

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Outside the Box: Pandemic Pushing Next-Gen Technology Forward

Supply chain challenges, a transition to remote working environments and a multitude of other factors affected tech companies last year, but the shake-up has ultimately forced corporations to re-think how they do business and reach out for advice on 5G, WiFi and smart cities technologies.

“COVID actually really helped businesses think through what technologies do I need in order to address COVID as well as the now normal and the next normal, if you will,” **AT&T Business** chief product and platform officer *Mo Katibeh* said at a **Cisco** webinar Thursday. “COVID absolutely helped accelerate some of those conversations that were existing before, but now they took on a new sense of urgency as almost every single industry you can imagine is questioning do they need to transform, how do they need to transform and how is technology an enabler of that.”

And while the transition to work-from-home environments was disruptive at first, it has proven to be an overall positive. “We actually have more time to apply to the job and more free time to really think about things,” Cisco fellow/CTO, broadband technologies *John Chapman* said. “We as an industry can do more... we’re into this internet thing by 20, 30 or 40 years, but in many ways, we’re still just getting going.”

Many questions were raised about how the pandemic has affected the timelines of the 5G rollout, how much industry is continuing to invest in it and, of course, where WiFi 6 fits into the picture as a complement to the mobile technology. The panelists agreed that

there is no reason to believe that 5G could or should replace WiFi.

Katibeh said that it’s difficult to determine, overall, whether WiFi 6 or 5G is the superior technology. Each industry or company needs to ask themselves what the optimal technology is for the consumer, factoring in use case and cost. “In the AT&T Business for Enterprise space, what we find is many customers will use WiFi and it’s fantastic. Think smaller locations, smaller venues that are predominately reliant on cloud-based solutions and applications,” he said. On the other hand, 5G and mmWave technologies can connect up to a million devices per square kilometer, making them more ideal for larger venues and spaces like hospitals or military bases. “The other factor is layering on edge compute. You now can create more secure environments because you give the CIO or the administrator over that facility the ability to route specific application traffic to location A to location B,” Katibeh said.

Chapman quipped that folks should view mobile and wireless connectivity as an edge concept on an IP network, saying it’s a technologist’s challenge to build one network that connects everybody in an environment where many separate networks have been patchworked together.

“WiFi ends up being an extension of the IP network owned by the cable companies. 5G is an extension of the IP network owned by the cable companies... what’s really happening right now is we’re converging networks within companies... It really boils down to when you’re a service provider, you need to connect to your customers... you use the tools that are necessary to get to that customer,” he said.

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## PLENTY OF FIBER CONSTRUCTION IN TEXAS

**Vexus Fiber** has started building a FTTH network in Wichita Falls, TX. The network will connect more than 30,000 new homes and businesses in the area. It's part of on-going construction that will bring service to more than 19,000 new homes and businesses by year-end. – This week, **Sparklight** connected its first Longview, TX, customers to its network, with construction continuing on the Passive Optical Network (PON). More than 800 Longview residents are now connected, with Sparklight's all-fiber network expected to reach more than 31,000 residents and businesses by year-end.

## EVALUATING NEW AD CURRENCIES

When it comes to new audience measurement currencies, nearly three out of four advertisers are willing to try them, but the devil is in the details. The stat is based on a new report from **Comcast Advertising's** Agency Leadership Council. Of the report's marketer and advertiser respondents, 57% say there is a lack of internal knowledge about measurement and currencies, with 53% expressing concerns over methodology. 42% of survey participants cited pre-existing agreements as a reason not to work with a new audience measurement provider. "Measurement has struggled to keep up with the way we consume media today. It is essential to bring new cross-screen measurement capabilities and partners into the marketplace to accelerate the path to innovation in this space," said *Tracy Chavez*, evp of **Publicis Groupe**.

## RATINGS

Yes, the news nets are still grabbing the headlines, but the year is off to a bang for several networks. **Lifetime** is the current home of cable's #1 movie and documentary, with Saturday's "Wendy Williams: The Movie" besting all titles in the last nine months among Adults 25-54 (1.2 million), Women 25-54 (893,000), Adults 18-49 (958,000) and Women 18-49 (682,000) in Live+3 ratings. The biopic drew 2.9 million total viewers. **HGTV** is enjoying bragging rights as the most-watched entertainment cable network in 2021 to-date, thanks to shows like "Fixer to Fabulous," which ended its sophomore season Jan 26 with the ep drawing more than 4.5 million total viewers. **Hallmark Channel** is the firm runner-up so far for 2021. The five original movie premieres the network has aired through its "New Year New Movies!" event have averaged a 2.5 household rating, 288,000 W25-54 and 2.4 million total viewers. **INSP** is feeling pretty good having just wrapped its highest January in network history. It averaged a 0.297 HH rating, 10.7% higher than January 2020. It comes on the heels of the highest-rated December in INSP history and wrapping 2020 with its seventh consecutive year of YOY ratings gains.

## ELECTION AFTERMATH

**SAG-AFTRA** president *Gabrielle Carteris* and national executive director *David White* released a two-word statement in response to *Donald Trump's* resignation from the union: "Thank you." The union had filed disciplinary charges against Trump, citing the Jan 6 US Capitol riot (Trump is a member from his reality TV days). In his resignation letter, Trump slammed the union and news nets and said "who cares!" in reference to a planned disciplinary hearing. Read his response [here](#). – Voting

software firm **Smartmatic** filed a \$2.7 billion libel suit against **Fox News** as well as hosts *Lou Dobbs*, *Maria Bartiromo* and *Jeanine Pirro* and lawyers *Rudy Giuliani* and *Sidney Powell*. Fox News' response? "FOX News Media is committed to providing the full context of every story with in-depth reporting and clear opinion. We are proud of our 2020 election coverage and will vigorously defend this meritless lawsuit in court."

## SLING BOLSTERS SOUTH ASIAN CONTENT LINEUP

**Sling TV** added South Asian streamer **Voot** to its service offerings Thursday. Voot is available at no additional cost to Sling International subscribers with Hindi, Hindi Gold, Hindi Mega, Hindi Premium, Punjabi Hindi and Urdu Hindi services. Customers can also purchase Voot as a standalone service or as an add-on to another Sling service for \$7/month.

## HONORS

**WICT** is accepting [applications](#) for the *Nomi M Bergman* Fellowship. The fellowship offers a woman employed by a technology company a one-year WICT membership and will see WICT underwrite registration costs and travel stipends for the WICT Leadership Conference, Executive Development Series and Tech it Out events. The application deadline is March 5.

## PROGRAMMING

AVOD **Tubi** will exclusively premiere supernatural theater film "Lazarus" from **Samuel Goldwyn Films** on Feb 26. – **WarnerMedia** signed a first-look deal with the stars of **truTV's** "Impractical Jokers" that has the comedy troupe developing scripted and unscripted programming for **TNT**, **TBS**, **truTV** and **HBO Max**. Impractical Jokers, cable's #1 unscripted comedy in 2020, has been renewed for a 10th season, with Season 9 debuting Thursday. – **Starz** greenlit "The Serpent Queen," based on the book "Catherine de Medici: Renaissance Queen of France" by *Leonie Frieda*. The eight-episode series is produced for Starz by **Lionsgate Television** and **3 Arts Entertainment**.

## PEOPLE

Former **Starz** CEO *Chris Albrecht* is taking over **Legendary's** domestic and international TV businesses, the Hollywood trades report. Current **Legendary TV** pres *Nick Pepper* will transition to an executive producer role on the studio's projects. Albrecht left Starz in March 2019 and launched an international production venture with **Legendary TV** later that year. – **Charter** upped *Jessica Fischer* to evp, finance, adding oversight of procurement, investor relations, internal audit and corporate planning to her purview. Additionally, *Charles Fisher*, evp, corporate finance and development, will add full oversight of all treasury activities, which were previously managed by Fischer. He will continue to manage capital markets, M&A and strategic investment activity and provide corporate development for **Spectrum Reach** and **Spectrum Enterprise**. – **DISH** hired *James Allen* as svp and chief accounting officer. He previously was a managing director at energy industry advisory firm **Opportune**. – *Josef Robey* joined **Crown Media Family Networks** in the newly created role director of product (VOD). He was most recently a digital consultant and previously served as executive director of product for **Disney/ABC Television Group**.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Puppy Bowl Again Encourages Adoption

Everybody is getting ready for a big game this weekend, but some are more prepared to cheer for those on Team Ruff and Team Fluff. “Puppy Bowl XVII” will stream on **discovery+** on Sunday and will air on **Animal Planet** at 2pm ET the same day. Diehard Puppy Bowlers will have more content to love this year than ever before. Three specials under the Puppy Bowl Presents umbrella will make their premieres on discovery+ with separate airtimes on Animal Planet. “The Dog Games” (streaming Sunday) has four dogs and amateur trainers face off to decide who is the greatest showman, “Best in Show” (streaming Saturday, on Animal Planet at 11pm) will reunite former Puppy Bowl players and “Puppy Bowl Nation” (streaming Saturday, on Animal Planet Sunday at 11am) offers a peek into life after the big game for these pups. The Puppy Bowl has always used to promote pet adoption, with 100% of participants finding homes in prior years, and this year’s spectacular comes after a particularly ‘pawsitive’ year for adoptions as a whole. Between March and September 2020, the number of foster pets in US homes increased by 8%, according to PetPoint, an organization that collects industry data on pet adoptions. For many people, the decision to open their homes came due to their lack of social interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey published in the journal PLOS ONE in September asked nearly 6,000 people in the UK about their wellbeing during the pandemic and interactions with their pets. Most respondents, including 91% of dog owners, said that their pets were an important source of emotional support, said University of York senior lecturer *Elena Ratschen*. “[The study] highlighted the role of companion animals as potential social buffers for psychological distress and loneliness, regardless of species,” Ratschen said in the survey’s results. – *Sara Winegardner*

### REVIEWS

“VH1 Family Reunion: Love & Hip-Hop Edition,” premiere, Monday, 8pm, **VH1**. There’s a lot of telling and not much showing as cast members from the four “Love & Hip Hop” cities gather for a reunion. Nearly the first 15 minutes comprise arrivals of artists like *Apryl Jones*, *Bambi*, *Fizz*, *Momma Dee*, *Paris Phillips*, *Ray J*, *Scrappy* and *Trick Daddy*, among others. And, yes, it’s an in-person event. After the arrivals, we glimpse the reunion’s first ‘event,’ a pajama show. Despite the lack of action, after 2020, it’s enjoyable watching people—many with larger-than-life jewelry, hair and makeup—socialize, dance, eat, gossip and generally indulge in #BlackJoy. – Notable: The main event this weekend, though, is the 17th annual battle of the barkers. 70 rescue pups vie for the ‘Lombarky’ Trophy during “The Puppy Bowl” (2pm ET, **Animal Planet**, **Discovery+**). *Steve Levy* and *Sage Steele* ‘dog’ it as sideline reporters. The appropriately named *Snoop Dogg* joins *Martha Stewart* as announcers. Thus ‘fur,’ Las Vegas says it’s anyone’s game, though one thing seems certain—a 100% adoption rate. – There’ll be no ‘littering’ on **Hallmark Channel** as “Kitten Bowl VIII” gets underway (2pm ET). *Beth Stern*, *Cameron Mathison* and *Tamera “Meow-ry”- Housley* keep ‘tabbies’ on all the action. Since its inception, this event boasts placing 50K+ shelter pets of various ‘categories’ in homes. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(01/25/21-01/31/21)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.830</b>	<b>2,556</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.748</b>	<b>2,304</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.580</b>	<b>1,786</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.430</b>	<b>1,325</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.328</b>	<b>1,009</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.302</b>	<b>931</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.298</b>	<b>918</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.279</b>	<b>858</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.271</b>	<b>834</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.262</b>	<b>807</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.247</b>	<b>760</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.245</b>	<b>754</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.225</b>	<b>691</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.211</b>	<b>650</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.207</b>	<b>638</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.201</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>TV LAND</b>	<b>0.188</b>	<b>578</b>
<b>HMM</b>	<b>0.179</b>	<b>551</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.170</b>	<b>523</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>508</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.154</b>	<b>476</b>
<b>ADSM</b>	<b>0.152</b>	<b>468</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.149</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.148</b>	<b>457</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.134</b>	<b>414</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.130</b>	<b>401</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.128</b>	<b>395</b>
<b>E!</b>	<b>0.125</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.125</b>	<b>384</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.117</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>MTV</b>	<b>0.114</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.110</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>APL</b>	<b>0.109</b>	<b>337</b>

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

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