

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## WiFi Waze: CableLabs Unveils Wireless Traffic Steering Tech

**CES** is kicking off next week, but **CableLabs** started the party early by introducing a technology that enables adaptive traffic steering and seamless transitions between different types of wireless networks.

Work on the platform-agnostic technology, known as intelligent wireless network steering (IWINS), began back in 2018, with the hope being that CableLabs would be able to find a way to allow users to move across CBRS, WiFi, LTE and other networks on each of their applications depending on which network offered the best experience.

"Today, it's all or nothing. I move everything onto cellular or I move everything onto WiFi. This allows you to then, by application, pick and select which one," CableLabs pres/CEO *Phil McKinney* said at a recent press briefing.

IWINS also uses an individual's personal experiences and crowdsourced information from other users across access technologies to determine which network will provide the best experience for individual applications. CableLabs' focus with the implementation of IWINS is increasing the reliability of the overall user experience, McKinney said.

IWINS will be deployed by operators, meaning those CableLabs members who are mobile network operators. CableLabs has conducted IWINS lab trials with its members and is working on striking licensing agreements with third-party vendors. The technology is a completely over-the-top

solution, CableLabs principal architect *Mario Di Dio* said, requiring the installation of IWINS software client on a user's device and the deployment of servers and other elements in areas like a data center, a premises cloud solution or a public cloud.

"IWINS is a technology that does not require any change to the operating system of the device... there are no deep hooks that have to be put into place," McKinney said. "You basically have a network engineer embedded in your device and it figures out what is the best path for this particular application."

CableLabs members that have shown particular excitement about the technology include mobile network operators and those cable operators who have or are in the process of adding mobile to their product portfolios. Approximately half of CableLabs' 65 global members are mobile network operators.

"They're looking for that kind of converged experience, the experience I get on my wired network and that experience I get when I'm out and about on my mobile device. Mobile in my home and mobile when I'm out and about," McKinney said.

The introduction of IWINS is one of many milestones CableLabs and the industry have reached on the path to 10G networks. As we move into 2021, McKinney said none of the previous dates or timelines CableLabs has shared surrounding the path to 10G have changed. Work continues on chip development and

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**Content. Community. Daily.**

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**The Collapse of Theatrical Windows?:** With theaters shuttering, will day-and-date releases become the norm? **Sals Pictures** is the first out of the gate, announcing "Trolls World Tour" will be available April 10 for a rental. Other in-release movie titles are set to be available as soon as this Friday. The movies will be available on **Comcast, Sky** and a "broad range of on-demand partners." Titles to be made available include "The Man" and "Emma" with a suggested retail price of \$19.99 in the US.

Tuesday — March 17, 2020 What the Industry Reads First Volume 31 / No. 050

**For Now: Providers Set Aside Disputes During Coronavirus Outbreak**

As they face the common enemy that is the coronavirus pandemic, **Cox Media Group** and **DISH** have set aside their retrans dispute for now so that **DISH** can resume its carriage of 10 CMG stations in New York, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Louisiana, California, Mississippi and Idaho. No word on how long the truce will last.

## Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 13, 2020 What the Industry Reads First Volume 31 / No. 050

**New Normal: Companies Roll Out Contingency Plans in Face of Covid-19**

With a growing number of students and employees working from home, it's mission critical for the nation's broadband providers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Operators big and small are up-ending their day-to-day operations to ensure service to their customers.

Wednesday — March 18, 2020 What the Industry Reads First

**Covering Covid-19: Content Companies Step Up Efforts**

Programmers are shuffling schedules to respond to the coronavirus crisis. **The Weather Channel** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content with its audience due to school closures. Topics include why thunder happens, how rainbows form and more. **Pledge** during the crisis.

**From the Commission:** Another 116 broadband and telephone service providers have taken the **Par's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**, agreeing to take specific steps to keep Americans connected for 60 days. Some notable names taking the pledge include **Hotwire Communications**, **Midd**

it remains unclear when 10G-capable equipment will be widely available. “The silicon suppliers are in active development and working with OEM manufacturers around that silicon. So as far as when we would see devices, that’s really determined by the manufacturers themselves,” McKinney said. “We don’t have any form of committed date yet from OEMs as to device readiness, for interops or any of those things.”

### FUBO SEES STRONG 4Q

**Fubo TV** saw a big jump in its stock after beating both 4Q revenue and subscriber results on Tuesday, with both results expected to exceed previously issued guidance in a record quarter and year for the vMVPD. Total revenue is expected to come in between \$94mIn and \$98mIn, a 77%-84% YOY gain and beating prior estimates of \$80-\$85mIn. The provider expects to beat 545K subs at year-end, a 72% YOY gain. Previous guidance was 500K-510K subscribers. The final 4Q numbers will be reported in the next few weeks. **Needham & Co** reaffirmed its “Buy” rating and maintained its \$60 target price. “We see FUBO as an inexpensive way for public investors to participate in the US consumer shift toward OTT and Streaming TV,” the note read. Not all analysts have as rosy of thoughts, however. In a Dec 27 note, **LightShed Partners** wrote: “There is no special sauce at FUBO which can turn the fundamentally flawed MVPD/vMVPD business into a good one, especially as it lacks scale and other products to bundle... Fubo investors should be rushing for the exit with the stock dramatically overvalued at current levels.” LightShed rated fubo a “Sell” with an \$8 target price. Fubo stock closed up nearly 13% at \$27.33.

### SPARKLIGHT SWITCHING TO IPTV

**Sparklight** is ditching linear video and launching its IP-based TV service, Sparklight TV, to customers beginning in early 2021. Delivered via the **MOBITV** Connect platform, Sparklight TV is expected to be available across the company’s entire footprint by the end of 2021. It will operate via an app designed to run on devices such as Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, and Apple TV and will include VOD, program restart, DVR and other features. Sparklight, a **Cable One** company, was an early leader in de-emphasizing video to focus on broadband. The transition to IPTV will allow it to free up network capacity to expand current Gigabit offerings and pave the way to 10G. More than 97 percent of the homes passed by Sparklight’s network currently have access to Gigabit broadband speeds. Over the past three years, the company invested more than \$600mIn on infrastructure upgrades and began installing modems capable of 10 Gigabit per second speeds, which Sparklight expects to deploy broadly in the coming years.

### SCHURZ SIGNS WITH NCTI

**Schurz Communications** signed a five-year enterprise license agreement with **NCTI** that covers technical, call center, leadership and management training. Students also will be able to earn college credit toward an Associate of Applied Science degree in Broadband Technology and Communication from NCTI’s training partner, Arapahoe Community College. “The training made available to Schurz employees will help prepare teams for an increase in fiber deployments over the next several years due to the unprecedented growth in broadband consumption,” NCTI CEO *Stacey Slaughter* said.

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**COX VIDEO RATE HIKE**

Add **Cox** to the list of MVPDs instituting rate increases for video services. In recent billing notices in Connecticut, Cox said that effective Feb 4, it would raise the price of Contour Flex Starter and TV Economy by \$5 each to \$40 and \$47 per month, respectively. TV Essential and Contour TV (Advanced) each will rise by \$4.51 to \$85.49 and \$95, respectively, while Contour TV Ultimate will actually decrease by \$1.99 to \$168.50. For service areas in the state, the broadcast surcharge will rise \$2.50 to \$13.50 and the RSN surcharge will jump by \$1 to \$11. **Comcast** also has rate increases taking effect in 2021, including up to \$4.50 more a month for its broadcast TV fee.

**VERIZON EXPANDS FIOS FORWARD**

**Verizon** is making its low-income internet program Fios Forward available now to existing customers instead of just new customers. Existing customers must qualify for the Lifeline government assistance program. Eligible customers can then choose an internet plan with savings up to \$20 per month—Fios 200/200Mbps is \$19.9/month; Fios 400/400Mbps is \$39.99 and Fios Gigabit Connection with router included is \$59.99/month. Customers may bring their own routers, or Verizon will waive router costs for the first 60 days for new subs. Qualifying new customers will also be eligible for additional promotions and benefits, including getting up to 12 months of **discovery+**.

**RATINGS**

**Netflix** saw its biggest viewing week between Christmas and New Year's ever, let by *Shonda Rhimes'* "Bridgerton" and "Spy Kids" spin-off film "We Can Be Heroes." The streamer said it expects 63m household to have tuned into Bridgerton in its first four weeks, and 44m household will have checked out the family film. Both were released on Dec 25.

**COLLEGE BASKETBALL UPDATE**

In an unusual season, college basketball is still getting the job done. The **NCAA** announced it will host the entire postseason

men's basketball tournament (which was canceled in 2020) in Indianapolis and surrounding areas with a bubble-like format. Since the 2011 tournament, **CBS** and **Turner Sports** have jointly produced the event. This year, CBS has the rights to the final two rounds of the tourney. But it isn't March Madness yet, and we're still in the regular season. **ESPN** is going all-in on men's basketball this week, set to feature more than 150 college matches across its portfolio of networks. The programming kicks off with double-headers on ESPN and **ESPN2** Tuesday night. Women's college basketball also gets its share of the spotlight, with the company's nets featuring nearly 170 games, headlined by two top-10 matches (Kentucky vs Texas A&M, Thursday 8:30pm on **SEC Network**, and Kentucky vs South Carolina, Sunday at 5pm on ESPN).

**PROGRAMMING**

**Pluto TV** is now the exclusive free streaming home to "The Dr. Oz Show." The new dedicated channel will feature 100 episodes with 30 new eps being added into the rotation each month. – **HGTV** is premiering the seven-episode series "Home Again with the Fords" on Feb 2 at 9pm. – **Tennis Channel** is ringing in the 2021 season with a new studio in its L.A. headquarters, just in time for the first women's matches in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Jan. 6 at 1am. – Journalist *Ashleigh Banfield* is joining **WGN America** as the new host of hour-long news and talk show "Banfield," airing weeknights at 10pm beginning March 1. She previously served as a legal analyst and host for **Court TV**. – **ESPN's Stephen A. Smith** is debuting the new series "Stephen A's World" Jan 11 on **ESPN+**. The weeknight series is made up of 30-minute episodes every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday night.

**PEOPLE**

Digital divide-focused nonprofit **Connected Nation** named *Heather Gate* as vp, digital inclusion. She was named director of digital inclusion in 2017 and currently serves as vice chair of the **FCC's** Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment.

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