

Cablefax Daily™

Thursday — October 3, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

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Rough Seas: AI's Place in Preventing Piracy

The problem of piracy has existed for decades, but identifying illegal behavior has become far more challenging as consumers continue switching to OTT video options. Streamed pirated content typically looks exactly like a typical, legal OTT video. And while you could use deep packet inspection to identify and track pirated streams, it is cost prohibitive and raises privacy concerns. Machine learning offers a less intrusive and cheaper alternative. By training it to detect variances in meta-data, byte distribution, packet lengths and inter-packet time, AI can identify the illegal streams with a high level of accuracy and precision. **NCTA** vp, broadband technology **Matt Tooley** also believes AI can be used to go out and find the video pirates themselves. "The video pirates have only three or four backend services that they will stream from," Tooley told attendees at an **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** panel on piracy Wednesday. "We find those four backends and we can find it all." But once pirates notice that cable operators have found a way to identify illegal streams, that very well could change. There is the potential that they could use packet stuffing to make their flows a constant bitrate, but they won't make those sorts of investments without some poking and prodding. "The pirates are cheap," Tooley said. "They don't encrypt any of their video streams because it costs money." He's also working on fine-tuning how to ensure AI's effectiveness for larger MSOs. That means continuing to work with the AI, teaching it to ignore activities like music streaming or online gaming sites that also have video features. That will lower the amount of false positives, ensuring the AI's accuracy. "There's a bit of work to do there so we can make this scale to a cloud service so that when the operators want to use it, it makes it easy for us to do it for our members," Tooley said. Of equal concern to cable operators and beyond are the DDoS attacks that have the possibility to cause serious disruptions on their networks. Buying an attack against a company is relatively cheap, costing the buyer only \$20/hour for 100Gbps or more. Victims forced to fight back face a much higher price tag, spending on average \$40K/hour to put an end to the attack. The risk landscape has only expanded as more people adopt IoT devices and place them on their network with little to no knowledge of how that device is actually interacting with that network. In his work in attempting to detect vulnerabilities in networks and when a DDoS attack could occur, **CableLabs** senior security engineer **Kyle Haefner** found that a device as simple as wireless tea kettle

Cablefax
MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

Awards Luncheon

Thursday, December 5
11am - 2pm | 583 PARK Avenue

Join us as we salute the women who have made their mark on the industry with their leadership and innovation.

Register Your Team at www.CablefaxWomen.com

35187

Join us for Smart Cities Day on Innovation Theater Stage

THURSDAY OCTOBER 3, 2019 9:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Stop by to check out stage presentations below!

9:15 am - 9:45 am | Smart Cities Opening Keynote

Moderated by: Jeff Baumgartner, Light Reading

Panelists: Tom Adams, EVP Field Operations, Charter
Bill Varga, VP Technology, Liberty Global

9:45 am - 10:30 am | US Ignite - Cable and the Smart City - Partnerships Happening Now

Moderator: Mari Silbey, Director, Communications, US Ignite

Panelists: Dominic Papa, Executive Director, The Institute for Digital Progress
Susan Anable, Vice President, Government & Public Affairs, Cox Communications
Alison Barlow, Executive Director, St. Petersburg Innovation District
Satya Parimi, Group VP, Enterprise Data & Smart Cities, Spectrum Enterprise
Bill Maguire, Consultant, ConnectedCom LLC

10:30 am - 11:00 am | Smart Cities Council - The Smart City Opportunity - Transforming the City - Citizen Relationship through Connectivity

Moderator: Jason Nelson, Smart Cities Council

Panelists: Jack Hanley, Telensa
Jacob Peters, Columbia Parc
Neil Illingworth, Director of Advanced Technology & Innovation, Liberty Global

11:00 am - 11:30 am | US Ignite: CIO & CTO Chat: New Orleans Speaks Out on Smart Cities

Moderator: Mari Silbey, US Ignite

Panelists: Kimberly Walker LaGrue, Chief Information Officer & Head of the Office of Information Technology and Innovation, City of New Orleans
Jonathan Wisbey, Chief Technology Officer, City of New Orleans

11:45 am - 12:15 pm | Improving Organizational Productivity with Building Automation Systems

Presented by: Mari Silbey, US Ignite

Panelists: Greg Walker, Research Director - Continental Automated Buildings Assoc (CABA)

Presented by



Spectrum

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● Acct. Exec: Olivia Murray, 301.354.2010, omurray@accessintel.com ● Director of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com ● Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com ● Group Subs or Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,749.00/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

could prove usable by hackers. Driving the point home was a slide in his presentation dubbing the iKettle from UK-based connected home company Smarter the “WiFi enabled tea kettle of doom.” “They can tap into your iKettle... and it gives the attacker the unencrypted WiFi password of your wireless network,” Haefner said. “You have to be a network manager in your own home, and most people don’t have that skill.” CableLabs is working with the **Messaging, Malware, Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group (M3AAWG)** to collect and aggregate attack data through the DDoS Information Sharing Project. The pilot began in 2017 in an effort to provide ISPs with data they can act upon to rehabilitate compromised devices on the networks before they become compromised.

Teching Out the Customer Experience: At a technical conference like **SCTE-ISBE’s** Cable-Tec Expo, it’s easy to geek out with acronyms and engineering speak. But sometimes you need to move beyond “techs and specs, and look at speed and ease,” a phrase coined by a Wednesday Expo panel on network management and growth for mid-size and small operators. “We keep trying to push speeds and feeds and everything else, but not really taking a step back and looking at how they are getting service from us,” *Tom Williams, Schurz Communications’* vp, engineering & technology, said on the panel moderated by **ACA Connects** pres/CEO *Matt Polka*. The network and the rich data it offers can help get service providers to step up their customer service game. “Even looking at and understanding when people disconnect. Do they start running more speed tests?” Williams asked, noting that it’s usually a signal that they’re having connection issues. “They’ll run it and they’ll run it, and then we’ll see that they disconnect. If we can look at that and make changes in the way we communicate to the customer and possibly go out and fix an issue that’s there, we can save that customer and not have to go back out and get them again.” That sort of network analyzation is OpenVault’s bread and butter. “Our goal is to get into the predictability business. We want to stop the congestion points on the network before they become alarming,” said *Josh Barstow, OpenVault’s* evp, corporate strategy & business development. He threw out the example of a customer who signed up for a 10Mbps data package three years ago, who now has 25 devices riding on the network today. “They normally never call and say I need more speed. They call and say, ‘my service isn’t working.’” OpenVault started using data on the engineering side, but now “there’s as much, if not more benefit, to the marketing side of the business,” Barstow said. There’s a real opportunity for operators to super serve their customers in this increasingly connected world. “I think where we’re at now is the consumer who goes to Best Buy or Amazon and buys a bunch of IoT stuff, comes home and goes, ‘now what?’” said **Evolution Digital** COO *Cash Hagen*, who spent time at **WOW!** as COO and CTO. “I think there’s a real opportunity for us to own the home.” With operators increasingly extending the demarcation point to include the entire

Cablefax: What’s Happening... November & December

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- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| EDITORIAL: | Amy Maclean | • amaclean@accessintel.com |
| | Sara Winegardner | • swinegardner@accessintel.com |
| | Mollie Cahillane | • mcahillane@accessintel.com |
| ADVERTISING: | Olivia Murray | • omurray@accessintel.com |
| AWARDS: | Mary-Lou French | • mlfrench@accessintel.com |

NOVEMBER

Cablefax: The Magazine – November Issue Most Powerful Women

Cablefax’s annual Most Powerful Women magazine honors the female executives and media influencers whose outstanding leadership, innovation and community continues to change the industry for the better.

Holiday Programming

With unprecedented amounts of holiday programming in 2018, what are the lessons learned for 2019? We’ll look at how programmers are carving out a space in the crowded seasonal programming environment.

Get SMART

From smart homes to smart cities, Cablefax has you covered. We’ll examine the latest developments in the space and how the industry is playing a pivotal role.

DECEMBER

Augmented & Virtual Reality

Is it really happening this time? We’ll take a look at VR and AR, as well as the opportunities (and pitfalls) for distributors, programmers and vendors.

Events

Most Powerful Women Luncheon
December 5
NYC

wireless network in a home, there are questions over how to monetize it. The answers are mixed. Sparklight looked at adding a managed WiFi network fee, but ultimately decided to include it in the base fee. "If we need to put more access points into the home to make sure there's ubiquitous coverage, we do that. There's not an extra fee for that," said *Ken Johnson*, **Sparklight's** svp, technology services. "We're trying to provide the consumer with an outstanding experience in the home as part of their base level service. We've seen because of that, a dramatic drop in service activity to the home because they have a better foundation. Ideally, we win the battle long term because we're the better experience for the consumer." Schurz offers a "smart WiFi service," giving it away for free in one system and charging \$12.99/month in another. "What's interesting in our surveys is the happiness of our customers is exactly the same, whether they get it for free or pay for it. We're moving across the entire company to charge for it," Williams said. "We have a backlog of people willing to pay for it. They want this thing that badly."

Lesser Leaving HBO After More Than Three Decades: Another **HBO** exec is saying goodbye to the premium programmer. *Nancy Lesser*, evp, media and talent relations, revealed in a note to staff Wednesday that she was stepping down after 35 years with the network. Her departure comes shortly after that of evp, corporate communications *Quentin Schaffer*, who resigned in July. Lesser joined the company in 1984 as senior publicist, media relations based in New York. Before joining the net, Lesser served as public relations director for Ford's Theater in Washington, DC.

Sunshine State Agrees to T-Mobile/Sprint Divestiture: Florida has chosen to support the merger of **T-Mobile** and **Sprint** so long as New T-Mobile divests Sprint's prepaid business to **DISH**, the **DOJ** announced Wednesday. "Florida has been one of the states leading this investigation since the beginning, and I am pleased that they have chosen to join our settlement after completing their thorough review," DOJ antitrust chief *Makan Delrahim* said in a statement. A total of seven states that previously sued to block the transaction have agreed to the divestiture plan while 18 attorneys general, including those from New York and Oregon, are still standing by their suit to block the deal.

Refinery29 Joining Vice Media Family: **Vice Media** acquired digital media company **Refinery29**, the pair announced Wednesday. Terms of the deal, which was signed Tuesday by Vice Media CEO *Nancy Dubuc* and Refinery29 co-CEOs *Justin Stefano* and *Philippe von Borries*, were not disclosed. Refinery29 will remain a separate brand under Vice Media and help its parent company reach more female millennials and increase its global presence. Both companies have laid off employees in the past year to adjust to a shifting advertising landscape. Vice Media laid off 10% of its workforce in February and Refinery29 confirmed last October that it would be cutting 40 employees.

Wurl Launches AdPool: **Wurl**, a provider of streaming video distribution and advertising services, is launching AdPool, a service that will enable video producers to sell their CTV ad inventory to thousands of advertisers. The platform is free for publishers and CTV platforms that are part of the Wurl Network. AdPool can be used to complement existing ad sales, to reduce unsold inventory or as the primary ad sales channel. Each ad is individually targeted in real-time for each TV viewer, which the company says earns higher fees for video publishers and greater ad buying efficiency for advertisers. "Even during our beta, AdPool has provided enormous benefit for our customers," said *Sean Doherty*, CEO and co-founder of Wurl. "With billions of CTV ad impressions already being sold on the Wurl Network, AdPool has the scale necessary to attract premium advertisers and increase our customers' yield from ad-supported streaming."

First MDU Fully Outfitted with Xfinity Smart Home Solutions: The Wyatt FOCO, a 12-building community in Colorado, has teamed up with **Xfinity Communities** smart home automation solutions to create the latter's first fully connected community. The Fort Collins community, composed of 368 luxury units, has been fitted with smart thermostats, lighting, locks and leak detectors that can all be controlled via an app for both residents and property managers.

Programming: Free streaming service **Tubi** entered into a deal with **Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution** for Season 13 of "The Bachelorette."

People: **Parrot Analytics** tapped *Stephanie Allen* to the newly created position of partnerships director, brands & media. She comes over from Reddit, where she was Strategy Lead and a senior partnerships executive. Prior to **Reddit**, she was brand strategy director at **Buzzfeed**. She's also held roles at **Tumblr**, **Facebook** and **Google**.

Think about that for a minute...

Plus What?

Commentary by Steve Effros

I was watching the football game on Sunday and I just couldn't help noticing the ads. First there would be an ad for Apple TV, and right at the end the logo would appear on the screen and after a little "ping" they would add the "+" symbol. Cute. Except apparently the same graphic artist was also working on the Disney ad which came right after it. Another "ping." Another "+" at the end of the logo.

Plus what? Of course they're not the first, we have Hulu +, ESPN + and I'm guessing that won't be the end of it. As a consumer, or even someone like me who is supposed to be well versed in this stuff, it's getting to be totally inscrutable. I got that AppleTV+ is focusing on their allegedly creative, new product. And you can't really miss that Disney+ is going to have one heck of a lot of old chestnut Disney movies and shows, lots of it animated. But should I, as a potential viewer, get animated about what they are offering? Their names suggest that I withhold judgment, since I really don't know what I'm going to have to add (that little "+" sign suggests that there are going to need to be additions, I would think) to get at least the equal experience to what I already have today.

So the question has to be "plus what?" I'd suggest that some cable folks get their ad departments working on that one. Because the "plus" part is also going to at least let folks know that the prices they are touting don't really let us know what the added costs will be. The "+," it seems to me, should make it clear to folks that they're being offered a "half-loaf" as the saying goes, and they better find out what other things will have to be added, and what they will cost, before buying the notion that this "+" service or that



"+" service is actually a "better deal" than cable.

Let's just start with "+ delivery" (in equally large type!) That might make their name and pitch a little more honest. Cable includes the delivery in our price. Then in some cases it will be "+ your local broadcast signals which are not included," or "+ all the other channels you want to watch that you will have to buy from some other service." I could go on, but you get the point.

What's as significant is that there are now commentators suggesting the confusion factor is going to get so great, as all these new services start rolling out, that consumers are going to prefer that the different services be aggregated. Viewers will want a platform that can easily offer those services in varying packages that allow them to just have one interface to work with. Through that interface they will pick the packages of signals, channels or services they watch.

Now that makes sense. The consumer could have one device, say a small plug-in device, or it could be built into the "smart TV," and all of the various services could be offered in various packages at various price points...maybe we could call them "bundles," and they could just call the programs up, maybe by something like, say, a voice command! Ladies and gentlemen, I hereby present to you: "Cable Television!" It's becoming clear that the new services have yet to even hit the scene and the marketers are realizing that if they want those "standalone services" to survive, they're simply going to have to reinvent the wheel.

Steve

T:202-630-2099
steve@effros.com

(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.)

 **DC5G**

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