Aug 2015 pulled in 24mln viewers on **Fox News**, and the Oct 2015 Dem primary debate pulled in 15.8mln on **CNN**. Locally, **Spectrum News NY1's** coverage in A25-54 ratings were higher than the CNN, Fox and **CW** broadcast affiliates, drawing a 0.53HH rating, over twice as high as the previous 30-day weekday average.

Programming: **Smithsonian Channel** will premiere "Mystic Britain" on Aug 5 at 9pm. The 10-part series will be hosted by *Clive Anderson* of "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" fame and anthropologist *Mary-Ann Ochota* as they explore the island's ancient places and rituals. -- "Killer Affair" premieres on **Oxygen** on July 11 at 8pm. Each episode follows a new investigation of true stories of murder ignited by infidelity. -- **Bravo** will air a three-part reunion of the "The Real Housewives of New York" beginning July 11 at 9pm. -- "Going for Sold" premieres Aug 1 at 11pm on **HGTV**. The series stars a married couple who turn forgotten homes into affordable properties.

People: **WWE** made some key exec appointments, tapping *Paul Heyman* as executive director of "Monday Night Raw" and *Eric Bischoff* as executive director of "SmackDown Live." Heyman was in charge of **ECW** from 1993-2001 before its purchase by WWE, and Bischoff is a former **WCW** pres. -- **Univision** upped *Julissa Bonfante* to vp, content publicity, effective immediately. She has been serving as director of corporate communications since 2016.

Faxies FYC!: As we all wait patiently for the TV Academy to announced the results of Emmys voting that wrapped up this week, **CFX** has added a special category to the 2019 Faxies for "FYC Events." Get the recognition you deserve, and enter by July 12 at a special \$299 entry fee. www.thefaxies.com. Good luck!

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Smithsonian Looks 'Beyond Stonewall'

Pride month is coming to a close, and it'll be another year before the colorful parades take over every major US city. But when most folks step out in their finest rainbow-colored garb, they do so without understanding the full history and meaning behind the marches. **Smithsonian Channel** has taken a deep dive into the start of the gay rights movement half a century before the Stonewall riots in "Smithsonian Time Capsule: Beyond Stonewall" (premiered Monday, will re-air Friday 6/28 at 10pm). The project was suggested to the network by Smithsonian curator *Katherine Ott*, who was planning an exhibition on LGBTQ+ history in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. "A lot of people think it's the beginning, but really there's so much before that," ep *Linda Goldman* told **Cablefax**. The stories of the years before, during and after the Stonewall riots are told directly by those who occupied Greenwich Village at the time of the attacks or by archivists who have studied the period. The magic in the documentary isn't all in the first-person accounts of the Stonewall riots. What sets it apart is something that could only come from a collaboration with the Smithsonian museums: the incorporation and presentation of objects from a time before acceptance. Of particular note is a donation can from the first pride march, personal belongings from *Matthew Shephard* and notes written by *Gene Robinson*, the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church. "We found out about it in time to film scenes with the curator collecting materials during a donation ceremony with Matthew Shephard's parents... around the 20th anniversary of his murder," Goldman said. "It was a nice opportunity to participate in that, capture that, help people feel that. There definitely is a special feeling around it for people because there were so many for so long that did feel that they needed to remain hidden." -- *Sara Winegardner*

Reviews: "The Heist at Hatton Garden," streaming from July 9, **BritBox**. There's no such thing as age discrimination in the criminal world. But in 2015, a group of seven burglars, whose age totaled more than 500 years, stole some \$26 million worth of jewels and cash from a safe-deposit company in London's diamond district. The 'seasoned' crew of small-time London hoods entered the building at night, at the start of a three-day weekend, and drilled through thick walls to access the safe. This four-part series goes into great detail about that, spending nearly the entire first episode on the break-in. It's luxurious storytelling. With *Timothy Spall's* weight-loss producing one of the craggiest faces you'll see, he's perfect as Terry, 67. His back and forth with the boss, *Kenneth Cranham's* curmudgeonly Brian, 76, is priceless. Cranham, too, has a delightful face of putty; perfect for this role. Ultimately, did they get away with it? We're not telling. -- "Divorce," season 3 premiere, 10pm, Monday, **HBO**. With so many stories of divorce involving bickering, it's a refreshing change to see how Frances (*Sarah Jessica Parker*) and her ex, Robert (*Thomas Haden Church*), get along. We'll bet Frances and Robert rekindle their relationship. It won't be easy. Robert is getting re-married and is about to be a father. Still, we have a hunch. -- *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (06/17/19-06/23/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.816	2,493
MSNBC	0.483	1,476
A&E	0.409	1249
HGTV	0.405	1,238
USA	0.358	1,092
HIST	0.343	1,048
TBSC	0.312	952
HALL	0.303	926
TLC	0.299	913
ID	0.288	881
DISC	0.283	866
CNN	0.272	830
FOOD	0.269	822
FX	0.251	766
ADSM	0.233	712
ESPN	0.226	689
TNT	0.210	642
NICK	0.205	625
BET	0.202	617
INSP	0.189	578
FRFM	0.181	554
BRAVO	0.177	542
LIFE	0.173	530
NAN	0.171	523
TVLAND	0.167	510
TRAVEL	0.163	498
AMC	0.160	489
DSNY	0.159	485
PARA	0.155	473
GSN	0.149	456
SYFY	0.149	455
UDS	0.147	449
HMM	0.145	442
DSJR	0.144	441
APL	0.144	441
OWN	0.144	440
WETV	0.141	432
NATGEO	0.140	428
VH1	0.138	420
NKJR	0.128	391
HBO	0.126	385

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

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