

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

From Cable to Big Tech: Internet Association CEO Snowden's Key Priorities

The Internet Association's new CEO is a familiar face in cable circles. *Dane Snowden*, who was *Michael Powell's* right-hand man at **NCTA** for years, is now heading up the association overseeing public policy for internet giants such as **Amazon**, **Facebook**, and **Google**.

Snowden started the role in February, with some of his largest members facing growing heat from Washington, particularly in the areas of content moderation and privacy. So far, he's running toward the flames. "When you look at tech, if you're into policy, this is a great place to be in our sector right now. There are a lot of great issues that are going to emerge and kind of be the foundation for how we go forward in this space, and I'm excited to be a part to be a part of that," he told **CFX** in an interview last week.

In addition to his time as COO of NCTA, Snowden's public policy experience includes a vp stint at **CTIA-The Wireless Association** and serving as chief of the **FCC's** Consumer & Governmental Bureau under Powell's leadership of the agency. All of those are much older organizations than IA, which will turn 10 next year. He's only the group's second CEO, with *Michael Beckerman* leaving the post in February 2020 to head public policy for **TikTok**. IA general counsel *Jon Berroya* served as interim president/CEO until Snowden joined in February. "Coming in at the ground level almost is a great opportunity



DANE SNOWDEN

to kind of chart and take what I've learned from the old, established organizations that I came from and lead a new course," Snowden said. "The issues are breathtaking in the sense of how fast they're moving, how ubiquitous our technology is in the lives of everyday Americans and across the globe."

It's a group that can be on the opposite side of NCTA on some policy issues. IA supported the Title II approach to net neutrality in 2015 and opposed the Restoring Internet Freedom order passed by the Ajit Pai-led **FCC** in 2017. Snowden said it remains to be seen how much common ground there is between the two industries on net neutrality, but like cable, IA wants some clear ground rules. "We want an open internet, and we want national rules for that. So, we have commonality there," he said. "How we get to that point... we're waiting for everyone to talk more about that on the Hill. Privacy, I think everyone wants a national policy framework. It's one of our priority issues. I think, in some respects, we have our agenda, and they have theirs, and I don't think we're that far apart."

With several lawmakers introducing bills focusing on Section 230, content moderation is at the top of IA's list of priorities. "It's been 25 years since we've had Section 230, and we're not opposed to a review of how it's working," Snowden said. "We also believe that not everything is necessarily 230... For us, it's critical that we have that liability protection to ensure that what users put up on our platforms, that we're protected from being sued for that. And that's good for the users as well."

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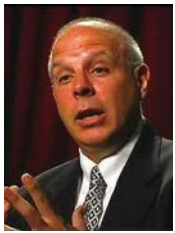
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You want to be able to put up content any time and not have a long, lengthy review, and you don't want a curated internet experience."

During his time at NCTA, Snowden was very involved in cable's D&I efforts, serving on the board of **NAMIC**. The tech sector has faced its criticism over the years for longstanding diversity issues. Snowden said D&I is something the industry has committed to, with IA assisting. "We have started to examine how our companies [are doing], how we're doing our hiring, how we're doing our supplier diversity. We have put a focus on this issue because it's very important, not just for tech, but for I think the whole country," he said. "As a CEO and as a Black man, these issues are top of mind. I was very involved with the activity of NCTA in our D&I work, and I will be very involved in our work at IA as well. We're at a really important point in our history right now in this country, and it's everyone. We need our political leaders, our corporate leaders, everyone has to recognize and focus on social justice and ensuring that we are moving forward and everyone gets to move forward."

ROKU SENDS YOUTUBE TV WARNING

Roku is warning customers that they may lose access to the **YouTube TV** on the streaming device. "Recent negotiations with **Google** to carry YouTube TV have broken down because Roku cannot accept Google's unfair terms as we believe they could harm our users," Roku said in an email sent Monday that encouraged customers to contact Google and urge them to reach a fair agreement. Roku claims Google wants preferential access in search results and to customer data. This skirmish has already caught the eye of Rep **Ken Buck** (R-CO), a member

of House Judiciary, who retweeted an *Axios* article and wrote, "Google is flexing its power over Roku, threatening the removal of their apps if they don't receive preferential treatment. At every turn, Google seems to engage in anticompetitive behavior. Congress must act."

SINCLAIR LOOKS AT RSN PROPOSALS

Sinclair is reportedly reviewing offers to rework its RSN unit's debt load, according to a *Bloomberg* [report](#). Bloomberg, citing people with knowledge of the matter, said the interest is from debt investors as well as outside firms. Sinclair operates the **Bally Regional Sports Networks** that used to be owned by **Fox**. Bloomberg said Sinclair is also in discussions with two sports betting companies for marketing partnerships that resemble the Bally's deal, which included a naming rights fee.

ALTICE LAUNCHES SMART WIFI 6

Altice USA is promising **Optimum** and **Suddenlink** internet customers a supercharged WiFi experience with the launch of Smart WiFi 6. Altice said this latest evolution offers WiFi speeds up to three times faster, greater coverage for multiple devices in use at once, less lag and more reliable connections. Smart WiFi 6 is currently available to new Optimum and Suddenlink 1 Gig broadband customers. In select areas, Smart WiFi 6 will also be available with the highest speed tier offered where 1 Gig service is not currently available.

TURNER NABS NHL PACKAGE

Word broke Monday that **NBC** had dropped out of bidding for the remaining **NHL** media rights package, with *Sports Business Daily's* **John Ourand** [reporting](#) that **Turner Sports** picked up the games as part of a deal worth up to \$225 million per year.

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An official announcement could come this week. NBC declined to comment on reports that it was ending its 16-year run with the League. Last month, ESPN announced a seven-year deal that will return hockey to the sports programmer for the first time since 2004. SBD reports that the Turner pact ensures that three of the next seven Stanley Cup Finals will be on one of the Turner networks.

DISTRIBUTION

Comcast is expanding carriage of **The Africa Channel** in 60 new markets via X1 and the Xfinity Stream app. Sample content from the channel will also be featured at no additional cost on the Black Experience on Xfinity Channel. Programming available on The Africa Channel includes "World Wide Nate," "Amah Knows Best" and "Lockdown." The channel also has carriage with **Charter**, Canada's **Rogers** and others. – **Nexstar** will launch digital subchannel **Rewind TV** on September 1. The subchannel will offer a slate of classic sitcoms from the 1980s and 1990s. Rewind TV will be available to nearly 50 million homes on digital subchannels licensed to Nexstar at launch. – Streamer **Pluto TV** will launch **Pluto TV en español** on May 5. The service is an update and expansion to its category dedicated for US Hispanics. The expansion will bring nearly 50 Spanish-speaking channels to the platform, including **Estrella News**, **Comedy Central Latino**, **MTV Latino** and more.

MOFFETT NATHANSON UPGRADES VIACOMCBS

MoffettNathanson upgraded **ViacomCBS** from "sell" to "neutral," but decreased its price target by \$11 to \$44. In the short term, MoffettNathanson argued the stock will be supported by a simple growth narrative as it delivers accelerated SVOD and AVOD revenues. This growth combined with a number of tailwinds this year will allow ViacomCBS's core revenue to look better than true underlying trends, according to the firm. Longer term, MoffettNathanson has concerns over the likelihood of more challenging affiliate fee negotiations, the risk of losing content licensing revenues in order to scale international DTC and potential cannibalization at **Showtime** and linear TV advertising from OTT and **Pluto**. ViacomCBS closed Monday at \$41.82 per share, up 0.11 points and 0.26%.

EY LOOKS AT MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT IN COVID

Some 52% of media and entertainment executives surveyed by **EY** say the pandemic permanently changed how their businesses operate, with 48% identifying increasing resilience as the biggest post-pandemic priority. Other findings from EY's global study looking at the impact of COVID-19: 45% of respondents said that without reinvention, their companies would not exist in five years—up from 37% in last year's pre-pandemic survey; 42% of executives, as opposed to 25% last year, admit they are uncertain about what actions to prioritize to realize their business transformation agendas.

MOODY'S ASSIGNS BA2 RATING TO CABLE ONE LOAN

Moody's assigned a "Ba2" rating to **Cable One's** planned \$600 million senior secured term loan B-4 due 2028. Cable One intends to use the net proceeds to fully repay Hargray's outstanding Term Loan B and purchase the remaining interest in Hargray that Cable One does not already own.

SLING SLASHES PRICE FOR PROMO

Sling TV is running a promotion where new subscribers can pay \$10 for the first month of the vMPVD service. The promotion comes just in time for football fans to catch the first round of the 2021 NFL Draft on Thursday at 8pm ET. Subscribers can view the program via **ESPN** and **ESPN2** on Sling Orange and **NFL Network** on Sling Blue.

PROGRAMMING

History debuts "Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre," a doc executive produced by **NBA** star and philanthropist *Russell Westbrook*, on May 30, 8pm. – Eight-ep historical drama "Domina," following the rise of Emperor Augustus Caesar's third wife, *Livia Drusilla*, premieres June 6 on **Epix**. – **Newsmax** launched podcast "The Newsmax Daily with Rob Carson" and will release new episodes every weekday at noon ET. – **Disney Channel** will host a one-night only marathon of "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series" Season 1 May 8 beginning at 5pm. The marathon will feature sneak peeks of Season 2. – Streamer **BBC Select** announced four premiere titles for May. The premieres include docuseries "*Louise Theroux: Life on the Edge*" and "How I Created a Cult" as well as travel series "*Joanna Lumley's India*" and "Extraordinary Places to Eat".

STILL STANDING FOR THE ARTS

Ovation TV is launching a "New Start for the Arts" PSA campaign to help organizations within the company's Stand For The Arts coalition demonstrate their need for support. More than 25 orgs will be featured in the campaign premiering throughout 2021 on the network's cable channel and digital properties. In tandem with the PSA launch, Ovation CEO **Charles Segars**, **The Music Center in Los Angeles** president/CEO *Rachel Moore* and artist and documentary producer *Pierre Gervois* sent a letter this week to President *Biden* and congressional leaders urging them for more federal support for the arts sector. The New Start for the Arts, according to the three industry leaders, should include a \$1 billion annual appropriation for the NEA with a minimum 5% increase each year and the installment of a Secretary of Arts & Culture. The group is also calling for the Put Creative Workers to Work proposal and all contours of the Defend Art Workers Now Act to be immediately included in the proposed \$2 trillion infrastructure and jobs stimulus package.

PEOPLE

Comcast Advertising appointed *Rick Mandler* vp, growth strategy. He was previously svp, strategy and operations for **true[X]**. – *Claudine Lilien* was named svp and head of global sales & partnerships at **WWE**. Most recently, Lilien served as svp, client management & solutions for **Fox Corp**.