

Cablefax Daily™

Wednesday — May 27, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 102

New Path: Startup Brings Telehealth Directly to the TV

You likely have encountered a shortage on toilet paper and disinfectant wipes during the COVID-19 pandemic, but perhaps less noticed has been a shortage in laptops, Chromebooks and tablets as much of the world moves to a work (and school) from home status. **Google** was struggling recently to find enough laptops and devices for new employees, CNBC reported. Schools have reported similar issues as they move to online learning. "Here's a big aha that many don't understand. As soon as the schools closed, school systems or parents essentially went out and bought all of the laptops and tablets in America," **Trapollo** svp/gm *Mike Braham* told **CFX**. **Trapollo**, a healthcare firm owned by **Cox Communications**, reacted by working with LifeScience Technologies to quickly repurpose a hospital for home solution and put out a "Bring Your Own Device" app on iOS and Android for physicians and COVID-positive patients. With speech-to-text capability, patients can use existing smart devices with non-connected medical devices (pulse oximeters, thermometers, etc) to keep medical staff updated on their connection. Startup **MedSign** has taken a different approach, launching a TV-based telehealth solution called Qortex that enables medical professional to deliver virtual medical services to patients confined to their homes. Patients need internet service, but don't require a computer or smart device. The TV doesn't even need to be a Smart TV, just have an HDMI cable to connect to the small Qortex box. While CEO and inventor *Tom Conroy* originally created the device to keeps tabs on his 92-year-old father, he sees Qortex's purpose expanding beyond telehealth in this coronavirus period. "Others have contacted us because they see this as a portal into the new world order, the home. People will be doing a lot more in the home, such as fitness, nutrition, education," said Conroy. "Education is huge, especially for kids who are underprivileged and underserved." MedSign's solution is currently in pilot programs with hospitals on the East and West Coast and is working with major teaching hospitals and various home healthcare firms. As a startup, MedSign is looking for partners, with Conroy identifying cable as a logical fit. "I believe they can provide that they can provide this service to all of their customers as a secondary function as part of their cable package that they supply," he said, adding that there are talks underway with two different operators. Telehealth's importance continues to grow. On Friday, a bipartisan group of senators, including *Brian Schatz* (D-HI), *John Boozman* (R-AK) and *Kevin Cramer* (R-ND) introduced the Health Care Broadband Expansion



CONGRATULATE the CABLEFAX 100 and REACH the Top Leaders in Cable, Broadband & Digital

Publication Date: July 22, 2020

Advertising Contact: Olivia Murray, Account Executive
301.354.2010 | omurray@accessintel.com

AD SPACE DEADLINE: July 7

Save the Date for Celebration on Sept. 22
Register Your Team! | WWW.CABLEFAX100.COM

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

During COVID-19 Act. The bill directs \$2bln to help healthcare providers increase their broadband capacity and expand telehealth services during the current public health crisis. It's a companion to legislation introduced in the House that has been endorsed by **NCTA**, **US Telecom** and the **Fiber Broadband Association**. *(Save the date: Cablefax plans to hold a virtual event on telehealth, tentatively scheduled for Aug 13. Check Cablefax.com for more details soon)*

Government Tells States Communications is Essential: The **FCC** and the **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency** are encouraging governors to help keep Americans connected during COVID-19. They sent a list of recommendations Tuesday, including that they recognize cable operators, IPTV providers, broadcasters, businesses that provide communications support to healthcare facilities, public safety communications infrastructure and others as essential to pandemic response efforts. They recommend states consider prioritizing the distribution of personal protective equipment to communications personnel when available. Other suggestions include having states to facilitate the maintenance, repair, and provisioning of communications infrastructure and services by providing online access to relevant government functions, such as the permitting process, where not already available electronically.

Bullish on Cable: **JP Morgan** expects broadband sub growth to remain strong in 2Q, with lower churn given the increase in working from home. The analysts "see the recent acceleration in broadband subscriber growth exemplifying cable's long runway for share gains given its superior value proposition across the majority of the US." The firm raised its broadband estimates for **Altice USA**, **Charter** and **Comcast**. On the video side, it expects lower churn in 2Q, but believes cord cutting will ramp up in the back half of the year as households pull back on discretionary spending. "In 2H20, we expect to see economic weakness and non-pay disconnects slow sub growth despite efforts by management teams to work with economically challenged households to retain service," said a JP Morgan research note. Despite the best 1Q net add broadband results since 2016, JP Morgan expects full-year broadband growth to be below the pace of 2019. It raised Charter's 2Q residential broadband net adds to 500K from 450K, Comcast's to 225K from 150K and Altice to 30K from 15K—figures that it cautioned could still prove conservative.

Four Vegas Stations Go NextGen: Four Las Vegas stations have begun broadcasting in NextGen TV powered by ATSC 3.0, marking the first full-power, multi-station commercial deployment of the standard in the US. The stations (KSNV, KVCW, KLAS and KTNV) are owned by **Sinclair**, **Nexstar** and **EW Scripps**. NextGen TV can support 4K video and immersive audio and will allow broadcasters to deliver high-quality service to mobile users. ATSC 3.0 will also power an advanced emergency alert system currently in development.



Help Save Lives. Donate Blood.

Schedule at RedCrossBlood.org



American Red Cross

Fox Does STELAR Deal: AT&T reached a deal with **Fox** to ensure that **DirecTV** customers who might have lost access to Fox stations on June 1 with the sunset of STELAR (Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization) will continue to receive the channels. AT&T said it's been in discussions with each major national broadcast network. With the sunset, DirecTV will lose the ability to import distant signals to RVs, truckers and others who lack a local station.

Top COVID Responders: *Forbes* released its new Forbes Corporate Responders ranking, assessing how well the 100 largest employers in the US responded to the public health crisis, and telecom came out on top. The data analyzed companies' policies from mid-March through May 7 across 22 categories and scored in an overall composite score out of 5. *Forbes* released the top 25 performers. **Verizon** topped the list with a score of 3.87, with *Forbes* noting the company had not laid off any of its 135K employees and committed over \$54mln in contributions and donations to nonprofits. **AT&T** was No 3 on the list with a score of 3.83 and **T-Mobile** No 5 with 3.77. **Charter** was ranked No 12, and **Apple** No 18.

Sports Update: The **NHL** is making plans for a return. Commissioner *Gary Bettman* said the league will forgo the remainder of the regular 2019-20 season, and instead go straight to a 24-team playoff tournament. No date yet as to when that would be, though Bettman said training would begin no sooner than July. **NBC Sports** currently has the national television rights to the league. -- Conferences and television networks have agreed to extend the announcement of college football early season games that would be televised. In a joint statement from **CBS**, **ESPN**, **Fox Sports** and their affiliated networks, the groups said those announcements would be pushed back from the standard June 1 deadline. The announcements will come at a later, unspecified date.

Future of Ad Spend: Digital ad spending may lead the way for recovery in advertising, following sharp declines throughout 2020. Analysts at **MoffettNathanson** predict advertising growth will decline by 8.6% in 2020, led by a 13% decline in traditional spending and a 3% decline in online ad spending. The group estimates that ad spending to GDP will "return quickly" to pre COVID-19 levels in 2021, led by digital ad spending. "By 2021, we estimate that digital ad spending—even excluding the TV dollars that go into AVOD platforms like **Hulu**, **Peacock** or **Pluto**—will source 54% of all ad spending in the US," analysts wrote in a research note. "Given both the shifts in consumer behavior to e-commerce and the ability of digital to produce more targeted and efficient results, this snap-back is essentially fueled by a return to growth in digital spending at the two largest ad platforms (**Alphabet** and **Facebook**)." The first quarter of 2020 did not show the full impact of the coronavirus, given that the shutdown occurred in mid-March. In fact, in Q1 advertising grew 7%, driven by a 13% growth in online advertising. "While we anticipate the full brunt of COVID-19 to be felt in 2Q, we expect weak ad spending to remain throughout 2020 in a more gradual "U-shaped" recovery," said **MoffettNathanson**.

Coronavirus Campaigns: **Altice USA** and **Optimum** unveiled a new campaign called #HeyNeighbor, aiming to spotlight local business and individuals across the NY tri-state area going above and beyond to keep their neighborhoods and communities connected. The campaign starts this week with sharing a variety of stories from neighborhoods throughout the area, such as a children's music performer providing free concerts online to a car service chauffeuring first responders. The stories will be shared across TV spots, social media and digital advertising.

Automotive Goes Virtual: **Effectv**, the ad sales division of **Comcast Cable**, is launching the first-ever virtual automotive showroom on an MVPD. More than a dozen Tier 1 automotive brands will take part in a free two-month preview on Xfinity's X1 platform. Manufacturers can feature their cars on a full-scale, voice-activated virtual showroom for free, and Z1 customers can explore new vehicles on their TVs.

Haystack TV Launches Newline: AVOD streamer **Haystack TV** launched its new feature "Newline," a dynamic and interactive news ticker. It first launched on the **Roku** platform, and gives users a customized selection of breaking and relevant TV news coverage.

Ratings: **History**'s 6-hour miniseries "Grant" was the net's best-nonfiction mini launch in 6 years. It pulled in 3mln viewers in its Memorial Day debut. It is the No 2 miniseries launch of '20 in all of cable, behind only **ESPN**'s "The Last Dance."

Programming: **ESPN** and **Peloton** have teamed up for the first pro-athlete all-star ride. The hour-long special will air Saturday at noon on ESPN. Eight male and eight female pro athletes will participate in two 20-minute classes, and the rider with the highest output number will be declared the winner. If the athletes collectively reach an output of 3K, Peloton will donate 1mln meals to the Food Bank for NYC. -- **Insight TV** will premiere its first full-length doc shot entirely in 8K as part of a week-long "Board, Not Bored!" programming event. "Sandboarding on Dragon Hill" premieres June 7.

People: **Revolt TV** named *Detavio Samuels* COO of the network. He comes over from **Interactive One** and One Solution/OneX, where he served as pres. -- Former **NAMIC** head *Nicol Turner Lee* was promoted to senior fellow at the **Brookings Institution**.