

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Come Together: OpenID Next Step in Cross Platform Collaboration

The stars are aligning in cross platform measurement like never before with TV ad consortium **OpenAP** gearing up to introduce OpenID as a way to better match audience segments.

"We've been very focused on how can we make it as easy to buy a sophisticated audience as it is to buy 18-49 today. We've been steadily trying to work on how do we operationally lower the burden for advertisers so that when they want to transact with a sophisticated audience, they can do it at scale," OpenAP CEO *David Levy* said during a **TV of Tomorrow Show** panel on Tuesday.

Enter OpenID, which OpenAP is unveiling this week. Levy described it as taking first- or third-party data and matching it to consistent ID sets (OpenIDs). "That represents everybody in the US for the most part. Not just linear viewers, not just streaming viewers," he said. The plan is to use OpenIDs to consistently create the linear segment by matching against linear viewership data and using that same set of OpenIDs to create a digital segment and work to also create an addressable segment.

"The idea is that if you start by defining your audiences as a set of ideas that goes across all viewing, then you can create audiences for execution that are all based off the same ID set," Levy said. "And what that gives you the ability to do is as you move through towards execution, one, all the publishers are working with the exact same audience. But two, if you

work with third-party measurement providers, like VideoAmp... Nielsen, ComScore, a bunch of others... who have the ability to conduct measurement to the ID level, then you start to unlock the capability of tying your linear viewership data to your digital viewership data on the campaign—your linear measurement to your addressable measurement."

Levy said OpenID's not quite to the point where they're ready to announce all the cross platform use cases it will enable, but he described it as the foundation on which everyone across the TV industry can collaborate on.

CBS has been a partner of OpenAP and **VAB** from early on, and it's thrilled with the momentum. "I think when they write the history of television... we will look back and really see this as a fundamental turning point or breakthrough moment... All kinds of silos that have existed are breaking down between publisher and publisher, between programmer and programmer, between addressable and linear, between TV and digital. That's what makes this so momentous and so powerful," *Radha Subramanyam*, CBS chief research and analytics officer, said during the panel discussion. "This is setting up the framework for a multi-currency universe, where the client can pick the currency, whether it's somebody's internal data or one of the various third parties."

It's significant from an MVPD perspective as well. With **Comcast Advertising** vp of strategy *Claudio Marcus* saying his company understood the importance and value of anonymized census level viewing data, but needed a way to make it

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It's free to enter – but you must submit your entries by April 30!

The Independent Operator of the Year Award (IOY) is presented in conjunction with ACA Connects and NCTC

useful. He credited VAB chief *Sean Cunningham* with helping to bring everyone together. “It has taken some push from the larger digital platforms for us to join together and see the importance of collaborating,” he said. “By being able to unify across linear TV, digital and addressable, we’ll see that the impact that we can bring. And we can produce incremental efficiencies, particularly around the duplicate reach and being able to target for incremental rates.”

BLACKSTONE SNIFFING AROUND HOTWIRE

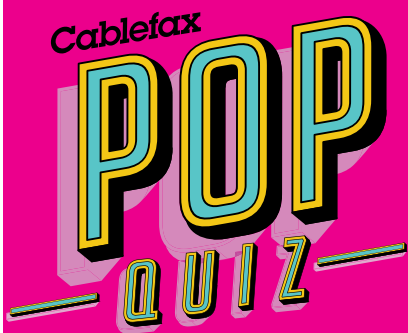
Investment firm **Blackstone Group** is in talks to acquire about a 50% ownership stake in fiber provider **Hotwire Communications**, *Bloomberg reports*, citing people familiar with the matter. Hotwire, **Cablefax’s** 2020 Independent Operator of the Year, is a fiber-focused operator covering a wide swath of the North and Southeastern US, including Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and New York. In addition to a strong MDU base, it is a CLEC, franchised cable operator and leases a municipal fiber system in Salisbury, NC. Hotwire and Blackstone declined to comment. Bloomberg reports the investment would come from the firm’s infrastructure and tactical opportunities funds—which could signal future expansion for Hotwire through capital investment. Hotwire competes with **Charter** and **Comcast** in a number of markets. Assuming the deal happens, it’ll be the latest in a flurry of investments in fiber. Just last week, global investment firm **KKR** joined **MetroNet’s** long-time partner **Oak Hill Capital**, with each making new investments to help accelerate MetroNet’s growth in building and connecting FTTH data, TV and phone service to homes and businesses.

COX BUYING SEGRA COMMERCIAL UNIT

Cox Communications will acquire the commercial services segment of **Segra**, one of the largest privately held fiber infrastructure providers in the US. Segra’s commercial unit covers enterprise and carrier customers in nine states in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast through a dense metropolitan fiber network. As part of the transaction, **EQT Infrastructure** will retain ownership of Segra’s fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) residential and small- to medium-sized business segment in Virginia and North Carolina and accelerate the plan to expand broadband services to neighborhoods and markets throughout their regions. Cox described the transaction as another milestone in its pursuit of strategic infrastructure investments, which have included EasyTel, EdgeConneX, InSite Wireless, StackPath, Unite Private Networks and ViaWest. Segra’s existing management team will continue to lead the enterprise and carrier organization following the acquisition. And the business will retain the Segra brand and operate as a stand-alone business within the Cox family of companies. While Segra will operate independently, there may be opportunities to use its infrastructure to support **Cox Business** customers and vice versa. More details likely once the deal closes following necessary regulatory approvals.

TURNER SPORTS WELCOMES NHL

That **Turner Sports-NHL** deal is official, with the **Warner-Media** division paying a reported \$225 million a year in the seven-year pact. It kicks off with the 2021-22 season, with Turner getting up to 72 regular season games and the Stanley Cup Final in three of the seven years (marking the first time the championship round will air exclusively on cable). The



What TV detective series began every episode’s title with the word “Mr.”?

[CLICK HERE TO ANSWER](#)

Last week’s answer: Defunct cable net TechTV was sold by Paul Allen’s Vulcan Ventures to G4 Media in 2004.

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deal includes live streaming and simulcast rights for **HBO Max**. Not clear yet what will be on HBO Max (or when), with Turner also nabbing TV Everywhere rights for authenticated MVPD subscriber viewing across all WarnerMedia platforms. Programmers with DTC offerings have a delicate balancing act, where making too much content available directly to the consumer puts them at risk of losing MVPD carriage and those affiliate fees. The move to Turner Sports marks the end of an era for NHL on **NBC**, which has been its home for 16 years. "Our partnership with the NHL will end at the conclusion of the upcoming Stanley Cup Playoffs and Stanley Cup Final, which we will present with the same excitement and professionalism that fans have come to expect since the 2005-06 season," an NBC spokesperson said. "We thank the league, its players, coaches and fans for their friendship, cooperation, and viewership, and we wish the league continued success. We also thank all of our colleagues at NBC Sports who through a passion for the game and their tireless efforts helped the league achieve unprecedented growth over the last 16 years."

PAI JOINS SEARCHLIGHT CAPITAL

Former **FCC** chair **Ajit Pai** joined private investment firm **Searchlight Capital** as a partner and a prospective board member of a number of Searchlight's existing investments in the technology, media, and telecommunications sectors. Searchlight's TMT investments include **Liberty Latin America**, **Univision**, **Consolidated Communications** and **Ziply Fiber**.

APRIL RATINGS

Nielsen's top five ad-supported cable nets in prime P2+ for April were: **Fox News** (2.236 million), **MSNBC** (1.581mln), **HGTV** (1.245mln), **TBS** (1.112mln) and **CNN** (1.03mln). In total day, the shakeout among P2+ was: Fox News (1.218mln), MSNBC (953,000), CNN (786K), HGTV (660K) and **ESPN** (491K). – Episode 2 of **HBO's** "Mare of Easttown" racked up 1.2 million viewers Sunday across all platforms. This bought it 25% above the debut episode last week. – **ESPN's** "Sunday Night Baseball" viewership is up 38% from its 2020 season average, with more than 1.7 million viewers. The program is up double-digits in every key demo, including a 21% increase P12-17, 63% up P18-34, 56% higher P18-49 and 52% increase P25-54. Last Sunday's Padres vs Dodgers game delivered a 9.9 rating in the San Diego market, making it the highest-rated regular-season **MLB** game on ESPN in the market since April 11, 2004.

COMCAST RISES TO CHALLENGE

Comcast said it will award 13,000 Black, Indigenous and People of Color-owned businesses across the country with monetary grants, technology makeovers and marketing services from its **Comcast RISE** initiative by 2022. Recipients will receive a TV campaign, production of a TV commercial or consulting services from **Effectv** or computer equipment, internet, voice or cybersecurity from **Comcast Business**. Comcast recently partnered with **Ureeka**, an online platform for entrepreneurs, to provide grant recipients with business coaching to provide ongoing mentorship. All Comcast RISE recipients will also have an online networking community within Ureeka with access to

educational resources, capital sources and vetted experts, including US Black Chambers, National Asian Pacific Islander Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship and more.

MOFFETT NATHANSON DOWNGRADES VERIZON

MoffettNathanson downgraded **Verizon** from "buy" to "neutral" with an updated target price of \$57. The initial target was \$62. "AT&T's sustained promotionality undermines the last remaining plank of our December Verizon upgrade," the investment firm elaborated. If AT&T maintains its promotional stance, MoffettNathanson expects Verizon to feel more pressure to respond, making the long-term challenge of losing its "best network" status looks more possible.

DISTRIBUTION

Byron Allen's streaming platform **Local Now** is available for all **Verizon Fios TV** customers with the newest set top-box models. The streamer's latest upgrade will be in the coming weeks and include 300 channels and 7500 titles. Local Now content partners include **The Weather Channel**, **Reuters**, **AP**, **Kevin Hart's LOL**, **People.TV** and more. – **Fuse** acquired additional carriage for its two free, ad-supported television (FAST) brands. **Fuse Backstage** is now available on free streamers **DistroTV** and **KlowdTV** and **Fuse Sweat** is now available on **Comcast**-owned streaming service **Xumo**.

PROGRAMMING

The final episodes of "The Haves and The Have Nots" premiere on **OWN** June 1. – **Disney Channel** and **Tastemade** will team up for 13-episode kids' baking competition series "Disney's Magic Bake-Off." – **HBO Max** will launch spotlight page "See Us: AAPI And Our Global Community" on May 1 featuring AAPI-centered programming such as "Mortal Kombat," "Crazy Rich Asians," "Life of Pi" and more.

TRADE WINDS

Big loss to the DC press corp, with longtime *Multichannel and Broadcasting+Cable* journalist **John Eggerton** retiring. He joined B+C in 1981, working his way up from editorial assistant to a slew of roles over the years, including assistant managing editor and Washington Bureau Chief. He retired as senior content producer for Multi, B+C and NextTV.com, but will remain a contributing editor to **Future**-owned publications.

PEOPLE

Former **Hulu** and **TiVo** exec **Jim Denney** joins **Peacock** next month as evp and chief product officer, direct-to-consumer. In this new post, he will be responsible for Peacock's global product strategy, as well as the product vision and strategy for other customer-facing **NBCUniversal** digital platforms, including broadcast and cable entertainment apps, **NBC Sports**, and **hayu**. – Hybrid fiber wireless provider **Starry** tapped **Komal Misra** as CFO. Misra most recently served as global head of corporate finance for **IPsoft**. – **Ari Cohn** left private practice to join **TechFreedom** as its first free speech counsel. – **David Cohen** is the new global vp, strategic marketing at **TVU Networks**. Cohen comes from **Grass Valley**, where he was vp, marketing communications.