

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Who's This: Carriers Say SHAKEN/STIR Can't Be Only Tool Against Robocalls

Most everyone in cable is on the same side when it comes to the war against robocalls, but there's still plenty to work out when it comes to requirements surrounding the regulation of and the implementation of the SHAKEN/STIR standard. In comments to the **FCC**, many of the major voice providers echoed a sentiment stated by experts at the Commission's July 11 Robocall Summit: SHAKEN/STIR is not the silver bullet designed to prevent robocalls. It's simply one tool in an ever-growing box. **Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, ACA Connects** and **CTIA** all expressed the need for a broad safe harbor for call blocking that includes decisions based on reasonable analytics rather than one relying on SHAKEN/STIR alone. Rather than push the single implementation, Verizon proposed that the Commission establish registration and reporting obligations while requiring providers originating traffic unsighted by SHAKEN/STIR to certify that they follow reasonable robocall mitigation procedures. Verizon's data, a list of carriers that have taken measures to block unwanted calls, could be used as part of the formulas used by voice providers that decide when to block a call. While it backed the broader safe harbor, ACA Connects made it clear that it believes establishing a mandate to deploy SHAKEN/STIR by the end of the year would "more likely frustrate than advance the deployment of robust solutions that protect customers from spoofed calls." ACA Connects and major carriers have both pointed to the importance of small operators implementing SHAKEN/STIR. Otherwise, a spoofed call cannot be traced back to the originator. And robocall mitigation solutions for smaller providers are still developing, with **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association** reporting a lack of vendor solutions available to its small operator members. Rather than impose any SHAKEN/STIR mandate on small operators, ACA Connects urged the Commission to give the marketplace more time to develop cost-effective solutions for smaller and legacy operators. The 51 state Attorneys General also chimed, having just announced their collaboration with 12 carriers on an effort to ensure free, anti-robocall tools are available as soon as possible. Their main concern: making it a priority to implement caller ID authentication for carriers that maintain some portion of their network on legacy technology. SHAKEN/STIR, as developed, was built for IP-based networks and has no effect on calls that exclusively traverse TDM networks. Those most likely not to see the benefits of SHAKEN/STIR are

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typically older or are located in rural communities and receive their wireline service on TDM or copper landlines. The AGs echoed **AARP's** concerns that overlooking that technological gap would leave those most often victimized by robocalls as vulnerable as ever. A group on consumer-focused groups, including **Consumer Reports**, **Consumer Federation of America** and **Public Knowledge**, took a stand to protect exactly those folks. They argue that the critical calls list, composed of calls that should never be blocked by a carrier, should be centralized and limited to government calls only and should not include commercial, debt collection or informational calls. Those calls would only be allowed if a consumer placed those numbers on their personal whitelist, which would be provided to their local provider. In the case that any emergency calls are incorrectly blocked, the consumer groups added that the FCC should establish a call-unblocking system. But steps will need to be taken to ensure that system cannot be taken advantage of by spoofer. "In any event, for a number to be unblocked, its caller ID information must be verified through appropriate means, to ensure scammers are not seeking to evade blocks," the consumer groups said. "Above all, consumer preferences should never be overridden."

**AT&T's Donovan Announces October Departure:** AT&T Communications CEO *John Donovan* announced plans Monday to retire from the company, effective Oct 1. He's spent the past two years leading AT&T's largest business unit, heading the company's 5G, fiber and FirstNet efforts. He was also a major proponent for AT&T's transition to a public cloud first company. Donovan first joined AT&T in 2008 as its CTO before being promoted to chief strategy officer and group president, AT&T technology and operations and eventually to his current post. AT&T will name a replacement for Donovan in the coming weeks.

**CenturyLink Partially Completes Senior Notes:** CenturyLink announced that it completed a partial redemption of \$400mln in outstanding principal amount of its 6.125% senior notes due 2021. The redemption issue was issued July 26, and the company completed them at a redemption price equal to 100% of par, plus accrued and unpaid interest. CenturyLink aims to meet its 2.75x-3.25x net leverage objective within the next three years. The news follows restoration of a large outage in Iowa on Friday, just days after the company came under fire from the **FCC** following a nationwide outage last Dec. "On Aug. 23, some customers in the Des Moines area experienced data service disruptions due to a fiber cut. All services are now restored. At CenturyLink, we are committed to providing reliable services. We apologize to our customers for the inconvenience," the company said in a statement.

**Imagine Entertainment Taps Rich Battista:** Imagine Entertainment chairman *Brian Grazer* and *Ron Howard* named veteran exec *Rich Battista* as the company's CEO, effective immediately. Before joining Imagine, he was

## Cablefax Upcoming...

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most recently pres/CEO of **Time Inc.**, and oversaw the \$2.8bln sale to **Meredith**. Time Inc. spun out of **Time Warner** in 2014, and transformed from a mostly print business into a top 10 digital property in the US. Before Time Inc., Battista served as CEO of media and content company **Mandalay Sports Media**. He's also had tenures at **Fox**, where he was pres of the company's national cable networks, and at **Gemstar-TV Guide International**, where he was CEO.

**Cisco to Purchase CloudCherry:** Cisco plans to buy privately-held **CloudCherry**, which is also one of Cisco Investment's portfolio companies. The company, based in Salt Lake City, UT, is a customer experience management firm that provides customer journey mapping, integrations and predictive analytics. CloudCherry's open API helps companies correlate factors that impact customer experience in real time, and will bolster Cisco's contact center portfolio. The deal is expected to close in the first quarter of Cisco's fiscal year, with all of CloudCherry's team moving to Cisco's Contact Center Solutions business.

**Younger Audiences Not as Excited About Football Season:** With college football season underway and pro football just around the corner, research shows Millennial and Gen Z generations might not be the fans their parents are. Data from **Kantar** found that 31% of the two generations considered themselves fans of **NCAA** football, compared to 54% of older sports enthusiasts. The **NFL** is still the most popular sports league among all generations, but 69% of Millennials and Gen Z's consider themselves followers, compared to 80% of older gens. The **NBA** is more popular in the younger demographics (52% compared to 33%), and esports are growing, with 19% of young sports fans considering themselves fans vs just 2% of the older gens. A lot of the change is likely due to changing demographics, as the data found that 52% of Millennial and Gen Z sports fans are non-white, vs 27% of older fans. Gender also likely plays a role, with women making up 44% of younger fans compared to 36% of older fans. It's not clear whether live sports will continue to fend off digital competitors for time and attention. Research found 50% of 12-29-year-old sports fans would rather play video games than play sports. Yet, 80% of these same fans plan on playing sports throughout their lives.

**Ratings:** **ESPN** kicked off college football's 150th anniversary season by airing the net's highest-rated college football game in nearly three years. The Week 0 showcase matchup between the University of Miami and the University of Florida on Saturday averaged 5.966mln viewers, ESPN's best start to the season on record. The game was ESPN's best since Nov 2016, when Ohio State faced Michigan State. ESPN's weekly show "College GameDay," which aired 9am-12pm, saw a 60% increase in ratings over last year's Week 0 preview show.

**On the Circuit:** **WICT** announced the artists panel for its WICT Touchstones Luncheon on Sept 16. The panel will feature co-creators and stars of **IFC**'s "Baroness von Sketch Show" with *Meredith MacNeill* and *Jennifer Whalen*. WICT also announced that *Georgia Juvelis*, evp and co-head of corporate communications for **AMC Networks**, will serve as the 2019 honorary chair for the luncheon.

**FCC Announces Next BDAC Meeting:** The **FCC**'s Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee will meet on Sept 19 at 9:30am at FCC headquarters. The newly-chartered BDAC is chaired by **Aristotle** pres/chmn *Elizabeth Bowles* and had its first meeting June 13.

**Programming:** **Disney+** announced six new titles in development and showcased an upcoming slate at D3 Expo. New series include an untitled Ob-Wan Kenobi Star Wars series from **Lucasfilm**, live-action series "Ms. Marvel," "Moon Knight" and "She-Hulk," all from **Marvel Studios**. *Hilary Duff* will return for a "Lizzie McGuire" reboot, and the Muppets are getting a short-form unscripted series, "Muppets Now." -- **Discovery** will premiere "Why We Hate" on Oct 13 at 10pm, with the first ep available on **Discovery GO** on Oct 6. The six-part series comes from Oscar winners *Alex Gibney* and *Steven Spielberg*. -- **Comedy Central** picked up "Drunk History" for a 16-episode seventh season. The net also signed creator of the series *Derek Waters* for a first-look all-media deal. -- **E!** will premiere the new season of "Total Divas" on Oct 2 at 10pm. The series follows **WWE** Superstar *Ronda Rousey* and others. -- **Freeform** began production on its holiday gift-wrapping series "Wrap Battle." The six-ep series is hosted by *Sheryl Underwood* and will follow nine contestants fighting to take home the ultimate prize, valued at \$50K. -- **Bravo** will premiere Season 7 of "Below Deck" on Oct 7 at 9pm. -- **Nickelodeon**'s new preschool series "Blue's Clues & You" premieres Nov 11, 9am. -- **Tennis Channel** is launching the Tennis Channel Podcast Network during the US Open. The digital home for podcasts will unite six podcasts under the new banner. -- **Disney Channel** ordered "Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur," an original animated series based on **Marvel**'s comic books. -- **Universal Kids** will premiere "Mighty Mike" on Sept 2 at 3pm. Beginning Sept 3, the show will shift to its regular weekdays at 5pm timeslot.

## CFX TECH

### What to See At IBC

Have your flights booked for **IBC 2019** yet? The Amsterdam-based media, entertainment and tech show kicks off on Sept 13, promising a deep dive into everything from competing in the OTT market, choosing between AVOD and SVOD (or both!) and the future of TV advertising. It's no small beast with more than 55K attendees expected to come through over the course of the five-day conference. If you're on the fence about attending, here's a glance at what some players are bringing to the show floor.

**NAGRA** will kick off IBC with the release of its 2019 Pay-TV Innovation Forum. The 2019 edition of the global research program, created in partnership with research consultancy **MTM**, will touch on OTT growth, next generation aggregation, data and analytics, piracy and the overall transformation of the pay TV ecosystem. Peeking into its crystal ball and analyzing the data, NAGRA will define what a successful operator could look like in 2023 and beyond. NAGRA will also have a strong presence at the show, hosting an invitation-only session on Sept 13 at 6pm focused on unpacking the new aggregation models that will create the pay TV services of the future.

More concerned about what's on the show floor? The IBC Exhibition will cover fifteen halls across Amsterdam's RAI and will host over 1700 exhibitors. **Eurofins Digital Testing** will be offering software solutions designed to help studios, post-production companies, broadcasters and distributors adopt the Interoperable Mastering Format, which provides a single master file format from which tailored versions of the same piece of content can be rendered for different audiences. Eurofins' tools ensure the quality of those IMF packages before they're sent off for OTT, VOD or mobile distribution. **SSIMWAVE** is also in the business of QA and will be demonstrating its ability to monitor the quality of Dolby Vision content for file-based streaming environments for the first time publicly. SSIMWAVE will also be showing off its VOD

Monitor Inspector which uses frame-by-frame scores to give customers the power to finetune the user experience pixel by pixel.

Protecting content from piracy, particularly streaming content, is an area where some companies will be starting to step up to the plate. **Synamedia** will be demonstrating its Streaming Piracy Disruption tool. The solution features a single workflow across both broadcast and IP streaming, allowing a provider to disrupt any leaks immediately. Customers will then be able to turn lemons into lemonade by converting viewers of pirated content to legitimate subscribers. Synamedia's solution replaces takedown warnings with notices that encourage viewers to sign up for a service. Also on display will be the Intelligent Piracy Monitor, which offers deeper analysis into the nature and scale of the problem as well as the impact of any anti-piracy initiatives. -- *Sara Winegardner*

**Navisite to Come Under RDX Ownership: Charter Communications** and **RDX** revealed an agreement Tuesday under which the latter will acquire and merge with managed cloud services provider **Navisite**. Navisite currently sits in the Spectrum Enterprise portfolio. RDX, a specialized provider of managed IT services, will own and operate the Navisite assets including client relationships, employees who support the Navisite business, fixed assets, leases and Navisite-operated facilities. The transaction is expected to close within the next few weeks.

**When Cable-Tec Closes:** Two post-conference events will be held following **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo 2019**. "Network Convergence and Intelligent Connectivity in the 5G Era," presented by **AMDOCS**, and "Leveraging the Open Source Community as a Force Multiplier and Innovation House," presented by **ADTRAN**, will be held simultaneously from 1-4pm on Oct 3 at the Ernest N Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Separate registration is required for both post-conference events, but both are free to Expo full conference registrants.

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