

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Shopping Season: Streamers Go Big with Black Friday Savings

It's going to be a different kind of Black Friday this year as with everything else since the pandemic took hold. But the sales must go on! Increased online shopping should actually help the industry, particularly all these DTC streaming offerings.

NBCUniversal's Peacock is offering 20% off of its annual subscription for the premium plan. **Discovery, Inc's** cooking streamer **Food Network Kitchen** is offering 50% off a year subscription (making it \$19.99), plus it's throwing in 30 days free. **Hulu** is back once again with its deep Black Friday discount. Beginning at midnight on Thanksgiving Day, new and eligible returning subs can sign-up for Hulu's ad-supported plan for just \$1.99 per month for one year—a \$48 savings.

Fox News' SVOD Fox Nation has rolled out a full slate of holiday programming, including its first holiday themed original scripted production, "Christmas in the Rockies," debuting Thursday. It's offering 35% off its one-year, two-year and three-year "Patriot" subscriptions now through Black Friday. **AMC Networks** is running discounts of approximately 50% off for three months on a variety of platforms, including **Roku**. The promos run across **Shudder, Acorn, Sundance Now** and **AMC+**.

Starting Thanksgiving Day and running through 11:59pm ET Sunday, vMVPD **Philo** will offer new customers 25% off their first month with the code "Black Friday 2020." But the fun continues on Cyber Monday with Philo offering 25% off the first month with the code "Cyber Monday 2020" running through

11:59pm ET Tuesday. **T-Mobile** announced a deal that puts the 33 channels in its \$10/month TVision streaming package in its larger \$40 and \$50/month packages—which seems to be more of a way to [appease upset programmers](#) than a Black Friday promo, with it unclear when/if the combined offering will end.

Pay-as-you-go satellite service **Orby TV** is offering now through Nov 30 \$99 for a one-room receiver system, including basic professional installation for one room with promo code Gobble9. It's for new customers only and available only online. Traditional players are getting in on the action as well, with **Verizon Fios** giving up to a \$500 credit to help cover early termination fees for those who switch over. Other offers include Sony PlayStation Plus and PlayStation Now free for 12 months when a customer signs up for Fios internet.

The **Consumer Technology Association** projects that tech spending on hardware and services during the 2020 holiday season will increase in the US 10% YOY to \$135bln in revenue. The 27th Annual Consumer Technology Holiday Purchase Patterns study also found 81% of US adults are more likely or just as likely to purchase tech products this holiday season, despite the economic and safety concerns marked by the pandemic.

With more consumers staying at home, TV manufacturers are hoping to see many of them take advantage of the Black Friday sales to upgrade their sets. Deals we spotted included an early Black Friday deal (and, not surprisingly, currently sold out) **Hisense** 65" Led 4K UHD Smart Android TV for \$249.99

CFX Cablefax PROGRAM AWARDS

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING NICHE CONTENT ON EVERY PLATFORM

Cablefax's Program Awards is continuing its long tradition of honoring the best programming in a particular content niche, regardless of where the content originated or how consumers watch it.

Enter Today at www.CablefaxProgramAwards.com

QUESTIONS: Mary-Lou French at
mfrench@accessintel.com

First Deadline: Nov. 30
Final Deadline: Dec. 11 (late fees apply)

Shorts Animals/Nature

African American Reality Competition
Music/Musical Live Event Coverage
Food Competition
Remote Production
Live Virtual Event
News
PSA
Awards
Children's
Animated
Local
Late Night
Game Show
Social Justice
Travel Educational Reality
Limited Series
Family-Friendly
Home Sports
Home Trailers
Pets Drama
Comedy
Religious
Lifestyle
Horror/Suspense
Competition
LGBTQ+ Focused
Latin

at Best Buy. But there are plenty of other inexpensive TVs out there, including **Element** 43" 4K UHD Roku TV set at Target for \$159.99. **Samsung** is offering a 55" QLED 4K UHD HDR Smart TV for \$799.

Some folks will be refreshing online like crazy to try and nab the hard-to-come-by **Playstation 5** console. That may give operators a chance to upsell them on internet services. **Cox** offers the Elite Gamer service to help reduce latency, lag spikes and disconnections free to all its Panoramic Wifi customers.

There is of course plenty of programming out there to watch after you've had your turkey dinner. Nonetheless, **Comcast** is giving its customers another helping. "Xfinity's Free TV Week" started today and runs through Monday, offering subs free movies and shows from **Epix, HBO, Starz, Showtime** and more via X1 and Flex. (Great time to binge HBO's "The Undoing" which wraps with ep 6 on Sunday).

VERIZON, NYC REACH SETTLEMENT

Verizon has an agreement with New York City that settles proceedings against it after the city claimed it had failed to meet buildout terms for its Fios network under its cable franchise agreement. The City sued Verizon in 2017, saying it failed to make its service available to tens of thousands of customers in breach of its 2008 franchise agreement. Under the settlement, Verizon will buildout Fios to 500K additional households, with the company compelled to prioritize the least-connected Community Districts and ensure connectivity for every New York City Housing Authority residential building. Verizon must report quarterly on progress, and the City will make public the list of newly eligible households that were previously ineligible for Fios or broadband service. The

settlement is subject to approval from the NYC Franchise and Review Commission and the Public Service Commission. "Internet access is an economic right in New York City, no matter your ZIP code. Tech giants will not stand in our way to deliver high-quality broadband to New Yorkers—they must be a part of the solution," Mayor *Bill de Blasio* said in a statement. A Verizon spokesman said the company is "grateful" for the opportunity to bring Fios to an additional 500K New Yorkers. "Currently about 2.5m in NYC homes and businesses benefit from all that Fios has to offer. This agreement builds upon Verizon's base, and will make this premier broadband service available to even more consumers," spokesperson *Rich Young* said.

FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON NAB NEXTGEN PETITION

The **FCC** Media Bureau is seeking comment on **NAB's** petition regarding the treatment of multicast streams under the NexGen TV local simulcasting rules. The broadcaster group wants the FCC to clarify, and to the extent necessary, change the licensing treatment so that local simulcasting applies to a station's simulcasted multicast streams as well as its primary stream. It also wants the FCC to declare that the framework applies to multicast streams, even if they're not aired by the originating station. Comments are due Dec 24, with replies due Jan 25.

YOUTUBE SUSPENDS OAN

YouTube has temporarily suspended conservative cable network **One America News**, saying it violated its COVID-19 misinformation guidelines. The network is prevented from posting new videos for a week and existing videos are demonetized for that period. *Axios* first [reported](#) the news Tuesday.

CROWN MEDIA TEAMS UP WITH USO

Webinar: How big data can address a multi-billion dollar problem—churn

Thursday, December 3 12pm EST

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Crown Media Family Networks partnered with the **United Service Organizations**, an org that serves the people in the US military and their families. The multi-platform partnership includes a contribution to the organization and the integration of the USO in the original **Hallmark Movies & Mysteries** holiday movie “USS Christmas,” premiering Saturday. Other elements of the partnership include appearances tied to Giving Tuesday and on **Hallmark Channel’s** “Bubbly Sesh” podcast and local market promotion of USO.

ESPN COLLEGE FOOTBALL UPDATE

The college football Bowl Season is getting closer, but first we have to make it through conference championships. Five championships will air on **ESPN** and **ABC** Dec 18-19 – ACC, American, Big 12, MAC and Sun Belt. The 30th “The Home Depot College Football Awards” will be held virtually on Jan 7 on ESPN at 7pm. Additionally, the net announced the 2020 New Mexico Bowl will take place in Frisco, TX, on Dec 24 at 3:30pm due to state guidelines in NM regarding intercollegiate athletics and travel.

DISTRIBUTION

DMR launched three digital linear channels on **The Roku Channel: RetroCrush, Midnight Pulp** and **Cocoro**.

RATINGS

Fox News was the most-watched net in total day and prime for the week of Nov 16-22. In prime, it pulled 3.083mln viewers. **ESPN** came next with 2.697mln, followed by **MSNBC** with 2.253mln and **CNN** with 2.0833mln. In total day, Fox News saw 1.5mln viewers, followed by CNN with 1.42mln and MSNBC with 1.405mln.

DOING GOOD

Lifetime announced “Gift of a Lifetime,” part of the net’s pro-social giveback initiative partnering with charities to identify five women and their families to receive the “gift of a lifetime” through brand partnership donations. The 2020 charities, who will also receive donations from **A+E Networks/Lifetime**, are Save the Children, #FirstRespondersFirst, Bob Woodruff Foun-

ation, The Pink Agenda and The Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation. Each story will be shared on Lifetime’s social platforms and website, beginning the week of Thanksgiving and debuting each week through Christmas.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

Pluto TV is celebrating Thanksgiving starting Tuesday with a lineup of classic series including “Happy Days,” “Family Ties,” “The Love Boat,” “Wings” “The Beverly Hillbillies,” “Mission: Impossible,” “Laverne & Shirley” and “Mork & Mindy.” – **Crackle Plus** will exclusively stream the doc film “A Reindeer’s Journey,” beginning Dec 1. – **Ovation TV** now has two productions of “The Nutcracker” available for free on its website or on the Ovation NOW app.

PROGRAMMING

“folklore: the long pond studio sessions” will premiere exclusively on **Disney+** Wednesday at 3am (12am PST). The film features *Taylor Swift* accompanied by co-producers of her folklore album *Aaron Desner* and *Jack Antonoff*, alongside *Bon Iver*, as she performs each of the 17 songs in order and for the first time reveals the stories and secrets behind each song. folklore was nominated for five Grammys on Tuesday. – **MSNBC** is airing “OBAMA,” a new docuseries that revisits the two-term presidency of *Barack Obama*. The first two episodes premiere on Friday at 8pm. – The **HBO** special “Between the World and Me” will be available to stream for free on **HBOMax.com** this Thanksgiving, beginning Thursday through Nov 30.

PEOPLE

Bobby Amirshahi is leaving **Univision** for **Macy’s**, where he’ll take on the role of svp of corporate communications, effective Dec 7. He’s currently the svp, corporate communications at Univision.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Monday. Stay safe and enjoy Thanksgiving! And don’t forget, the first entry deadline for the CFX Program Awards Monday at cablefaxprogramawards.com.



National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday December 19th.

You can join in the mission to remember our fallen heroes, honor those who currently serve and their families, and teach younger generations about the value of freedom.

A \$15 Donation to **Wreaths Across America** Sponsors a fresh balsam remembrance wreath. These wreaths have become a symbol of America’s respect for those who have served and no longer walk with us. Sponsor a wreath today.

Visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

Think about that for a minute...

Oh, The Fun We'll Have!

Commentary by Steve Effros

A brief word quiz: do you know what “FOB” stands for? It's a longstanding shipping term you rarely run into these days because we're now using new lingo referring to the same notion. It's an acronym for “free on board destination.” Yes, I know, seems to me it should be “FOBD,” but it's not! Don't know why. Anyway, in the shipping world “free on board destination” signifies that the seller retains responsibility for something through delivery and pays for shipping. Once it is delivered, then ownership conveys. Got that? Good. Now, do you know what “zero rating” means?

In our world, “zero rating” relates to the practice by some data transport providers, both ISPs and cellular companies, offering to provide the data delivery of some specific goods or services without that delivery “costing” the consumer who is using data on some form of limited plan. You see this in ads from time to time. You know, XYZ service, like HBO or Spotify will be promoted as “not counting” against your data plan.

Now granted, this type of promotional is often associated with the company doing the data delivery also owning the programming that it's favoring. However from the provider's point of view, there is usually the response that they are simply paying for delivery rather than forcing the consumer to pay for it: FOB, and that anyone else who would like to “prepay” for the delivery of their product is welcome to do so as well!

I raise all this because the real issue behind the “zero rating” battle we are about to re-enter once the Biden FCC is established is one of antitrust rather than who pays for delivery! There are all sorts of interesting economic arguments that suggest that an ISP “paying” for delivery of its own product has “unfair” advantages because of internal pricing, efficiencies and the like that any of its competitors do not benefit from. This is just one small example of how different things are about to be once we get back to policy debates that are actually about policy differences.

If AT&T offers a “free” year of HBO Max to customers who sign new long term agreements, is that OK, but not charging for data use on the plan they signed would not be? What about T-Mobile now offering “free” Apple TV? Those are examples of the fight that was just getting underway almost four years ago when the battle over “net neutrality” included the “zero rating” issue. I would have to suggest that it may not be as much of an issue today, since the new normal seems to be “unlimited” plans, which sort of moot out the whole thing because it's irrelevant how much data is used for what.

From a broader perspective, however, the question starts to be (and many of you will remember this) what's “free”? Was “free TV” ever free? When Proctor and Gamble includes two “extra” ounces of something “free” is that really the case? If there's a “promotional” deal and you can get a “free” phone but your monthly cellular subscription goes up by the same amount as you would have paid for the phone, is that really “free?” These are all the wonderful things we will contemplate with the incoming administration. As Dr. Seuss has said “oh the fun we'll have!”

Happy Thanksgiving, and stay safe.



Steve

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(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.)

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