

Special Work Culture section Pg 4

Cablefax Daily™

Thursday — August 20, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 161

Heavy Lift: Iowa Struggling to Recover From Derecho

It's been just over a week since a derecho storm devastated portions of Iowa, and the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area has only just started recovering from its effects. Broadband and cable operators serving the region moved quickly to assess the damage and get customers back online. After the initial storm, **Mediacom** had 340K customers offline. "We quickly rolled out local crews and out of state contractors to get 250K customers back online within the first couple days," a Mediacom spokesperson said. About 40K customers remain offline today, most of whom are in the hardest hit areas like Cedar Rapids and Marshalltown. The company is now following behind the tree removal and power companies as they work to clear debris and rebuild power lines. In total, Mediacom estimated it lost about 60-75 miles of network as a result of the storm. **ImOn Communications** is still working to determine the full scale of the storm's impact on its network. Like Mediacom, ImOn is following commercial power, working to restore service to those without as quickly as possible after power is restored. And where it is safe, ImOn crews are working to evaluate, assess and repair the areas of the network that have taken damage. The storm's timing couldn't be less ideal. The number of COVID-19 cases in the area is trending upwards and many folks were still working from home when the storm hit. "Businesses are frantic for us to get their employees' residences back up so that they can continue to work," ImOn vp, marketing *Lisa Rhatigan* said. "There were so many more people working from home that we're feeling that pressure." School districts are also struggling to decide how to move forward with the start of the school year as they assess the damage done to educational buildings. The Cedar Rapids School District was originally scheduled to open for in-person learning this upcoming Monday, but pushed that back by a week in order to put together a plan that better addressed the ongoing pandemic. Now, that date has been pushed back even further, and other school districts in the area are in similar situations. "If they're starting, we're prioritizing them to get their service back up, but they've all postponed for two or three weeks," Rhatigan said. The **FCC** deactivated its Disaster Information Reporting System for the derecho after publishing its daily communications status report for Wednesday. The report said cable and wireline companies reported more than 23K subs out of service in affected areas of Iowa. That could include the loss of telephone, television and/or Internet services.

**HELP CABLEFAX
RECOGNIZE THE MOST
POWERFUL WOMEN
IN THE INDUSTRY**



**Cablefax
MOST POWERFUL WOMEN**

NEW FOR 2020!

Cablefax is expanding the recognition of female excellence & achievements by adding 7 individual & organization award recognitions including: The Wavemakers, The Rising Tide (*honoring women 30 & under*) and Mentoring Programs.

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, AUG. 21

www.CablefaxWomen.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, Cynopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com ● Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● VP, Sales: Mike Farina, 203.218.6480, mfarina@accessintel.com ● Sales Exec: Albert Nassour, 917.545.3129, anassour@accessintel.com ● Dir 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/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

DNC Night 2: MSNBC was once again the big winner of the Democratic National Convention, averaging 4.6mln viewers during prime (8pm-11pm). That's 5% above the first night's 4.3mln, and a record rating for any convention night in network history. **CNN** fell 12% from the first night, bringing in 3.6mln, and **Fox News** gained 3%, averaging 3.5mln. During the 10pm hour, which featured former pres *Bill Clinton* and *Dr. Jill Biden*, MSNBC hit 5.4mln viewers. CNN saw 4.3mln and Fox News earned 2.2mln. In the A25-54 demo in all primetime, CNN topped with 1.047mln. MSNBC drew in 836K viewers and Fox followed with 836K.

Is Free for Quibi?: If **Quibi** wants to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic, its best bet may be to transition into an ad-supported service. That's according to the most recent report from research consultancy **TDG**. If the short-form streamer made the change, four-in-10 adult broadband users said they would watch, with 18% certain to do so. Another 34% were on the bubble, either slightly likely or unlikely to view. TDG also said that Quibi needs to make the pivot in order to reach its target audience of millennials and Gen Z viewers. "Social networks dominate short-form video viewing among young adults, capturing hundreds of millions of viewers. Yet none—including **YouTube** and **Facebook**—have been able to convince young adults to pay a fee each month to watch professional content," TDG senior analyst *Lauren Kozak* said. "At this point in the evolution of mobile short-form video, and regardless of new features and formats, introducing a paywall is problematic."

Older Population Drives Netflix Growth: In the first half of the fiscal year, **Netflix** added 5.7mln subs in the US and Canada, up 8% from the end of year 2019. According to a report from **Nieslen**, streaming usage is growing in consumers 55 and up, now comprising of 26% of all streaming minutes viewed, up 19% YOY. Analysts at **Bernstein** believe that the older population is driving Netflix sub growth, meaning Netflix is not fully penetrated in North America. "Over time, there will be a natural growth tailwind as younger cohorts age and carry-forward their higher penetration rates. We have estimated this aging benefit to be worth 23mm US subs to Netflix over the next 15 years. COVID accelerated that," analysts wrote in a note. Bernstein rated Netflix Outperform, with a target price of \$573.

The TV Multiverse: **Hulu's** latest research surrounding "Generation Stream" (the 90% of Americans 18-54 who stream video content) found that the demographic is creating new "networks" of television — fandoms built from the ground up that tap into human bonding. Nearly every person surveyed (95%) said that streaming has changed the way they watch TV. Instead of focusing on one primetime series, now folks can binge watch entire series. Nearly half (49%) said they miss collective "water cooler" conversations around content, and 56% said

CYNOPSIS WEBINARS PRESENTS

BLACK OWNED MEDIA MATTERS

The Ways You Can Include Us & Build Long Term Partnerships

Thursday, AUG. 27 | 1-2PM ET

Sponsored by:

the **grio**



Register for Free

www.cynopsis.com/webinars

keeping up with popular TV shows and movies is a form of social currency that allows them to take part in cultural conversations. Almost half (46%) of streamers are actively part of a community, either in real life or online, that discusses their favorite TV shows and films.

Shentel Building Out in WV: Shentel is working on building out cable systems in areas of the West Virginia Eastern Panhandle. Charles Town city council voted unanimously to enter into a cable franchise agreement with the company, and vp *Chris Kyle* said the company should have the system completely built out by Aug 1, 2022. **Comcast** is the largest provider in the area. The news was first reported by local paper *The Journal*.

Voting Time: *Oprah Winfrey* is busy encouraging people to vote this year, announcing that **OWN** is providing a full paid day off for election days, both national and presidential, to all employees in order to vote and volunteer. In addition to voting, the net is encouraging people to get involved by becoming a poll worker, volunteering to support election protection, or volunteering to call or text voters in states where voter turnout will be important. OWN also recently released its first voting initiative. "OWN Your Vote" is working to empower viewers with tools they need to make their voices heard this election season.

Ratings: **Fox News** hit 30 straight weeks of leading in primetime among total viewers. Last week, the net pulled in 3.386mln viewers in prime and 1.739mln in total day. In prime, **MSNBC** brought in 2.088mln, and **CNN** followed with 1.353mln. **HGTV** saw 1.384mln. In total day, Fox saw 1.739mln, MSNBC 1.224mln and CNN 977K. -- **BET's** docuseries "No Limit Chronicles" earned 3.1mln total viewers during its three-week premiere run across BET and **BET Her**. The series finale and premiere of "Ruff Ryders Chronicles" pulled in 1.1mln total viewers on Aug 12. -- **Outdoor Channel** and **Sportsman Channel** ranked among the top 20 basic cable nets in July among M25-54, both posting double-digit YOY growth. Overall, Outdoor Channel grew impressions in total day by 22% and in its key demo by 13%. Sportsman Channel grew its total day impressions by 8% in households and in the key demo by 19% YOY.

Distribution: **Pluto TV** is launching in Brazil, beginning Dec of this year. The service launched in Latin America earlier this year. The AVOD service also launched 12 new channels in the US in a new mix of 15 categories. Channels include content focused on classic TV shows, Westerns, love stories and suspense. The new categories combine new and existing programming and include content genres like entertainment, crime, gaming + anime and more. -- **Endemol Shine** and **Tubi** entered an agreement to distribute additional shows in the US, bringing "MasterChef" and "Lego Masters" to the AVOD platform. Tubi will now be the only platform in the US where international versions of MasterChef will be available.

Comcast Unveils Voter Education Tool: **Xfinity** launched an interactive, personalized and bilingual election news experience Tuesday on X1 and Flex. Election Central is designed to help customers access information on voting in their state and the latest news on the general election. By selecting a "Voting Information" tile, customers will be able to enter their mobile number and immediately receive a link to vote.gov.

Programming: **Peacock** is going all-in on sports, this time adding a new Peacock original series streaming on a new, free sports channel. "Brother from Another" will be the streamer's first original sports talk show, coming to Peacock in September, streaming live 3-6pm. On Aug 24, NBC Sports on Peacock will launch. -- **WE tv's** "Life After Lockup" is returning with a four-part event on Sept 11 at 9pm. The self-shot program includes a mix of unseen footage and stories from quarantine. -- **HBO Max** is debuting the documentary "Class Action Park" on Aug 27. The doc dives into New Jersey's Action Park, regarded as the world's most dangerous amusement park. -- **The Weather Channel** is premiering Season 6 of "Weather Gone Viral" Sunday at 6pm. -- Soccer is continuing to make its return across the world, with Germany's Bundesliga kicking off on **ESPN** and **ESPN+**. Beginning Sept 18, ESPN+ will stream more than 300 matches in English and Spanish in the first year of a multi-year agreement. There will also be select specials and segments across **ESPN Deportes**. And over in France, Ligue 1 returns on Friday after an early cancellation due to COVID-19. **beIN Sports** will kick off the 2020-2021 season at 12:55pm when Bordeaux takes on Nantes. -- **Marquee TV** is teaming up with Houston Grand Opera to exclusively stream the 2020-2021 season. The subscription-based arts channel will host the content for free, with viewers creating an account not requiring payment information.

People: Former **AMC Networks** exec *Adam Gaynor* joined **VIZIO** as vp, network partnerships. He'll be tasked with helping build direct relationships with networks across VIZIO's Smartcast platform and its advertiser-direct business unit, VIZIO Ads. Gaynor most recently served as vp, AMCN Agility and has also held posts at **DISH**, **Game Show Network**, **Comcast** and **CBS**.

THE WORK CULTURE LIST PROFILE:

WORKPLACE DESIGN PARTNER **Eppstein Uhen Architects**

With a change in the workforce also comes a change in the way companies approach designing their own spaces. A number of cable's best have called on Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) to revamp their buildings in order to attract and retain top talent while maximizing the potential of their real estate.

"The employees who are out there looking and interviewing are weighing not only compensation packages, but they are weighing their work environment," principal Rick Burkett says.

And it doesn't take long for those potential employees to make a judgment call on whether a workspace is right for them. EUA found that it only takes seven seconds for a candidate or new hire to make a first impression about a potential employer. He has especially seen that in Millennials, who tie much of their personal self-worth with the work that they do, the company for whom they choose to work and the space they have to work within.

Companies are responding by opening up their floor plans and creating what principal Kitty Yuen calls "we spaces" and "me spaces." While a cubicle or desk may have the best lighting or additional space for an extra monitor, moving to a different environment partway through the day may boost the productivity of some employees.

"The most important thing for attracting and retaining employees is an engaged work environment," Yuen says. "An engaged work environment means that they have all the choices they need to do their jobs the way they want to do their jobs... we need to leave ourselves enough room and flexibility to have them choose the places where they want to meet."

EUA has also seen a number of its clients move to take leadership out of the private offices they would traditionally occupy. In order to still recognize that person's seniority and service to the company, EUA has placed



those people closer to windows or chosen to expand their workstations to allow for more private conversations with employees.

There's also been a change in expectation over time as to what amenities a workplace should be offering to its employees. Offering a gym or coffee station for employees may have been a major draw for talent a decade ago, but it is becoming increasingly standard issue for that to be a part of any company's environment.

Wanting to stand out, EUA's cable and technology clients have begun wanting to build out a variety of lab spaces. Those innovation hubs are designed to give teams an additional space to dive into projects and brainstorm new ideas. Additional demonstration rooms to show off the latest and greatest the company has to offer have also been in high demand.

"That's a good sales tool because it's part of their client tour and the potential employee tour too as they take them through these spaces," Yuen says. "These companies are looking for differentiators to help them stand out among the other competitors, and having a well-designed space is one of those things."

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES!



Cablefax's Work Culture List Digital Issue!

Read & Share Profiles at www.CFXWorkCulture.com

April 2020
Cablefax
THE MAGAZINE
Innovation > Leadership > Community
cablefaxmag.com



Think about that for a minute...

Word Play

Commentary by Steve Effros

The initial headlines said that the viewership on “television” of the first night of the Democratic National Convention was down by about 25% from the prior convention. Oh, wait a minute, those were the “Nielsen” numbers. They left out those (estimated at over 10 million) who were watching on a “streaming” app! If you counted those, then the “viewership” exceeded the last convention.



As I’m sure you noted, I’ve had to put quotation marks around the words viewership, television, streaming and the like because clearly there is no agreement any more about what any of those words mean! How about cooperation, consent, complicity and collusion? Thousands of pages of investigations later and there’s clearly no agreement on those, either. And then there’s television, cable television, broadband, streaming, OTT, and the like. Just look at the latest spate of numbers showing the alleged impending demise of the “cable industry” and you can really tell that no one knows what the heck is going on.

Let’s look at those numbers; well known researcher Bruce Leichtman released his quarterly report recently with the headline “Major Pay-TV Providers Lost About 1,570,000 Subscribers in 2Q 2020.” But, he noted, the top “cable companies” lost only 500,000, while satellite providers lost close to 900,000 and the “vMVPD” group that released numbers (Hulu + Live, Sling, AT&T Now) also lost subscribers.

But wait! Then came another headline from Bruce: “About 1,245,000 Added Broadband in 2Q 2020.” Based on the DNC numbers, a whole lot of folks who were watching things on what was narrowly defined as “television” are now watching that same thing on a “streaming” service via broadband. So if we stop playing word games and focus on whatever it is that is considered important, such as “viewers” in the case of the DNC, not how they viewed it, you get

a totally different perspective on what’s actually happening.

The same is true if you want to focus on the medium.

That is, for the “cable” industry, if someone wants to watch something on an aggregated channel that we offer, or on a “streaming” aggregated program service that someone else offers, the fact is they are still watching it on our infrastructure. The difference is that in one case we have to pay for the programming we aggregate (“cable service”) and in the other we escape all that expense and simply provide the means of delivery of the programming (broadband).

To be sure, it’s still a darn good deal if we can get customers to buy both services. However programming costs are escalating to the point, particularly with retransmission consent, that some cable operators find it’s a better business model to simply drop the aggregated programming service and focus on broadband delivery. Broadband has considerably better margins and much less hassle.

Meanwhile, the consumer press and other commentators still try to compare “cable service” prices and “streaming service” prices as though they were equivalent services, ignoring the fact that consumers buying “streaming services” then have to additionally pay for delivery!

I know you’ve read my laments about this before, but it’s to the point where, using the DNC example as an indicator of how confused the consumer press gets, it’s time for us to ask the “experts” like Bruce and analyst Craig Moffett for help. Their headline-fodder press releases should start introducing totally different language to explain what they’re talking about. Burying the clarifications in the details won’t work. The word play has gotten too confusing.

Steve

T:202-630-2099
steve@effros.com

(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

CableJobs

Post your job openings today!

Reach the most qualified candidates.

Cablefax has a recruitment product to fit your budget and business needs.

9898
JOB SEEKERS

5075
RESUMES



Visit us at www.cablefax.com/jobs