

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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All for One: I Stream, You Stream, We Stream & ViacomCBS Sells to All

In what was expected to be its last earnings call before the **ViacomCBS** merger, **Viacom** CEO *Bob Bakish* outlined rosy revenue synergies ahead. One of the areas expected to benefit is affiliate revenues, with CBS' *Ray Hopkins* to lead distribution for the combined company. "On a combined basis, ViacomCBS delivers about 22% of US primetime TV viewing with a range of highly sought after content. Today we only receive about 11% share of fees. We believe that represents a significant going forward opportunity," Bakish said during the 4Q19 presentation. Earlier this week, **CBS** revealed that it has about half of its affiliate deals coming up for renewal this year. On the flipside, Viacom has renewed or expanded almost all of its traditional sub base. How does that square? "There are deals in 2020 that are, we believe actionable," Bakish said. "We do ultimately believe that the realization of that opportunity is not all in 2020. This will take some time to play out, but nonetheless, I am excited about it." Viacom's 2019 renewals included a deal announced over the summer with buying group **NCTC**, with Bakish reporting that "virtually all" of the NCTC members opted in to the agreement. With Disney+'s recent launch and Viacom's continued evolution of free AVOD Pluto TV, much of Thursday's call centered on the company's view of the streaming world. Pluto has some 20mln domestic monthly active users, a nearly 70% increase calendar year-to-date, according to Viacom. It launched 43 new channels in Q4, launching 3 new this week with CBS (ET, CBSN NY and CBSN LA). With the addition of CBS, CBS All Access and Showtime OTT will join Viacom's existing BET+, Noggin and others as fee-based DTC options. It may have a lot of platforms to fill, but ViacomCBS will continue to sell (or as Bakish prefers to call it 'rent') content to third parties. "Demand for content from third parties is incredible. And the combination of our assets and capabilities with the fact that some of our competitors are pulling back makes this sector an enormous opportunity for ViacomCBS," he said, arguing that the company has plenty of content to serve all between 750 series on order or in production and a library of 140K TV shows and more than 3600 films. Viacom shares closed up 1.9%, with revenue and earnings beating Wall Street expectations even though both metrics slipped. Net income fell to \$307mln from \$394mln a year ago, while revenue dipped 1.5% to \$3.43bln. As for what's ahead, investors will have to wait until February's combined company earnings call for 2020 guidance.

TELL US WHAT ELSE WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR WORK CULTURE.

Cablefax is seeking nominations for The 2020 Work Culture List.

This recognition program pulls back the curtain to give a glimpse at the culture behind the company names, shining a light on the magic that happens when work enhances your life.

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Free to Nominate

Deadline: December 13, 2019

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Impeachment Hearing Ratings: Day 1 of impeachment hearing saw **Fox News** in first place among all cable and broadcast for P2+ from 10am-4pm ET. It averaged 2.9mln viewers, followed by **MSNBC** (2.7mln), **CBS** (1.97mln) and **CNN** (1.84mln). ABC won that time period among 25-54s (496K). Fox News scored the top three programs on cable Wednesday in total viewership with “Hannity,” “Tucker Carlson Tonight” and “The Five” all topping the cable news ranker. MSNBC’s “Maddow” placed fourth with 3.6mln total viewers

Comcast’s Cohen Comes to Washington: A day after US Supreme Court oral arguments in *Byron Allen’s* racial discrimination suit against **Comcast**, Comcast’s senior evp and chief diversity officer *David Cohen* blasted the litigation. “Our commitment to diversity and inclusion and equity is why we find the rhetoric surrounding the Supreme Court case involving Byron Allen’s cable channels, which should have been a routine program carriage dispute, so distasteful, and yes, offensive,” Cohen said at a **Media Institute** lunch in DC Thursday. “It’s just another example of small ball posturing for personal financial gain. It’s not going to advance the global interest of our country and it’s not going to advance the interests of the people who Byron Allen alleges that he is speaking for. And certainly not how Comcast acts.” Cohen followed up on his statements by pointing out that in 2018, 71% of Comcast’s new hires are diverse and now 53% of the company reports to a diverse leader. With lunch attendees including lobbyists, government agency officials and lawyers, Cohen implored everyone to come across the partisan aisle and work together to embrace the next big stage in tech, which he called the “fourth industrial revolution.” “We can begin by dealing with issues that are not about the left, not about the right, but moving forward as a nation together with a common purpose. We have to move forward beyond small ball if we are going to think big,” he said, urging folks to not waste time arguing on privacy regulation and net neutrality. “We all agree about what needs to be done, we simply must put aside the irresistible temptation to fight, try and gain, try and fundraise, try and gain social media clicks and followers and decide to do what needs to be done, which is to put in place federal regimes around both privacy and net neutrality. Those are typical small ball issues that get in the way of our being able to focus on the future.”

STELAR Bill Forwarded to Full Committee by House Commerce Subcmte: House Commerce’s Communications subcmte agreed unanimously to move chmn *Mike Doyle’s* (D-PA) STELAR reauthorization bill that includes retrans reforms and bill transparency requirements on to the full committee, but the minority reserved the right to vote against it down the line. Commerce ranking member *Greg Walden* (R-OR) said the Republicans were “dissatisfied” with how the bill ended up in the markup, having only been introduced hours before the notice of the markup was issued. He and other conservatives also noted that there had been no legislative meeting on the bill, leaving them with plenty of unanswered

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

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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**

questions on how it would work. “We also saw the Senate yesterday... pull their bill that had not had a legislative hearing, so it appears this extension isn’t yet fully vetted and ready for primetime in either body,” Walden said. And while he agreed that the reforms proposed in the bill are worthy of being considered, he didn’t see why they had to be tied to a renewal of STELAR. “We can do media policy through regular order in this committee just like any other issue. There’s no reason we need to try and do these reforms on the basis of unrelated expiring provisions,” Walden said, adding he’s not yet convinced Congress should reauthorize STELAR. The rest of the markup, which examined nine bills spanning everything from spectrum sharing to broadband mapping, was a show of bipartisanship that’s rare nowadays in Washington. The subcommittee forwarded all nine bills to the full committee with minor amendments being made to six.

Another Sinclair SSA Deal Done: And then there were three. **AT&T** signed a retrans renewal with **Mercury Broadcast Group**, bringing Wichita-Hutchinson, KS, **MyNetwork** affil back on to **DirecTV** and AT&T. AT&T filed a retrans complaint at the **FCC** in June against nine broadcast owners with **Sinclair** shared service agreements. The FCC ruled in AT&T’s favor last Friday. Of the original nine, only three are still outstanding with stations blacked out on AT&T/DirecTV: **MPS Media**, **Nashville License Holdings** and **Waitt Broadcasting**.

Nascar, NBC Sports Partner on Motorsports DTC Product: **Nascar** and **NBC Sports** announced plans to launch streamer **TrackPass** on **NBC Sports Gold**. Launching in December, the DTC product will bring fans exclusive live events as well as a library of archived documentaries and films. Live Nascar national series races will not be offered on the platform, but American Flat Track and select ARCA Menards Series events will be available. The product will launch with a \$4.99/month or \$44.99/year price tag, but series-specific subpackages for **IMSA** (\$2.99/month, \$19.99/year), **AFT** (\$1.99/month, \$10.99/year) and **Nascar Roots**(\$2.99/month, \$19.99/year) content will also be available.

Traditional Streamer Adds UPTv to its Lineup: **UPTv** content will be added to family-friendly streamer **Frndly TV** in the coming weeks at no cost to the latter’s customers. **Frndly TV** launched on Oct 1 and, with the addition of **UPTv**, includes 13 live TV networks including **Hallmark Channel**, **The Weather Channel** and **Game Show Network** as well as on-demand content. The service starts at \$5.99/month.

Mediacom’s Gigabit Milestone: **Mediacom** has surpassed 50K gigabit residential and business customers. It began launching the service in 2017 as part of a 3-year, \$1bn capital investment strategy and reaffirmed its commitment to offering higher speeds earlier this year by partnering with **NCTA**, **CableLabs** and others in the race to 10G. That technology promises greater capacity, lower latency and symmetrical 10Gbps speeds. **Mediacom** has field trials for the technology set for 2020.

Sprint Going Green in New Corporate Goals: **Sprint** committed to sourcing 100% renewable electricity across its entire operations by 2025 in a set of corporate environmental goals released Thursday. It has also re-committed to responsibly reuse or recycle 100% of electronic waste directly generated from its business operations and divert 50% of operational waste from landfills by 2025.

Irdeto, Amlogic Partner on New Set-Top Box: Digital security solution provider **Irdeto** and semiconductor company **Amlogic** together launched a set-top box Wednesday that is pre-certified under **Netflix**’s Hailstorm Hybrid program. Designed by the streamer to reduce integration time for operators on the Android TV platform, the program allows those operators to ensure their boxes can reliably stream **Netflix** and similar services. The system from **Irdeto** and **Amlogic** includes **Irdeto Armor**, a solution designed to monitor and block app-based piracy and malicious apps on Android TV devices.

Sling TV Rolls Out New Apple TV Features: **Sling** is bringing new features to its app on **Apple TV**, including **Launch Into Live** and **Browse While Watching**. Users can now launch into the last channel they were watching instead of navigating, and can also browse other content while the current channel plays.

Programming: **Stadium** announced a coast-to-coast lineup of more than 65 college basketball games from five conference partners that will run across the platform’s over-the-air network, **WatchStadium.com**, and channels on **Roku** and **fubo TV**. Additionally, 20 games will be featured as a **Facebook Watch** exclusive. -- **TBS** renewed “**Full Frontal with Samantha Bee**” for Season 5, as well as its first-look production deal with her company **Swimsuit Competition**. -- **CuriosityStream** will premiere “**Hi\$tory**” on Nov 18. The four-part show, hosted by **NPR**’s **Peter Sagal**, dives into **Watergate**, the **Civil War**, the **transcontinental railroad** and the **Cold War**.

People: **WOW!** appointed **John Roy** as vp, engineering operations. Roy has held leadership positions at **Layer3 TV**, **Comcast**, **Media One** and **Charter** and most recently served as vp, operations in **T-Mobile**’s home and entertainment department. -- The **Ohio Cable Telecommunications Association** selected **Steve Buehrer** as its next executive director. He’ll replace **Jonathon McGee**, who left for a position in the state government earlier this year.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Don't Mess with Doris...

We love stories of revenge. There's something so satisfying about a gritty tale in which someone wronged turns the tables on the tormentors—often in ways that make us question our own sense of justice. It's even better when the story involves Machiavelian moves that build over time, with a protagonist whose adversaries don't even see the threat coming until it's too late. That appears to be the trajectory of **Hulu's** "Reprisal" (premieres Dec 9), which interestingly stars *Abigail Spencer*, who often plays characters with a sweet sensibility. That's decidedly not the case here, although her badass femme fatale Doris does at least speak quite softly as she works to take down her brother and his outlaw gang that left her for dead after dragging her chained to a truck through a field. Yes, it's that kind of show. And like any good revenge story, we will eventually start to question who is good, who is evil—and whether the lines have blurred beyond all recognition. "As things get more clear, which will happen as episodes come out, things will get more gray," Spencer told critics at Summer **TCA** earlier this year. "So I think, we'll always be towing that line." Producer *Warren Littlefield* said the jarring violence in the show fits the dark, retro-punk landscape that showrunner *Josh Corbin* has created. "It is a violent world and it's a male-controlled world, and this is the story of Doris who says, 'Enough' and it's Doris taking this world apart," he said. Spencer tells **Cablefax** that she always works closely with producers to shape her characters, a compulsion that stems from her days in live theater where characters morph and evolve right up until opening night. Perhaps that kind of creative collaboration is even more important when the stakes are life and death on the small screen. "High heels are really fun to kill people in," she deadpans. Yes, it's that kind of show. — *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "The Preppy Murder: Death in Central Park," 9pm, Nov. 13-15, **AMC** and **SundanceTV**. Most viewers think of series when it's said we're in television's golden age. Yet the medium's ability to re-tell stories using historic footage, supplemented with new material, is underrated. Evidence is this five-part doc, shown over three nights. Filmmakers *Ricki Stern* and *Annie Sundberg* do a very good job setting the stage. The film feels very '80s, as it should. *Jennifer Levin*, 18, died in 1986. Interviews are plentiful and informative, though few speak up for the preppy murderer, *Robert Chambers*, which is not surprising. Tighter editing would have made this terrific story even more intriguing. — "Nixon on Nixon: In His Own Words," 9pm, Saturday, **CNN**. You couldn't pick a better time to show this **HBO** doc. It will appeal to those interested in *Richard Nixon* and impeachment. It's also a chance for young viewers (but not children) to see what the fuss is about. Within minutes of listening to Nixon's (mostly secret) taped conversations, it's clear. And ugly. Nixon comes off as a press-hating, paranoid bigot with misogynistic tendencies and a disregard for law (he says so). Besides the tapes, other segments include TV interviews. He's all smiles and diplomatic during those sessions. After watching this doc, you know it was an act. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (11/04/19-11/10/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
ESPN	1.209	3716
FNC	0.844	2,595
MSNBC	0.615	1,891
HALL	0.453	1,393
HIST	0.325	999
HGTV	0.312	960
TBSC	0.308	947
A&E	0.306	939
CNN	0.291	895
DISC	0.281	863
HMM	0.281	863
TLC	0.267	820
ID	0.258	791
FOOD	0.254	780
USA	0.249	764
LIFE	0.217	668
AMC	0.214	657
BRAVO	0.199	612
ADSM	0.198	609
TNT	0.195	600
INSP	0.185	567
TVLAND	0.181	555
FX	0.179	551
FRFM	0.173	530
NICK	0.166	509
NFL	0.150	461
NAN	0.150	461
DSNY	0.145	446
MTV	0.128	392
BET	0.122	376
NKJR	0.121	372
GSN	0.119	367
WETV	0.117	361
SYFY	0.116	357
CRN	0.116	356
E!	0.112	343
VH1	0.109	335
TRAVEL	0.108	330
DSJR	0.106	327
COM	0.104	320
PARA	0.103	317

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




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