

Cablefax Daily™

Wednesday — October 9, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 194

Not Yet: Providers Have Questions About USTelecom's Mapping Plan

It's difficult to find something in Washington that many stakeholders can agree on, but the need for improved broadband maps at the **FCC** has become a bipartisan topic. It's been four months since the Commission proposed establishing a new data collection method to fix those maps and only one since **USTelecom** pres/CEO *Jonathan Spalter* testified before the House Communications subcommittee that early pilots conducted by the Broadband Mapping Coalition in Virginia and Missouri confirmed that the current maps overestimate the availability of high-speed internet. Spalter has proposed establishing an ever-updating fabric that would allow providers to consistently report residential and business addresses, seemingly addressing the problems that currently exist with the FCC's maps, but other stakeholders aren't quite ready to move forward with USTelecom's plan. **NCTA** warned in its reply comments to the Commission this week that it should not begin implementing the broadband serviceable location tool proposed by the Broadband Mapping Coalition until it obtains and seeks comment on more information on how the tool would be created and updated. Small and mid-size operator association **ACA Connects** criticized the Broadband Mapping Coalition for not directly discussing the costs a geolocation data collection would impose on providers. The BMC did make a push for the FCC to allocate or provide resources to help smaller providers prepare their files to be integrated into the new framework, but no details were laid out on the size of those resources or where they would come from. In order to lessen the potential burden, NCTA suggested limiting the new database to rural areas, particularly those that are underserved and are likely to be the recipients of broadband deployment-related subsidies. Another way to cut on costs would be taking advantage of existing mapping tools like the Pitney Bowes Address Fabric Data product rather than creating a brand new tool from scratch. Even with its criticisms, NCTA said "there is no reason to deprive consumers of this public interest benefit by delaying the new data collection process" until after the concerns it raised have been resolved. Still, filers found plenty to agree on. USTelecom, **Verizon** and NCTA all suggested even if the Commission sunsets the outdated Form 477, it should adopt the same availability map update schedule used for Form 477 filings. That goes against the idea included in the proposed rulemaking, which suggested that providers would update their shapefile polygons within six months of each significant change. "Such an unwieldy approach could create significant logistical complications and burdens if it required providers to continually churn

We're
Bucking
the
Trends.

+33%

growth in primetime
in the last four
consecutive weeks



America's
Hispanic
Superbrand

Source: Nielsen, NPM (09/23/2019-09/29/2019 vs. 09/24/2018-09/30/2018), Mon-Sat 8pm-11pm/Sun 7pm-11pm, Adults 18-49. Univision's consecutive weeks of audience growth based on (09/23/2019-09/29/2019 vs. 08/26/2019-09/01/2019), Live+SD. Exclusive Audience based on 6+ minutes qualifier. Median age based on Persons 2+.

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through reports instead of sending regular, synchronized batches that align against one another and the Commission's other reports," Verizon said. Most filers also said the Commission should avoid collecting any data that does not directly relate to broadband availability, including pricing, usage and latency. "Forcing mobile providers to collect a snapshot of every pricing plan would impose a burden with little-to-no benefit," CTIA said.

USA Gets Video Description Break: The FCC Media Bureau is granting NBCU's petition for a limited waiver for USA Network in regards to video description rules. However, the FCC isn't granting NBCU's request to extend the waiver to all five of the top cable nets (TBS, History, HGTV and Discovery Channel), saying there is no evidence in the record to suggest problems with the other nets complying with the video description rules. USA committed to airing at least 1K hours of described programming each quarter through June 30, 2021, without regard to repeats, as current FCC rules say repeat programming can't be counted more than twice toward the required hours. USA also pledged to provide descriptions for at least 75% of any newly-produced non-live programming aired between 6am and midnight per quarter. USA had the support of NCTA and The American Council for the Blind. "We recognize that compliance with the prohibition on counting repeats presents unique difficulties for USA because its schedule is built on a large amount of repeat programming," the Media Bureau said. To get technical, the FCC rule waiver applies to MVPDs carrying USA, as current rules require MVPDs that serve 50K or more subs to provide video described programming on each of the top five national non-broadcast networks that they carry. The five networks are established every three years, with cable nets like ESPN and Fox News earning exemptions because of the large amount of live programming offered.

Maine a la Carte Bill: Many thought the a la carte horse was long dead, but it's alive and kicking in Maine. The state AG filed comments this week in defense of a bill passed by the state legislature that would require cable operators to make cable networks available on an a la carte basis. The law is being challenged by A+E Networks, Comcast, C-SPAN, CBS, Discovery and a host of other media companies, who claim, among other things, that the law violates First Amendment rights for editorial discretion. "Plaintiffs are claiming that they have a First Amendment right to require customers to buy HGTV and Animal Planet in order to watch Discovery and to require customers to buy 'NCIS' and 'Big Brother' in order to watch '60 Minutes.' There is no First Amendment right to engage in this bundling, and, unsurprisingly, plaintiffs cite no authority supporting such a proposition," Monday's filing from the AG said. Unhappy with retrans demands, the one area some cable operators have supported a la carte purchasing in is with broadcast stations. However, a footnote in the AG filing makes it clear that the state believes consumers are expected to first have to purchase the mandatory basic tier, which includes broadcast stations, before making a la carte cable network selections.

Cablefax Upcoming...

The FAXIES Award Luncheon

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Bigger. Better. Faxier. The expanded FAXIES awards program recognizes the intersection of marketing, PR and content producing endless content diversity and a dizzying array of entertainment options. This celebration lunch brings together the all the puzzle pieces and recognizes the best people and initiatives impacting American culture. Join us when we announce the winners of the Ultimate b2b awards program.

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Most Powerful Women Celebration

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www.CablefaxWomen.com

Register Early. Questions: Contact Kate Schaeffer, kschaefter@accessintel.com

Spooky Season with SpotX: Video advertising and monetization platform **SpotX** has teamed up with **AMC** to power programmatic monetization for OTT throughout the Halloween season. AMC sees a spike in viewership in the weeks leading up to Halloween, thanks to “The Walking Dead” and the annual FearFest programming event, making it a lucrative opportunity for advertisers to sign on. In 2018, AMC viewership grew across digital by nearly 80% in video views and 10% in reach. Horror films kicked off on the net Oct 1, and FearFest will run from Oct 13-31. The event features 104 titles and 400+ hours of programming. Season 10 of The Walking Dead premiered Oct 6.

OpenAP Expands into Digital: **OpenAP**, the advanced ad company owned by **Fox**, **NBCU** and **Viacom**, launched the OpenAP Market, which it says offers advertisers premium video advertising inventory and unified audience-based buying across digital and linear TV programming. This marks the first time OpenAP has included digital, giving it a larger addressable footprint with cross-publisher optimization against audience segments. The marketplace launched in beta in September and became available to all advertisers on Oct 1. With new capabilities, advertisers can create audiences, define goals across campaigns and increase reach. According to OpenAP, buyers will then receive a consolidated, optimized linear media plan and unified optimized media plans for digital. OpenAP was created in 2017 by Fox, Viacom and then-Turner. After **AT&T** purchased **Time Warner**, it pulled Turner from the consortium to launch **Xandr** internally.

Ex-AT&T Exec to Head Charter's Enterprise Unit: **Spectrum Enterprise** found a new president, with **Charter** tapping **Bill Archer** for the role of evp/pres. He succeeds **Phil Meeks**, who previously announced plans to retire in January 2020. Archer most recently was managing dir, business for Ireland's **Eir** group. Before joining Eir in 2012, he spent 30+ years at **AT&T**, including as president of advance solutions for AT&T Business. At Charter, he will oversee product, marketing, sales, operations and strategy for Spectrum Enterprise and report to CFO **Chris Winfrey**.

Bloom Exits TBS & TNT, Launches Production Company: **Michael Bloom**, svp, unscripted series and specials for **TNT** and **TBS**, is stepping down to start his own production studio **Bongo Pictures**. The LA-based studio has a first-look deal with **WarnerMedia**. Bloom has been in the industry for more than 20 years, and during his time at TBS and TNT launched series such as **James Corden's** “Drop the Mic” and “Chasing the Cure with Ann Curry.”

Ratings: **ESPN** drew its best Saturday college football audience since Week 0 with the telecast of Georgia at Tennessee this past weekend. The game averaged 3.901 mln viewers, up 51% from last year's same game window. -- **MLB Network's** two exclusive telecasts from the ALDS rank as its third-best combined postseason game viewership since it began televising League Division Series in 2012. The two-game average hit 2.249mln viewers, up 8% over its two exclusive NLDS games last year. Game Three of Houston Astros at Tampa Bay Rays on Monday averaged 958K viewers, following the net's second-most watched game telecast ever on Friday for Game One of the Minnesota at New York, which drew 3.4mln average viewers.

People: **DeDe Lea**, **Viacom's** evp, global govt affairs, will be sticking around post Viacom-**CBS** merger. The company entered into a new agreement with her last week that will keep her in the same post for the surviving corporation.

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