

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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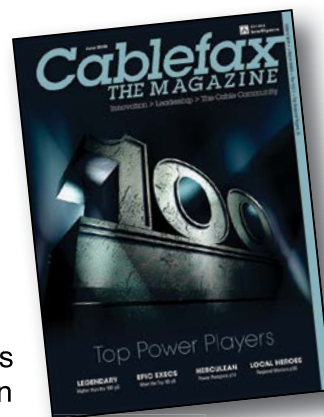
## #StreamingWars: Execs Focus on OTT, Strategies Still Evolving

Sure, TV execs have streaming on their minds as they parade in front of critics in Pasadena this week for Winter TCA. But any anxiety or hand-wringing seems a bit more subdued now that what was once a shiny (and scary) new object has become just a part of the business, with *Seth MacFarlane's* \$200mln haul to create content for NBCU's **Peacock** just the latest mega-deal in a new world awash in money and Peak TV insanity. **FX** chief *John Landgraf* called the content craze "bananas" last week. Yet it seems like the Gold Rush shows no signs of letting up any time soon. "Independent studies show today's SVOD user has more than three services on average—actually, about three and a half," said *Marc DeBevoise*, Chief Digital Officer, **ViacomCBS**, and pres/CEO, **CBS Interactive**. "This has grown meaningfully over the last few years and is something we expect to continue to grow." He noted during his session Sunday that CBS' own research suggests that 80% of **CBS All Access** subs also get TV via traditional service and spend an average of \$50 per month on other SVOD services, "meaning it's already not a zero-sum game, and there's plenty of room for us to grow." That could include new content from Viacom, which just officially recombined with CBS last month, but like most things in streaming—it's largely unclear how all of this will ultimately shake out. "I think we're in the middle of working through all those pieces," he said. "We don't have anything to talk about today about how we might put those things together or keep them separate. I think the idea is we view it as a much larger content portfolio to play with to figure out where things should fit and can thrive in an ecosystem like this." **NBC Entertainment** chairman *Paul Telegdy* on Saturday said Peak TV means everyone needs to "put on the big show" to compete for increasingly distracted eyeballs. So it's not just about 532 scripted shows in 2019. "I put that in the context of 1,500 other things that we're competing with, and at this point the number of scripted shows that are relevant is just a small portion of the actual landscape," he said. "We're not just programming for the year. We're programming for the decade." If all of this makes you wonder where it all ends, you're not alone. "I think there's a lot of a lot of us have... this reaction to a lot of services launching, saying, 'well, you're just going to tap out. There's only so many you can have,'" DeBevoise said. "And that may be true, but I don't think we've hit that point yet." And so the Golden Age continues...



## Who Deserves to Rank Among Cablefax's Annual Top Power Players?

The Cablefax 100 salutes the most influential executives whose leadership continues to take the industry to new heights. We will rank the top professionals in the media, cable & broadband industry and publish the list in the June edition of Cablefax:The Magazine.



**It's free to enter - but you must submit your entries by February 7!**

Enter at [www.Cablefax100.com](http://www.Cablefax100.com) | Questions: Mary-Lou French at [mfrench@accessintel.com](mailto:mfrench@accessintel.com)

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**Fox Soul Makes Surprise Launch:** Fox Television Stations on Monday debuted **Fox Soul**, advertising the service as an ad-supported streamer that houses original talk and lifestyle series as well as locally produced content designed for African American audiences. Available via the **Fox Soul** app or online, the service will air original series from 6-10pm PT followed by two hours of programming from Fox O&O stations. Those exclusive programs include “The Tammi Mac Show” hosted by radio personality *Tammi Mac* and “On the 7 with Dr Sean,” which will examine hot topics through the lens of faith. Those exclusive series will be interactive as well, allowing viewers to call in via a toll-free number. Outside of those hours, consumers can access an on-demand library of recent series. “We are proud to debut this African American focused channel, created by and for the members of the black community,” Fox Soul head of programming *James DuBose* said in a statement. “We intend to inform, inspire, and empower our viewers by meeting their needs for authentic conversations on topics relevant to our lives.”

**Aloha Chairman Pai:** FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* was in Maui Monday to offer remarks before the Hawaii International Conference on Science Systems. Pretty nice venue for celebrating his birthday (he turned 47 on Friday). It also crosses off Pai’s 49th state visited since his appointment as chairman in January 2017 (Alaska is the last one remaining). But this visit wasn’t just about having a birthday luau. Pai talked up the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund that the FCC is slated to vote on later this month, noting that approximately 17K of the estimated 6mln homes and businesses in the US that would be eligible for money for the auction’s first phase are in Hawaii. Part of his visit included a tour with **Hawaiian Telecom**, which was awarded \$18.1mln in Connect America Fund Phase II funding over the next decade to bring broadband to 3900 unserved homes and businesses. “By expanding access to high-speed broadband, we will expand access to jobs, expand access to education, expand access to entertainment and culture, expand access to civic participation, and expand access to healthcare,” Pai said in prepared remarks.

**Trump Allies Aim to Buy One America News Network:** Investment firm **Hicks Equity Partners** is interested in acquiring **One America News Network** in an attempt to shake up the conservative media marketplace, according to a *WSJ* report. The firm is owned by the family of *Thomas Hicks Jr*, co-chmn of the Republican National Committee and a friend of *Donald Trump Jr*. According to the report, the firm is looking for donors to the Republican party to come up with funds for a \$250mln bid for the channel’s parent company, **Herring Networks**. “With the 2020 political season in full swing, expressed interest is on the rise,” One America News Network pres *Charles Herring* told *WSJ*. “Yet our family didn’t build our operations to sell it.”

**Comcast Dubbed the Winner in Most Recent TiVo Patent Bout:** Comcast scored the latest win in an ongoing

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RESUMES

patent battle with **TiVo**. The Federal Circuit upheld a previous decision from the Patent Trial and Appeal Board that found a TiVo patent describing a system with multiple interactive TV guides invalid due to prior art. Prior art can be used to show that an invention is not new, and the determination of whether an invention is patentable depends on how different that invention is from anything that has come prior to it. "We are pleased with this decision confirming the invalidity of yet another Rovi patent," Comcast said in a statement.

**New Advocacy Group Focused on 5G:** Rep *Mike Rogers* (R-MI) will serve as chmn of **5G Action Now**, a new advocacy organization aimed at advancing the rapid deployment of 5G technology in the US. It will also highlight the importance of the US successfully deploying 5G networks before China. "The Chinese understand how important 5G is to America's economy, national security and global leadership," Rogers said in a statement. "It is crucial that we don't allow China to outspend and outplay us on the 5G field." In addition to its larger goal, 5G Action Now also supports the FCC's goal of auctioning off C-band spectrum by the end of 2020.

**Charter Launches Spectrum Total Connect:** **Charter** announced a new high-speed internet offering for large national businesses from Spectrum Business is offering Spectrum Total Connect to large, national businesses. It will enable businesses with locations in multiple states (such as retail franchises or fast-food chains) to connect to Spectrum's broadband network, even outside of Spectrum's footprint.

**Programming:** **Golf Channel** is celebrating 25 years of programming. All week, "Morning Drive" will have anniversary content, leading up to Friday's extended show (8-11:30am). The net will re-air "The Approach" at 5:30pm on Wednesday, the first show ever to appear on the net. The first single-sport cable net launched in 1995. -- **Syfy** placed a straight-to-series order for "Chucky," to be ep'd by original creator *Don Mancini*. -- **Showtime** renewed "Work In Progress" and "The L Word: Generation Q" for second seasons. The net also announced "Shameless" has been renewed for an 11th and final season. -- "Powerbirds" will premiere Jan 19, 10am on **Universal Kids**.

**Board Appointments:** **WICT** elected *Sandy Howe*, evp and pres of Americas for **Technetix**, as board chair for 2020. *Marva Johnson*, vp, state government affairs (South) for **Charter** will transition to immediate past chair. New directors at large include *Johnita Due*, svp & chief diversity & inclusion officer, **WarnerMedia**; *Tina Evangelista*, vp, HR, **Cable ONE**; *Orlando Hampton*, gm, USA, **Afiniti** and *Lee Schroeder*, evp, government & community affairs and chief diversity officer, **Altice USA**. *Julie Agnew*, executive director of construction & delivery, network expansion, **Virgin Media**, will serve a one-year term as the chapter leader designee. Also serving one-year terms as emerging leader designees are *Carmela Fournier*, executive director, data platform, **FreeWheel**; and *Jonica Hartman*, director, strategic initiatives, **Spectrum Reach**. -- **C2HR** named its 2020 officers, tapping *Cox Communications* pres, HR service delivery *Michele Parks* as pres. *Dave Crossen*, svp of HR for **NBCU** will serve as veep; *Judith Mills*, group vp, HR for **Mediacom** continues her role as treasurer; *Julie Niemat*, **Discovery's** evp, employee experience and HR operations, is secretary; and *Tom Tooker*, vp of HR for **A+E Networks**, is immediate past president.

**People:** The **NBCU** Lifestyle Group is making some changes, promoting *Jennifer Geisser* to evp, communications and talent relations, effective immediately. As part of her promotion, several of her direct reports have expanded roles. *Chloe Ellers Bremner* has been promoted to svp, communications for **Bravo, Oxygen & Universal Kids**. *Julia Nietsch* was upped to vp, communications, lifestyle networks, and *Ryan McCormick* to vp, communications, **E!**. -- **Food Network** is ramping up programming and development with hires for both its East and West Coast-based teams. *Nick Briscoe* joins as vp, programming and development in NYC. He was most recently a showrunner for a variety of upcoming Food Network titles. *Dana Volkmer-Jones* joins the net in L.A. as director, programming and development. He comes over from **Truly Original**, where he was svp of development, West Coast. -- **IMMCO** is starting 2020 with a new CEO. *Keith Hayes* comes to the company with four decades of experience, including executive roles at **Charter** and **Adelphia**. He also a Cable TV Pioneer and former chmn of **SCTE**. Co-founders and current leaders *Dr. Ramesh Iyer* and *Jana Iyer* will transition into advisory roles. -- **Spectrum Networks** named *Helen Swenson* vp, content, **Spectrum News NY1**, beginning Feb 10. She most recently served as program developer and ep for **TEGNA**. -- **One America News Network** (OAN) tapped *Chanel Rion* as the net's chief White House correspondent.

**Discovery Supporting Wild Tigers:** **Discovery** and **Tigers United**, an organization composed of four universities with tiger mascots, announced a joint text-to-donate campaign raising funds in support of a goal to double the wild tiger population by 2022. Kicking off Jan 11, the campaign will also be highlighted during the College Football National Championship on Monday (Jan 13) at 8pm ET. Clemson University and LSU, two of the Tiger United schools, will play in the championship. Proceeds will be directed to Tigers United and Discovery's Project CAT.

# CFX TECH

## Breaking Down CES 2020

Just as quickly as it arrived, CES 2020 has come to an end. For those of you that weren't able to make the flight to Las Vegas, here's your roundup of some of the biggest sights and trends from the show floor to the keynote stage.

**Content is Changing, and Advertising Needs to Follow Suit** Just as it did last year, streaming showed up in a big way across the show. Panels tackled everything from the content that calls those platforms home to how soon 8K UHD entertainment will become mainstream. Headlining it all was the promise of a keynote from Quibi, the short-form startup set to launch in April. "We're not shrinking TV onto phones," **Quibi** CEO *Meg Whitman* told the crowd. "We're creating something new." A quick demo of the platform's Turnstyle feature, which allows viewers to watch fullscreen content from different vantage points depending on the way they hold their phone, showed that there was a unique technology platform behind the app developed specifically for the short-form experience. Advertisers have bought into the platform with **PepsiCo** and **T-Mobile** being just a few of the brands that have purchased Quibi's entire \$150mln first-year ad inventory. Major brands want to unlock the potential that comes with the world of streaming, but **NBCU** advertising and partnerships chmn *Linda Yaccarino* used her keynote to be frank about how the ad buying process has been slow to adapt to the age of cordcutting. "The consumer is driving this change," Yaccarino said. "What has been so frustrating about the leaders in the industry has been the acceptance of the status quo and the unwillingness of the industry to reflect that consumer behavior." **Trade Desk** CEO *Jeff Green* said he believes 2020 will be the inflection point. "It is the year that connected television changes everything about TV forever," he said.

**Data Key to the Future of Watching Sports** Sports has always been quick to adopt new technology if it means adding more value to the consumer's viewing experience. Now, its fans are craving the data the technology makes available, calling for more information on their favorite players

to be made available. "We're seeing on the data side a lot of biometric, wearable technology that is increasing," said *Andrea Berry*, svp, gm of broadcast and TV for **Production Resource Group**. "You're getting all these biometrics that tell why an athlete was successful in that match or that game. Fans really want to know why." Data has become just as important in the exploding world of esports. With the industry still in its infancy in comparison to that of traditional sports, folks are hard at work trying to nail down standard ways of measuring its performance for potential partners and the fans themselves. **Riot Games** head of esports insights *Doug Watson* applauded the industry's recent embrace of the average minute audience metric. "It's a great way for us to be able to standardize a viewership metric that allows us to have an apples-to-apples comparison across a number of properties, including traditional sports and media," Watson said during a panel, adding that the development of those standards will keep the esports industry stable in the future. *Jake Phillips*, CRO for esports analytics firm **Stream Hatchet**, added that the average number of hours watched by an esports fan has been a key metric for potential advertisers and brand partners.

**Taking Advanced Networks into the Sky** Innovations in the world of automotive had a major presence in the Las Vegas Convention Center's North Hall, and even **Sony** unveiled a concept car during the show. But a keynote from **Delta Airlines** offered attendees a peek into how new technologies can transform the way people fly by 2025. While innovations like real-time tracking of bags and biometric security scans were previewed, Delta CEO *Ed Bastian* also spent time discussing how airlines need to offer the same WiFi experiences that customers are able to access on the ground. Delta has a dedicated team developing technology that will expand the amount of bandwidth available and increase the average speeds seen by customers. While it'll take a few years to see that create change across the fleet, one thing Delta customers will see within the year is for WiFi to become available at no additional charge.

— Sara Winegardner

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