

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Big Time: T-Mobile Sets Major Home Broadband Goals

T-Mobile's home broadband service is finally moving out of the pilot phase and will launch widely later this month. The company started the pilot program two years ago on its LTE network, eventually opening it up to 100,000 participants.

About 35% of applicants for the pilot were new to T-Mobile, and the company sees that as a great sign that there are even more customers that are looking to switch away from their current broadband or wireless providers.

"If someone is getting great home internet service from us, then it's a strong bet they're also going to have amazing mobile service in and around our home. We'll use our home internet relationship to market our wireless services in the future just as we're doing the opposite today," evp, emerging products *Dow Draper* said during T-Mobile's virtual analyst presentation Thursday.

The company will first target underserved rural and suburban areas and has set long-term sights on urban markets. Draper said new customers will be able to easily self-install the product, which won't have contracts, rental fees or "exploding promotions." He believes the company already has a huge advantage over some of its competitors in the traditional cable space as it won't have any incremental costs associated with passing homes, last mile installations or truck rolls. Looking at usage, 20% of pilot participants have been using more than 500 gigabits/month on T-Mobile's LTE product. As the company


rolls support of the home broadband product over to its 5G network, Draper said he expects customer satisfaction to rise even higher due to the higher speeds and greater capacity.

The provider's goal for the end of the year is 500,000 home internet customers. Looking long-term, T-Mobile expects to have 7-8 million customers in five years. As of now, leadership isn't concerned about having enough network capacity to support both its wireless footprint and the growing broadband opportunity.

"With the assets we have today, and the capital plan we're already fully funded for, there's massive capacity remaining," T-Mobile CEO *Mike Sievert* said. "That's without even getting into things like the extra capacity we can add... With the right business model, if we need to, we'll go in and light up, opportunistically, millimeter wave spectrum just to support this business plan."

T-Mobile's presentation came less than a day after **Verizon** held an event of its own where the latter said it expected to cover nearly 15 million homes with its home broadband product by the end of this year. About 1-2 million of those households will be covered via mmWave spectrum while the rest will be covered by the company's LTE Home network and the first of its C-band auction winnings. Its availability is expected to expand to 30 million homes by the end of 2023. Verizon's product is currently available in 18 markets.

Thus far, cable operators haven't been particularly threatened by the offerings from wireless providers. Speaking at




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an investor conference Monday, **Charter** CFO *Chris Winfrey* said he thinks of any 5G home broadband launches as just another overbuilder trying to take share. He also had doubts as to the ability of wireless networks to handle the sheer amount of data that customers demand. “The difference in the utilization of wireless networks versus our networks is significant. Current wireless networks aren’t designed to handle that,” Winfrey said.

REPEAL RETRANS BILL RETURNS

Among the bevy of bills being reintroduced this week is Reps **Steve Scalise** (R-LA) and **Anna Eshoo’s** (D-CA) attempt to repeal retransmission consent and other regulations of the 1992 Cable Act that they believe are outdated, such as the compulsory copyright license. The Modern TV Act of 2021 quickly received a standing ovation from those unhappy with the current retransmission regime. Broadcasters opposed the bill when the bipartisan duo introduced it in 2019, and that hasn’t changed. “**NAB** continues to oppose legislation that undermines the foundation of broadcast television,” spokesperson *Ann Marie Cumming* said. “Every day, Americans rely on local broadcast TV stations for news, weather, investigative journalism, public affairs programming, sports, popular entertainment and emergency information—including critical lifeline coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic during the past year. We strongly urge policymakers to work with broadcasters on preserving and strengthening a local broadcasting system that provides immeasurable service to our communities.” MVPDs are a different story. **AT&T** said the bill recognizes that the decades-old rules are “harmful” for consumers. “The number of TV broadcaster blackouts have

more than doubled over the past two years alone, from 165 in 2018 to 342 in 2020. Since these rules were first adopted 30 years ago, the market has drastically shifted with the rise of streaming and changing consumer trends,” said *Tim McK-one*, AT&T’s evp, federal relations. **The American Television Alliance**, which is made up of several pay TV providers as well as **ACA Connects**, also was enthusiastic. “After broadcasters set records for retransmission blackouts during a public health crisis over the last year, it is more urgent than ever this legislation be advanced,” said ATVA spokesperson *Jessica Kendust*. Under the bill, when broadcasters and MVPDs fail to reach a new deal, MVPDs would be required to continue carrying the broadcast signal while the parties negotiate for up to 60 days, with broadcasters retroactively paid for their content aired during this time. The repeal of retrans consent and the compulsory copyright license would take effect 42 months after enactment, allowing free-market contract negotiations to take place under traditional copyright law. There’s also a mechanism in which the **FCC** can compel parties to seek baseball-style arbitration through a third-party arbitrator. Speaking of blackouts, **Mediacom** and **TEGNA** are still in a retrans kerfuffle. Fifteen TEGNA stations, including Minneapolis-St Paul NBC affil KARE, have been off Mediacom since Dec 31.

BROADBAND FOR ALL IS BACK

As **promised**, the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act is back. The bill, re-introduced by House Majority Whip *James Clyburn* (D-SC) and Sen *Amy Klobuchar* (D-MN) on Thursday, would authorize more than \$94 billion for broadband in underserved and underserved communities. What’s new this time—

Cablefax Executive Round Up

We asked some of last year’s FAXIES winners what’s the biggest professional lesson they’ve taken away from the pandemic.



David Bowler
Sr. Director Advanced Engineering
CommScope
FAXIES 2020 Engineer of the Year

“The pandemic impacts us all in different ways, but it also brings to the forefront the extraordinary adaptability and compassion that we possess. From this, I have learned that the strongest teams are the ones that best support each other through challenge and adversity.”



Jayar Donlan
EVP, WWE
FAXIES 2020 Digital Executive of the Year

“The pandemic has shown the importance of being nimble and keeping fans at the center of everything we do. From accelerating content creation across platforms to creating a best-in-class virtual fan experience, WWE has driven the fan experience to new heights during the pandemic despite the persistent challenges”



Holly Henderson
VP, Distribution,
Crown Media Family Networks
FAXIES 2020 Sales Executive of the Year

“The pandemic has reinforced the importance of personal connections. Making time to connect with colleagues, clients, family and friends has enriched numerous relationships. Take advantage of impromptu phone calls, virtual cocktail hours and text chats when you can.”



Angel Stokes
Sr. Dir., Digital Marketing,
Mediacom
FAXIES 2020 Digital Team of the Year

“Doing business during the pandemic reinforced how much we needed to stay nimble and flexible. The digital team, like every team at Mediacom, quickly set up offsite, moved to virtual check-ins and made sure that we were still able to provide our customers access to products they needed online. We quickly saw that we could be as, if not more, productive off site and that propelled us to stay focused and connected with colleagues and customers.”

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, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Assoc Editor: Theresa Maher, 301.354.1704, tmaher@accessintel.com | Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships: Albert Nassour, 917.545.3129, anassour@accessintel.com | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com | Production Manager: 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: \$1,799.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

besides the change in administration and Dems controlling Congress—is that the bill is expected to move in tandem with broader infrastructure proposals from the House and Biden administration. The legislation includes \$80 billion for deployment of broadband infrastructure, with providers that get that support required to offer an adorable internet plan to every consumer. Other components include an additional \$6 billion for the recently established Emergency Broadband Benefit program and \$5 billion over five years for low-interest financing of broadband deployment through a new program that would allow eligible entities to apply for secured loans, lines of credit, or loan guarantees to finance broadband infrastructure build out projects. The bill also has a “dig once” provision for better coordination of broadband and infrastructure projects and funding for a new Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth within **NTIA** that would coordinate with other federal agencies the use of federal funding for broadband projects. The measure gets a thumb up from consumer advocates, such as **Free Press**, for requiring the FCC to collect pricing data on broadband and mandating it issue rules for ISPs to communicate price and terms of service to consumers.

CABLE VIEWERSHIP SURPASSES 70% SHARE

It isn't just streamers who saw more people watching content during the pandemic. Cable TV saw its highest share of time spent, with 71% of that attributed to consumption of cable versus broadcast and premium networks in Q3, according to research from **Effectv**, the ad sales division of **Comcast Cable**. The findings are based on aggregating data from more than 17 million Comcast households across 65 markets. Live TV also saw a boost last year that was largely driving by cable TV news. Comcast households saw a shift toward live TV in the second half of 2020, accounting for 89% of daily viewership. There was a 16-minute YOY increase in live viewing for Q3, and a 10-minute YOY increase in Q4, **Effectv** found.

ANTITRUST ALERT

There's a new attorney general in town—and some are hoping *Merrick Garland's* tenure will be punctuated by antitrust reform. “Together we will show the American people by word and deed that the **Department of Justice** pursues equal justice and adheres to the rule of the law,” **Garland** said in his first remarks to DOJ employees Thursday shortly after he was sworn in as US attorney general. Around the same time, a **Senate Judiciary** subcommittee was embarking on a hearing about antitrust reform for the 21st Century and what can be done to foster competition. “But even before the pandemic, well before the pandemic, it was clear that America had a major monopoly problem. An example: more than two-thirds of US industries have become more concentrated even between the years of 1997 and 2012,” Sen *Amy Klobuchar* (D-MN) said in opening the hearing. Ranking Member *Mike Lee* (R-UT) this week re-introduced his bill that would remove the **FCC's** ability to undertake duplicative competition reviews of transactions under its regulatory jurisdiction and would put all antitrust enforcement under DOJ. He used the hearing to speak out against sweeping reform. Instead, he

called on agency leaders to vigorously enforce the laws already on the books and for the government to avoid tipping the scale to pick winners and losers through regulation and taxation. **Klobuchar** is working with Sen *Chuck Grassley* (R-IA) on a bill that would deliver more funding to antitrust enforcement agencies like DOJ and the **FTC**, noting that DOJ's antitrust division went from 453 lawyers in 1980 to 330 in 2017.

MEDIACOM UNVEILS WHOLE-HOME WIFI

Mediacom is launching its own whole-home WiFi solution next month. **Xtream WiFi 360pro** will deliver up to 1 Gigabit speeds, greater home coverage and a more reliable connection. It also incorporates **eero's** TrueMesh technology, which intelligently routes network traffic to avoid congestion and buffering. Other features include parental controls and advanced safety and security measures.

COX DIVES DEEPER INTO ACCESSIBILITY

Cox introduced a new feature Thursday allowing subscribers to control their TV with their eyes. Using the **Accessible Web Remote for Contour**, customers are able to sync their device and begin changing channels, setting recordings, searching for programming within the **Contour** guide and access integrated streaming apps.

DISTRIBUTION

Crackle Plus and **Vewd** struck a deal to launch the **Crackle** app on smart TVs and set-top boxes powered by **Vewd**. **Crackle** also reached an agreement with streaming platform **Plex** that will have **Crackle** represent **Plex's** US ad inventory in the direct ad sales market.

PROGRAMMING

MTV will air the “2021 MTV Movie & TV Awards” on May 16, followed by the inaugural edition of “Movie & TV Awards: UNSCRIPTED” on May 17. Hosts, honorees, performers, presenters and more details on both programs to follow. – **OWN** revealed its new drama series, “The Kings of Napa” Thursday. Following the wealthy King family siblings in Napa Valley, the show will begin production in later 2021 for an early 2022 premiere. – **FX** ordered nine-episode limited series “Fleishman is in Trouble,” based on *Taffy Brodesser-Akner's* novel of the same name. The series will be available exclusively on **FX** on **Hulu**. – **Disney Channel** ordered a pilot for “Saturdays,” a single-camera comedy about a preteen girl and her skate crew. – **Tubi** will add 42 TV shows and movies to its library on Monday. New titles include nostalgic shows like “Battlestar Galactica” to horror flicks like “Do Not Reply.” – **TLC's** “90 Day Fiance: Happily Ever After?” will premiere its sixth season on April 25 at 8pm. The series will also be available to stream on **discovery+**.

PEOPLE

Katherine Nelson is leaving her post as group svp, communications for **USA Network** and **Syfy** at the end of the month. **Nelson** has been with **NBCUniversal** for eight years, previously serving on the comms teams at **Discovery** and **SpaceX**. Her departure comes following a reorg that saw the exits of *Chris McCumber*, *Bill McGoldrick* and *Dawn Olmstead*.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'Bloodlands' - A Puzzle Outside the Box

We've seen a lot of hands-on hobbies embraced during the pandemic lockdown—crocheting, drawing, DIY-ing of any sort, etc. It all comes back to one theme—we love a puzzle. For many viewers, crime is the ultimate three-dimensional puzzle. “Bloodlands,” a four-part thriller premiering March 15 on streamer **Acorn TV**, is one such nuanced puzzle for viewers. “I think crime thrillers now are quicker to embrace the grey areas and that makes it very enjoyable for audiences too,” said *Chris Brandon*, writer and creator of the series, his first-ever drama commission. It was a hit in the UK on BBC One before skipping across the pond for its North America debut on the **AMC Networks**-owned streamer. Set in Northern Ireland, the show follows Detective Chief Inspector Tom Brannick (*James Nesbitt*) as he finds a clue on the scene of a missing person's investigation that throws him full-force back into a cold case from 20 years ago with a personal connection and many willing deniers. The show navigates the line between individualism and community constantly, which becomes a conflict between Brannick and his supervisor. They battle over whether it is worth it to reopen this case that was ignored by many in an effort to keep the peace in the months leading up to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. The peace agreement put an official end to the 30-year period of political violence in Ireland, known as the Troubles. “So really, the thriller of Bloodlands emerges from that idea of, ‘What happens when concessions are made, what happens to the people who feel neglected by those concessions?’ and that's why it's so fascinating to compare now to then,” Brandon said. “Because you're sort of dealing with, now we have a very distinct sense of importance of individual identity, but set that against the compromise of the Good Friday Agreement, the acceptance that others can be as they want to be.” – *Theresa Maher*

REVIEWS

“Doctor Foster,” streaming on **Netflix**. Even as the vaccine beckons, many remain homebound, with time to catch up on series you may have missed. We happened upon this **BBC** series about a doctor, mother and wife who seems to have a terrific life. It crashes fast, though, within its 5-ep first season, a total binge. Season 2 is not nearly as believable, as if that matters. Besides *Suranne Jones* as the doctor, fans of **BBC America's** “Killing Eve” can spy a young *Jodie Comer* in a deliciously decadent role. – **Notable:** The US has 9/11, Japan has 3/11, which commemorates the anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. On this 10th anniversary, **NHK World-Japan**, the English-language arm of NHK, will offer commemorative programming, even anime is included. One of the genre's best, *Murata Tomoyasu*, offers “A Branch of a Pine is Tied Up” (premieres Friday, 10:30 am), his third in a series of Earthquake-related films. – This year Japan is sharing 3/11 with another sad anniversary. On this day one year ago, the WHO declared the novel coronavirus a global pandemic. Tomorrow night, “Washington Week” (8pm, **PBS**) reassembles the panel it featured last year at this time. They'll review what they said then and how things have changed. Panelists include *Yasmeen Abutaleb* (*The Washington Post*) and *Susan Page* (*USA Today*). – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(03/01/21-03/07/21)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.768	2,366
MSNBC	0.631	1,943
CNN	0.405	1,247
TNT	0.375	1,154
HGTV	0.360	1,108
HALL	0.359	1,105
HIST	0.299	922
TBSC	0.280	862
DISC	0.270	832
FOOD	0.262	807
INSP	0.245	755
TLC	0.243	747
ESPN	0.220	676
USA	0.215	662
A&E	0.185	571
ID	0.185	569
LIFE	0.171	527
SYFY	0.170	524
TVLAND	0.166	510
AMC	0.163	503
ADSM	0.144	442
NATGEO	0.139	428
WETV	0.136	419
BRAVO	0.135	415
HMM	0.134	412
GSN	0.125	385
FRFM	0.117	361
NAN	0.115	355
APL	0.113	349
FX	0.112	345
TRAVEL	0.111	341
MTV	0.108	333
BET	0.106	327
NICK	0.103	318

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



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