

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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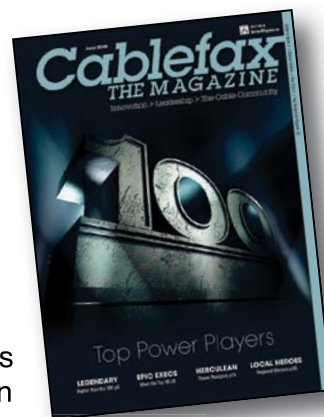
Internet Flex: Streaming, Broadband Shape Comcast's Future

If it wasn't made clear during last week's **Peacock** investor day, **Comcast NBCU** execs reiterated during its 4Q19 earnings call Thursday that the company is relying on broadband and streaming to take it into the future. Comcast reported a 25.9% YOY increase in net income to \$3.2bln, and revenues for its cable communications business rose 2.6% to \$14.8bln for the quarter. Much of that can be attributed to the 442K broadband customers it added as the pay TV business continued to bleed, dropping by 149K. Comcast now has 31.5mln customer relationships, and it has no plans to go the extra mile to retain its traditional video customers. "Video is still valuable for us to attach to our broadband-centric customer relationships, but only to the extent that it helps us increase the lifetime value of those relationships," Comcast svp/CFO *Mike Cavanagh* said. "We've consistently said that there is a segment of the market that either doesn't value a traditional pay-TV service or isn't profitable for us to serve. We're not chasing that segment of the market." Comcast is expecting higher video losses in 2020 due to rate adjustments it will implement this year and will prioritize improving its Flex platform and expanding its footprint. Comcast Cable pres/CEO *Dave Watson* said Flex is a natural extension of Comcast's focus on broadband innovation and its continued investment in the X1 platform. "Flex is going to help fuel broadband over time," Watson said. "We're pleased with the roadmap ahead." Comcast is aiming to add more content and apps to Flex, including **Hulu** and **CBS All Access**. It's also looking forward to seeing the impact of Peacock's launch once the service becomes available to Flex and X1 subscribers on April 15. As of now, **Cox** is the only other MVPD that has signed on to distribute Peacock to its subscribers, but Comcast believes that it won't be long before others come to the table to negotiate. "It's such a great value to be able to give all of your customers a product that's \$5/month or \$60/year for free that I think eventually we will get the vast majority, if not all of cable and satellite. It will take time," Cavanagh said. Most of the time, Peacock negotiations will be included in with discussions over the renewal of NBCU's deals with MVPDs and Cavanagh said a lot of big deals would be expiring within 2020. "I think by the end of this year, you're going to see the \$5 Peacock product be offered for free to a lot of cable and satellite customers." Watson also said that the combination of broadband, Flex and Peacock together will unlock opportunities across all



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three, including advertising and app participation for Flex. Ultimately, they're all key pieces to the puzzle in Comcast's efforts to expand beyond pay TV. "I think our company is better positioned as the world moves to streaming than any other company in the world," Cavanagh said. "And I think you could argue in the next 10 or 20 years, if you look at all those three businesses combined, we could make more money in streaming than anyone else by a lot." Turning to wireless, Comcast added 261K lines in 4Q19 and saw revenues rise 39.4%, but that business is still in its infancy compared to the rest of the MVPD's product lineup. Still, the growth that it has exhibited thus far could unlock additional opportunities for Comcast outside of its current MVNO with **Verizon**. **MoffettNathanson** said in a research note that it has long believed that the current MVNO doesn't leave room for the business to ever be profitable on its own, but Comcast may not necessarily have to get it to that point. "Reports that **AT&T**, and perhaps even **T-Mobile**, might be willing to offer a better deal suggest that Comcast's steady wireless growth may have given it precisely the kind of strategic leverage that will now enable a much clearer path to profitability," MoffettNathanson said. Even with its strong numbers, Comcast saw stocks drop 3.77% at market close.

Liberty Global Targets Univision, Reports: **Liberty Global** and Spanish-language broadcaster **Hemisphere** are working on a bid for **Univision**, according to industry trades. The news, first reported by *Bloomberg*, also said former **Viacom** CFO *Wade Davis* (with backing from investors) and private equity firm **Platinum** may also be interested. Final offers are due in February, and no decision has been made on whether to sell. In 2017, the company declined a takeover offer from **Discovery**, and discarded an IPO in 2018. Representatives from Univision declined to comment.

Ampersand Launches Advanced TV Buying Solution: **Ampersand**, the ad sales and tech company owned by **Comcast**, **Cox** and **Charter**, is launching a new TV ad planning, buying and measurement platform aiming to simplify advanced TV ad buying. The AND platform gives ad buyers reach across 85mln households, 120 cable nets and more than 55% of all addressable households. The company says the platform is the first advanced TV platform to centralize every step of the campaign planning and buying process with a simple interface for both local and national TV buying. AND connects with Ampersand's data platform, which has anonymized and aggregated viewership from 40mln homes with activation in 85mln households. Advertisers can now define audiences beyond traditional age and gender demos, and later this year will be able to integrate their own first party data sets. The platform generates an optimized plan for where to best reach audiences, and its tools measure both efficiency and effectiveness. At launch, advertisers can work with Ampersand to utilize the platform, and direct,

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self-serve access comes later this year.

Massachusetts Effective Competition Showdown: Comcast and Cox have both filed oppositions at the FCC to The Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable's request that their petitions for effective competition in Massachusetts be put on hold pending the state's challenge of an FCC decision that found OTT offering AT&T TV Now constitutes effective competition for Charter in 32 Massachusetts communities. Cox and Comcast said they qualify for the same determination of effective competition in Massachusetts as Charter. Cox and Charter urged the FCC to deny the stay request, calling it an unauthorized pleading under Commission rules. They said MDTC failed to file any petition for reconsideration with the FCC before filing its legal challenge in the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and that MDTC failed to seek a stay of the Charter order at either the FCC or First Circuit.

DISH On Hunt For Help With 5G: The T-Mobile/Sprint merger in a state of limbo, but DISH is moving forward with its plans to build out a nationwide 5G network. The company announced Thursday it would soon release a Request for Information and Request for Proposal for telecom transport services in the coming weeks. It will be the fifth in a series of requests for proposals for different elements of the national network, and this one will include requests for telecom transport service companies to facilitate lit and dark fiber connectivity to cell towers, buildings and data centers. DISH has committed to building a standalone 5G broadband network available to at least 70% of the US population by June 2023.

Impeachment and Other Ratings: Fox News topped its cable news rivals in primetime impeachment coverage Tuesday, garnering 654K impressions compared to MSNBC's 490K and CNN's 460K. MSNBC was No 1 in total viewers during impeachment coverage and analysis from 11pm-1am. There was a break in Senate debate at 11pm with Brian Williams hosting live analysis on MSNBC. Overall, Nielsen found an average of 11.01mln viewers watched impeachment coverage from 12:30-5pm ET Tuesday across ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox News, MSNBC and CNN. Early Nielsen Media Research data for Tuesday and Wednesday from 1-5pm ET have Fox News ahead of cable and broadcast networks, averaging 2.197mln total viewers, ahead of 1.866mln for MSNBC and 1.36mln for CNN. -- Last week, ESPN came in first among the cable nets in prime (4.4mln total viewers), buoyed by LSU's victory over Clemson in the College Football Championship. The sports net was followed by Fox News (2.84mln), MSNBC (1.92mln), CNN (1.51mln) and TLC (1.5mln).

Maine A la Carte: Cable last month won a temporary halt to a Maine law requiring cable operators to allow subs to purchase programming on an a la carte basis, but government officials have filed a notice that they will appeal to the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Comcast, C-SPAN, Viacom and A+E Networks are among those challenging the state's new a la carte law.

Game Time: NBC Olympics and Snap are partnering ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Games for the third consecutive Olympic partnership. NBC Olympics will produce more than 70 episodes across four daily shows for Snapchat leading up to and during the games, more than triple the amount of episodes compared to the 2018 Games. For the first time, NBC Olympics will also create two daily highlight shows for Snapchat, which will be updated in near real-time. Two unscripted shows will air two new eps per day during the games. "Chasing Gold" debuted during PyeongChang 2018 and follows the journeys of Team USA athletes. A second new, daily recap show will recap the most memorable moments from that day.

605 Earns Third-Party Security Cert: TV measurement and analytics firm 605 earned third-party service organization control 3 (SOC 3) compliance from KPMG for its Audience App, built for Charter. The service uses anonymized and aggregated subscriber viewing data and consumer data to target specific consumer attributes.

People: WarnerMedia named Pia Chaozon Barlow svp, program marketing for upcoming streamer HBO Max. Barlow previously served as director of advertising and promotions at HBO until she left for Netflix in 2014, where she most recently held the title head of nonfiction marketing. -- Charter tapped Avery Boggs as gvp, policy communications. Boggs previously served as evp, marketing and strategy development for PLUS Communications. She replaces Tamara Smith, who has taken the newly create role of gvp, partnerships and strategy for the company's Spectrum Networks. -- Best wishes to ESPN PR maven Amy Phillips, who is headed to London as vp, corp comm & social responsibility for Disney's European operations.

Oops: The NATPE Notebook in Thursday's issue mistakenly included RLJ Entertainment as one of the companies Ovation has completed an acquisition deal with.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

The Hidden Corners of Earth's Seven Continents

BBC America has become well-known for its work examining the natural world through series like "Planet Earth," but the premiere of "Seven Worlds, One Planet" (Saturday, 9pm) made it clear that there's still plenty humans have to learn about the planet we inhabit and how it has changed over time. Seven Worlds, One Planet ep *Jonny Keeling* also served in production roles for Planet Earth and "Planet Earth II," and he didn't want this nature doc to be a replication of either of those. That's when he came up with the idea to give each continent a dedicated episode designed to show off the incredible variety of animal species and terrain types that can be found across the large land masses. By highlighting different locations on each continent, Keeling hopes audiences will feel a deeper connection to the series and the planet as a whole. "We all belong to a continent, we all come from a continent whereas we don't all come from a desert or a mountain or a jungle," Keeling said. "It also meant that we could then include a little bit of geology." Something else that's new with Seven Worlds, One Planet is the choice to highlight the topic of conservation in the series. "If you go back to Planet Earth, there's almost no conservation in it," Keeling said. "It feels right to be talking about some of the challenges and the threats faced to animals on each continent. If you have an episode which has a bit of geology in it, things that have happened over millions of years, and then you look at what's happened over a single human lifetime and how we have rewritten the rules... it highlights some of the urgency that's happening now." In recognition of the environmental emergency in Australia due to wildfires, Seven Worlds One Planet premiered with the Australia episode to encourage support for relief efforts. — *Sara Winegardner*

'Seven Worlds' Review: "Seven Worlds, One Planet," 9pm, Saturday, **BBC America, AMC, IFC, Sundance.** We are reluctant to call something perfect. In the nature genre, "Seven Worlds, One Planet" seems very close. The camerawork is amazing, but anyone who's even glimpsed BBC's "Blue Planet" duo is accustomed to that. (Newcomers, though, will be amazed.) Seven's visuals, both close in and sky level, top those award-winning series. Its score and *Sir David Attenborough's* erudite narration also are treats. Within seconds of last week's opening ep, "Australia," Sir David, 93 years young, had gently educated viewers. Australia, he said, was "cast adrift" during "the time of the dinosaurs." As a result, its animals, isolated for millions of years "are today like none elsewhere...this is a land of survivors." The ep begins with a giant bird's ominous, dinosaur-like claws as it roams Australia's north jungle, "the oldest on our planet," Sir David tells. Strange to urban eyes, it's the cassowary. This weekend's ep, "North America," begins with excellent computer graphics showing Pangaea, the supercontinent that broke apart 175 million years ago, forming the seven continents. North America's highlights are numerous. A few favorites: mullet spawning off Florida's coast, the evening mating dance of fireflies and chub males using their mouths to haul pebbles en route to building an underwater nest for females. OK, perfect. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (01/13/20-01/19/20)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
ESPN	1.653	5,078
FNC	0.895	2,752
MSNBC	0.605	1,859
CNN	0.470	1,444
TLC	0.366	1,125
A&E	0.363	1,115
HGTV	0.349	1,072
HIST	0.315	968
HALL	0.306	942
TBSC	0.276	849
USA	0.266	818
DISC	0.259	796
FOOD	0.252	774
ID	0.245	753
TNT	0.244	751
BRAVO	0.211	649
ADSM	0.206	633
LIFE	0.205	631
HMM	0.193	592
INSP	0.190	583
NICK	0.184	565
FX	0.175	538
TVLAND	0.172	530
SYFY	0.171	525
NAN	0.146	449
CRN	0.143	441
HBO	0.138	423
TRAVEL	0.135	414
MOTOR	0.132	405
GSN	0.132	405
DSNY	0.131	404
FRFM	0.131	404
PARA	0.127	389
BET	0.127	389
AMC	0.126	387
NKJR	0.125	385
WETV	0.123	377
NATGEO	0.113	347
DSJR	0.112	344
ESPN2	0.110	339
COM	0.110	337

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

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