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Cablefax Daily™

Friday — July 10, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

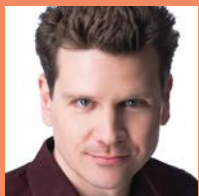
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Fans Unite: Comic-Con@Home Prepares to Open Virtual Doors

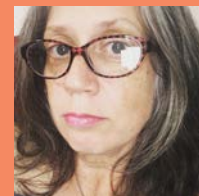
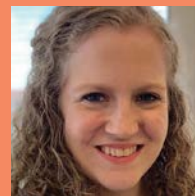
San Diego Comic-Con had to call off its annual four-day convention back in April, but its virtual alternative taking place July 23-26 promises to provide plenty of programming for a larger audience than ever before. More than 350 separate panels will be spread out over the event's five days and will be accessible via the San Diego Comic-Con [website](#) or on the Comic-Con YouTube channel. The majority of those will also be available after their scheduled air times, but some may have a limited time period attached to them, according to the show's organizers. The experience won't allow for the same level of interactivity with fans as a live show as all the panels will be pre-recorded. Fans will still be able to show off their best cosplay via the event's annual Masquerade showcase. Attendees will be able to watch entries as a video presentation or series of photos. The rest of the schedule is still rolling out, but many of programming's biggest names have already begun announcing their plans. **AMC's** "The Walking Dead" is making its 11th appearance at the show to discuss the Season 10 finale episode with cast members and showrunner *Angela Kang*. "Fear the Walking Dead" will have a separate session to give a preview of its upcoming sixth season. **FX** is showing up with sessions for comedies "Archer" (July 24, 5pm PT) and "What We Do in the Shadows" (July 25, 5pm). **Amazon Prime Video** is sponsoring its own hub within the virtual conference that will showcase series like "The Boys" and "Utopia." Newcomers **Apple TV+**, **Disney+** and **HBO Max** are all making appearances at the convention. Apple TV+ is bringing together the female powerhouses behind "Mythic Quest: Raven's Bouquet" to discuss not only how the show came together, but also to address their experiences working in historically male-dominated industries (July 23, 1pm PT). Disney+ is showcasing "Marvel's 616," a docuseries exploring the intersections of pop culture and fandom. It will also be holding a "The Simpsons" panel to explore how the show has moved forward to Season 32 through the times of social distancing (July 25, 11am PT). HBO Max is showing off original series "Close Enough" (July 23, 5pm PT) as well as "Looney Tunes Cartoons" (July 26, 1pm PT). During the latter panel, the creative team will premiere an all-new cartoon and walk fans through what it takes to bring Bugs and the rest of the gang to life. Mainstay **Hulu** will also be around to tout Marvel series "Helstrom" as well as "Solar Opposites" and "Crossing Swords," but no times have been announced for those sessions. **CBS All Access** will be showing up in full force for all the Trekkies out there, who should buckle up for a "Star Trek" panel bringing together "Star Trek: Picard," "Star

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Trek: Discovery” and “Star Trek: Lower Decks.” HBO Max isn’t the only **WarnerMedia** property showing up for the virtual show. **AT&T**’s cable networks are also participating, hosting panels for series like **HBO**’s “His Dark Materials” (July 23, 1pm PT) and “Lovecraft Country” (July 25, 4pm PT). **TBS**’s “American Dad” supervising director *Brent Woods* will also host a panel teaching the cast and executive producers how to draw everyone’s favorite alien, Roger (July 25, 1pm PT). **AT&T** is also holding a separate event to capitalize on the breadth of its entertainment assets. **Warner Bros** is launching DC Fandome, a free virtual fan experience centered on its DC Comics library of entertainment. The virtual conference will kick off Aug 22 at 10am PT and will run for 24 hours. The program will include content reveals as well as panels and presentations from the casts and crews behind films and TV series from the DC universe.

Frontier Reaches \$900K Settlement: **Frontier Communications** will pay \$900K to settle an investigation by the Washington State AG’s office into whether Frontier Northwest adequately disclosed fees when advertising and selling its products. The investigation also alleges that Frontier misled subscribers about internet speeds it could provide. AG *Bob Ferguson* began its investigation into Frontier Northwest in 2018 after receiving more than 600 complaints about the company. As part of the settlement, Frontier Northwest is ordered to clearly and conspicuously disclose all fees. It is also required to be transparent about its available internet speeds. The majority of its \$900K payment will be used to provide restitution to impacted customers.

NYC Directing More Funds to Broadband: NYC mayor *Bill de Blasio* plans to expand broadband access to 600K New Yorkers, including those in low-income communities of color. His plan would invest \$157mln, including \$87mln that was originally earmarked for the NYPD, to extend service to those that were left behind by the city budget passed last month. Beneficiaries of the funding will receive internet service for \$15/month for the next 18 months. Recipients of the internet offer include 200K public housing residents. De Blasio also said the city would work with minority- and women-owned businesses to train people to install and operate broadband infrastructure to create jobs within those communities.

Quibi Fails to Convert Trial Customers: Only 72K of short-form streamer **Quibi**’s initial sign-ups have stuck around after being the first to sign up for its three-month free trial, according to estimates from analytics firm **Sensor Tower**. The app had attracted 910K users within the first few days of its April launch, meaning it has converted approximately 8% of those users into paying customers. Quibi has said that more than 5.6mln people have downloaded the app since then, and it remains unknown how many of those have continued to use the service beyond the trial.

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Checking Broadband Progress: Rep *Anna Eshoo* (D-CA) introduced legislation Thursday that instructs the **FCC** to update the National Broadband Plan to expand internet access and study how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the online lives of Americans. The National Broadband Plan for the Future Act is companion legislation to a Senate bill introduced by Sen *Ed Markey* (D-MA) that requires the FCC to measure the nation's progress towards closing the digital divide and provide detailed proposals to further increase internet access.

Nielsen Delays Out of Home Measurement: **Nielsen** is delaying the launch of its "out-of-home" measurement tool, which was expected to debut in September. *Sports Business Journal* reported that Nielsen execs spent Wednesday afternoon calling media companies to inform them the new ratings measurement tool would be delayed, citing the pandemic and stay-at-home orders as the main reason. The company did not give a revised start date, and said it will reassess its decision in 1Q21. Nielsen is expected to officially announce the delay this week. In other Nielsen news, the company launched the Nielsen Audience Planner, a solution it says enables first-party audience segments to flow across systems for various stages of media planning and buying. The tool is designed to help buyers take an advanced segment and find which networks and programs would work for that audience by streamlining the integration of first-party data across multiple systems and workflows. At launch, the solution will feature first-party data upload, where users can upload their own data and match it to Nielsen's audience measurement data, which will then create audience profiles. Segments can be used across in-house, third party and Nielsen solutions.

NBCU Reveals Creativity Summit: **NBCUniversal** set the slate for its first "creativity summit," taking place virtually on July 16. The event is aimed primarily for media buyers and press and includes an early preview of the "30 Rock" upfront show that will be broadcast later that evening. The four-hour event includes talent such as *Tina Fey*, *Fred Armisen* and *Dan Fogelman*, and advertising and marketing specialists will speak on a variety of panels. The 30 Rock special will bring together the original cast of the comedy and is in lieu of a traditional upfront, to "celebrate the stories and talent featured in NBCUniversal's 2020-2021 television season."

Distribution: **Pluto TV** and the **NFL** extended their partnership, continuing NFL content on the service. The NFL Channel on Pluto TV is a curated feed of library content, and upcoming new programming includes several series dedicated to the NFL 100 season-long celebration in 2019. -- **SportsGrid Network** launched on **Samsung TV Plus**. The digital-first linear TV streaming net caters to a sports wagering audience.

Programming: **Peacock Premium** will feature more than 175 exclusive premier league matches in the 2020-21 season. It will include full-event replays for all 380 matches on-demand, and all content presented on **NBC Sports Gold's** "Premier League Pass" will shift exclusively to Peacock Premium. Peacock launches nationally July 15. -- **ViacomCBS** scored the rights to UEFA club competitions, beginning this August and running through 2024. **CBS All Access** and **CBS Sports** to serve as the exclusive English-language home in the US for the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League. -- *Martha Stewart* is bringing her talent to **HGTV** for new series "Martha Knows Best," premiering July 31 at 10 and 10:30pm. Martha's fans and famous friends will virtually pop in to chat with her and get advice on their own home projects. -- **Nickelodeon** greenlit a second season of animated series "It's Pony." The 20-episode season will premiere domestically in 2021. -- **HBO Max** ordered a second season of ballroom competition series "Legendary." -- **Fuse** is bringing digital original series "Like, Share, Dimelo" to its linear channel, premiering on Sept 21. -- **HBO Sports** is creating a two-part documentary series following the rise, fall and comeback of *Tiger Woods*. Part one of "Tiger" premieres Dec 13. -- **Travel Channel** will premiere "The Osbournes Want to Believe" Aug 2 at 10pm. The eight-part series stars *Jack*, *Ozzy* and *Sharon Osbourne* examining paranormal videos. -- **MTV** greenlit "The Challenge" for a 36th season as the franchise is currently pacing to be the highest-rated season in the last eight years. -- **VENN**, the Video Game Entertainment and News Network, will launch with over 20 hours of first-run programming per week on Aug 5. The company is planning a slate of news and talk shows, game shows and documentaries, and plans to expand to over 50 hours of content in 2021. -- **Hulu** renewed "Ramy" for Season 3. The 10-episode order comes after the May 29 premiere of Season 2. -- **Netflix** is adding a sixth season to "The Crown." The series was originally set to end after Season 5. -- **ESPN2** added 10 matches from World Team Tennis, set to play its 45th season this summer. Matches kick off on the season's opening day Sunday at 8pm. More matches may be added beyond July 18.

People: **WWE** tapped *Kristina Salen* as CFO, effective Aug 3. She replaces *George Barrios*, who left earlier this year. *Frank A. Riddick III* had been serving as interim CFO. Salen was the first CFO of **Etsy** and executed the company's IPO. -- **Tubi** named *Carolyn Forrest* svp, general counsel. She most recently served as vp, legal affairs for **Fox Television Stations**.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Big Green Men...

Alien shows on TV come and go like the solar wind, but a constant audience seems to clamor for anything alien in both the scripted and non-scripted realms. SyFy's "Resident Alien" is one such offering, and the show—which was supposed to debut a couple of weeks ago before everyone's programming schedules got derailed by COVID-19—puts a different spin on the alien invasion trope by telling its story from the perspective of said alien. To be specific, it's an alien who had one job (drop off an Extinction Device to kill us all) but who crash lands instead, stealing the identity of a small-town Colorado doctor until he can complete his murderous mission. SyFy has released an early cut of the pilot to critics, and one thing seems clear: This show will cleverly mix dark humor with real heart when it debuts later this year (no new date set yet). *Alan Tudyk*, whose socially awkward alien finds himself helping to solve a murder (don't ask), told critics at the last TCA press tour that "when I play the character, there is a lot of discomfort going on inside of me... It's like he's wearing a mask, the mask that looks like me, as he's looking at the world." And for those who love alien lore, it doesn't hurt that showrunner *Chris Sheridan* got the idea for the series 20 years ago on his honeymoon when he and his wife spotted a UFO over the beach in the Bahamas. "It was triangular, and it had, like, six circular lights on the bottom of it," he told critics. "And it slowly went over us. And it had a light on the front that was sweeping the beach. And the light sort of hit us, and she tried to run and I grabbed her and—you know, the 'take her first' type of thing." He says the object instead passed over them, but Sheridan's dark sense of humor (we assume he really wouldn't have handed over his wife to aliens) gives you a feel for this quirky series that hopefully will get a new premiere date soon. — *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "Frontline: Once Upon a Time in Iraq," premiere, 9pm, Tuesday, **PBS**. Hard to believe it's been more than 17 years since the US and its coalition partners invaded Iraq and toppled the regime of *Sadam Hussein*. This short doc lets viewers experience the invasion and the turbulent years since through the Iraqis who have lived through it. Most of the people interviewed in the film were teens or younger when the US-led coalition arrived. Perhaps filmmaker *James Bluemel* thought it would be useful to hear childhood recollections of the time, loaded with hope and optimism, and contrast them with what's occurred. Says one Iraqi, "When I was a child, I thought *Sadam* was immortal." Another says he thought *Sadam* "was my grandfather." Once *Sadam* was no more, thoughts of better times were rampant, and not just from Iraq's youth. Bluemel also interviews an Iraqi who tells him, "I miss *Sadam* every day." This doc is not easy viewing, and perhaps scheduling it during a global pandemic wasn't the best programming choice. Yet it's a tremendously insightful and compelling film. — "Obsession: Escaping My Ex," premiere, 8pm, Saturday, **Lifetime**. Loyal readers have urged us to lighten up a bit. We hear you. This three-part mini may not be high drama, but it'll help viewers escape the quotidian for a few moments. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (06/29/20-07/05/20)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	1.089	3,346
MSNBC	0.588	1,806
CNN	0.508	1,562
HGTV	0.409	1,256
TLC	0.346	1,063
TBSC	0.285	877
HIST	0.263	808
FOOD	0.251	770
HMN	0.229	705
USA	0.225	691
INSP	0.224	690
DISC	0.221	678
HALL	0.217	667
ID	0.210	647
TVLAND	0.194	595
TNT	0.176	542
PARA	0.164	503
SYFY	0.158	486
NAN	0.155	477
ADSM	0.151	463
A&E	0.148	454
GSN	0.147	450
FX	0.144	442
NICK	0.140	429
AMC	0.138	424
APL	0.134	412
BRAVO	0.130	400
TRAVEL	0.125	385
WETV	0.124	382
NATGEO	0.122	374
COM	0.120	370
DSJR	0.110	338
LIFE	0.108	332
MTV	0.107	327
DSNY	0.106	324
BET	0.105	322
NGW	0.104	320
FRFM	0.100	309
E!	0.097	300
ESPN	0.097	298
HBO	0.094	287

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

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