

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

HBO Max's Forssell: Sports Rights Still a Challenge for Streamers

HBO Max evp/general manager *Andy Forssell* believes sports and news will fit well with the rest of the streamer's content portfolio, but there are still some kinks to work out in how programming is showcased on those services.

"The whole model of sports rights that has been so successful in cable involves leagues selling what are, if you looked at them on their own, little slices of sports rights... that has been phenomenal in cable because we all subscribe and you had all of the pieces, and you probably didn't pay too much attention to the fact that those pieces were spread out," he said during an appearance at the **Barclays Future of Media Conference** Thursday. "In SVOD, it's harder. I don't think that rights landscape is going to be nearly as successful in SVOD."

He also said there are different discussions occurring around whether the presentation of that sports content should be different in a streaming environment. News is an easier beast to tackle, but Forssell reiterated that the HBO Max team won't just be repurposing content from the **CNN** linear network and pasting that onto the streamer.

"A lot of work is going on to say what does that look like and what does an internet-native version of what CNN does so well look like online. That's something you could do independent, that's something you could do as part of HBO Max. That's all being worked out now," he said. "I'm optimistic about the fit between news and general entertainment... Sports, I'm not

pessimistic. It's going to take some experimentation on what works in SVOD."

HBO Max launched its ad-supported tier Wednesday, and Forssell sees that tier as a pillar of what will solidify the streamer as one of the most successful on a global scale.

"The total addressable market is larger. **Netflix** is defining the ceiling on what full penetration in the US market is and they're riding that up and in some cases they are propelling that wave with many of the rest of us. I think with ad-supported you add another 20% to that," he said. "We should get back to 100 million-plus homes that we served during the heyday of cable."

There are a number of avenues to purchase streaming service subscriptions nowadays, whether it is as part of a bundle with a wireless service, directly from the company or through ad-supported channels. While that has made distribution much easier, the challenge has now shifted to retaining customers, Forssell said, and it is ultimately forcing companies to offer better services.

"Customers now have the big red button they can push at any time. You're facing instant accountability, which isn't comfortable all the time, but it's largely a good thing," he said. "Lack of accountability means you can not be a great programmer and still have good economics for a while before it catches up to you. That's not really good for anybody."

When it comes to HBO Max's relationship with content aggregators like **Roku**, Forssell said he isn't afraid to continue

THE FAXIES

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN PR & MARKETING

Awards Celebration:
Thursday, June 10 at 4pm

Cablefax is PROUD to announce 2021 finalists for **The FAXIES**, the ultimate awards program in the b2b media space. The FAXIES honor 2021's marketing & PR campaigns as well as the executives and teams who brought them to life. During this pandemic year, these achievements are nothing less than extraordinary.

Join us when the winners will be announced.

View the Finalists and RSVP for Event at
www.thefaxies.com



sitting at the negotiating table if the terms of a carriage deal aren't making sense for both sides. That's ultimately what led to a delay in the arrival of HBO Max on Roku and **Amazon** devices.

"We had great support from *Jason Kilar* in the **WarnerMedia** CEO position and also from *John Stankey* at **AT&T** to play the long game last year... Did that cost us in the early days because there were devices we couldn't sell on? Absolutely it did. But we got to really good outcomes with them," he said. "We just launched our ad-supported offering on HBO Max. A couple of those deals got done in the middle of the night as the software was going out... our biggest protection we can bring there is to make great programming that people care about. If so, you're a must-carry."

NAB SNAPS BACK OF FCC FEE PROPOSAL

The **NAB** is fighting back against the **FCC's** proposal to significantly raise regulatory fees for broadcasters in FY21. Its largest qualms come with the 5-15% increase in regulatory fees that could be coming to broadcasters and exactly where that money would be headed. The FCC's NPRM breaks down the FY21 appropriation fees into two buckets, one of which includes \$33 million to cover costs associated with the implementation of the Broadband DATA Act and costs associated with creating more accurate broadband maps. "The Commission's proposal is unjustifiable when broadcasters are not regulated by nor benefit from implementation of the Broadband DATA Act," NAB said in its comments. "Public policy and the public interest counsel in favor of the Commission taking a more nuanced approach and reallocating the Broadband

Costs only across the core bureaus that are engaged in the work and whose regulatees benefit from such services." The association is urging the Commission to adjust the proposal so that only the beneficiaries of the mapping activities pay for the associated costs, the wireless industry pays a fair share of the agency's costs and there are steps taken that require Big Tech and other unlicensed spectrum users to pay a share for the Commission's activities from which they benefit.

MAGNUS UPPED TO ESPN PROGRAMMING CHIEF

Longtime **ESPN** veteran *Burke Magnus* has been promoted to president, programming and original content. His purview includes all programming and rights acquisition and scheduling, and he added oversight of ESPN and **ESPN+** original content development and scheduling to his duties in November. Magnus joined the media company in 1995 as a program associate and currently serves on **Disney's** CEO Diversity and Inclusion Council.

CHARTER SAYS ITS MOBILE IS THE SPEEDIEST

Charter is boasting that **Spectrum Mobile** delivered faster overall speeds than any other mobile provider in its footprint for the seventh straight quarter. The claim is based on **Nielsen** Mobile Performance cellular and WiFi speed test results for Spectrum, **Verizon**, **AT&T**, **T-Mobile** and **Sprint** mobile customers that took place Sept 1, 2020 through March 31. For 1Q21, Spectrum Mobile customers saw data speeds that were 43% faster than Verizon's, 41% faster than T-Mobile's and 29% faster than AT&T's, based on data collected by **Global Wireless Solutions** and Nielsen. Wait, doesn't Spectrum Mobile operate via an MVNO with Verizon? How can it be faster than Verizon? That's because

SCTE-ISBE
CABLE-TEC EXPO
FAST FORWARD
2021

UNLEASH THE
POWER OF LIMITLESS
CONNECTIVITY
OCTOBER 11-14
ATLANTA, GA

WE'VE
UNLEASHED
THE POWER...

Act Now, Exhibit &
Sponsorships Available!

#cabletecexpo • expo.scte.org

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 | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, ekamhi@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

the service features converged WiFi and cellular service, with approximately 80% of mobile data usage now taking place over WiFi. And it's exactly because of that WiFi convergence that the **National Advertising Divison** of BBB National Programs recommended in April that Spectrum stop boasting in ads that it has the fastest overall speeds. NAD said it's only when a consumer is in certain geographic market or connected to Spectrum WiFi (at home or via hotspot) that they gain a speed advantage. Charter said it would appeal the decision, and it obviously continues to believe it's the fastest.

FCC STRIKES 911 DEAL WITH MOBILE CARRIERS

The **FCC** signed deals with **Verizon**, **AT&T** and **T-Mobile** Thursday that will see them start delivering vertical location information tied to 911 calls in the coming days. The Commission adopted rules to improve location information for wireless calls in 2015, requiring that nationwide wireless providers meet certain location accuracy requirements in the nation's largest 25 markets by April 3, 2021 and certify the deployment by June 2. AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon all sought extensions of those deadlines, which led the Enforcement Bureau to inquire into their compliance with FCC deadlines. This agreement will settle that investigation. Each company will start providing wireless 911 callers' z-axis location information to 911 call centers within seven days; implement a compliance plan that includes specific testing, reporting and public interest conditions; and pay a \$100,000 settlement. "These settlements accomplish what has evaded the agency for too long: they ensure the FCC, public safety, and wireless carriers work together to immediately start delivering this information to first responders without further delay," acting chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* said in a statement.

CARRIAGE

Multicultural News Network has secured a multi-year nationwide linear distribution agreement with **Charter**. This will make MNN available to **Charter Spectrum** customers at the network's commercial launch. MNN, which announced its launch in November 2020 in partnership with **Cox Media Group**, will be headquartered in the same facility as **Circle City Broadcasting's** WISH-TV and MyINDY-TV 23.

DISNEY AD SALES LAUNCHES ACCELERATOR

Disney Advertising Sales is launching the Disney Advertising Sales Accelerator Program for minority-led businesses. The program will offer 10 of these businesses comprehensive and custom advertising strategies, creative consultation and advertising opportunities in collaboration with the Disney CreativeWorks team.

COMCAST LIFT ZONES GET HGTV MAKEOVER

Comcast and **HGTV** are partnering to rebuild spaces into Comcast Lift Zones in three cities. HGTV will donate \$150,000 toward the renovation of the three sites. HGTV is also commissioning artists to create inspiring mural at or near Girls, Inc, Atlanta; Boys & Girls Club of Metro Baltimore—Brooklyn Club; and Inukai Boys & Girls Club in Hillsboro, Oregon. Comcast Lift Zones are spaces to help ensure low-income students have

the WiFi access and resources they need to participate and remain in distance learning.

PROGRAMMING

Is there blood in the water? Because the sharks are circling. **Discovery** is bringing "Shark Week" back for its 33rd iteration July 11-18, while **National Geographic** just announced its largest "Sharkfest" ever. The event spans six weeks, kicking off July 5 with the 9pm premiere of "Shark Beach with Chris Hemsworth." Content will be available across National Geographic, **Nat Geo Wild**, **Nat Geo Mundo**, **Disney XD** and **Disney+**. Disney+ will offer new content every Friday starting July 9 and highlight the best programming from past SharkFest seasons beginning June 25. – **FX** released its summer slate of programming across **FX**, **FXX** and **FX on Hulu**. Premiering exclusively on FX on Hulu are "American Horror Stories" (July 15), "Reservation Dogs" (August 9), "Y: The Last Man" (September 13) and *BJ Novak's* untitled anthology series (September 16). On FX, "American Horror Story: Double Feature" debuts Aug 25, "What We Do in the Shadows" returns for its third season Sept 2 and "Impeachment: American Crime Story" premieres Sept 7. "Archer" launches into its twelfth season Aug 25. – AVOD **Tubi** entered a content deal with **Cohen Media Group**, adding more than 80 titles to its library. Highlights from Cohen Media Group's titles include "Howards End," "Daughters of the Dust," "Faces Places" and "Mustang." Some Cohen titles are already available on the streamer.

DIG ONCE ACT LIVES AGAIN

Reps *Anna Eshoo* (D-CA), *David McKinley* (R-WV) and *Antonio Delgado* (D-NY) reintroduced legislation Thursday that would mandate the inclusion of broadband conduit during the construction of any road receiving federal funding in areas lacking broadband. The National Dig Once Act would also establish a process for states to notify broadband providers of federally-funded highway construction that may present opportunities for coordinating installation of broadband infrastructure. Eshoo first introduced Dig Once legislation back in 2009.

PEOPLE

Linnea Hemenez joined **Starz** as svp, international marketing, Starz International Digital Networks. She comes from **Spotify**, where she spearheaded global marketing and promotional strategy for podcasts, music and creators. – *Scott Crisler* was named COO of **CTI Towers**. Crisler came from **T-Mobile**, where he was senior manager, engineering development for over two years. – Research firm **TDG** appointed *Paul Hockenbury* senior consultant, product strategies. Hockenbury previously worked for **Comcast** for 24 years, most recently serving as executive director, research and analysis.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mark your calendars. **Cablefax** holds its annual FAXIES celebration on Thursday, June 10. Register for the free virtual awards show at TheFaxies.com. We'll reveal the best PR & Marketing campaigns and salute the execs and teams behind them while having some FAXIE fun!

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Pets Go to Therapy in 'HouseBroken'

Many people have probably wondered what their pets are thinking at least once. Executive producers *Gabrielle Allan*, *Jennifer Crittenden* and *Clea DuVall* each wished they could go to therapy with their pets to solve the mystery. While that's not possible, the trio did come up with animated comedy "HouseBroken" that lets viewers get a glimpse of what their pets might say if they went to group sessions. "Often people will say 'nothing's going on with them, they're just thinking about chicken' and that's probably true, but sometimes it is a little bit more complicated. Especially if you've ever gone to a pet psychic or just noticed the fact that they pick up on all your neuroses. I worked with a trainer who was all about that, 'any anxiety your pet has is just because of you and you need to work out your own stuff, and then your pet will be fine,' so all of that is just really fascinating," said Allan, co-creator, ep and showrunner of HouseBroken. The show finds the humor in a group of dogs, cats and other pets in a group therapy setting. A poodle named Honey, voiced by *Lisa Kudrow*, is their pseudo-leader each session, struggling to maintain control of not only the session, but the circumstances surrounding her own life. While the series is animal-centric, each character has relatable human qualities. Tabitha is aging out of the show cat circuit as fellow feline Chico binge eats to cope with separation anxiety when his owner leaves for work. "What we were trying to do, which is another favorite aspect of mine, is deal with human issues through the lens of pets. It just feels a little more palatable. There's things that we can broach that can be uncomfortable and sort of examining them through the lens of animals makes it a little bit easier, and so I hope that people actually relate to some of their issues," Allan said. HouseBroken premiered Monday at 9pm on **Fox**. - *Theresa Maher*

REVIEWS

"Dom," streaming on **Amazon Prime**. We're in a quandary on this series from Brazil about a policeman father who's a soldier in the war on drugs and his teen son, who has a drug habit. We'll tell you that the opening episode explodes off the screen, with visuals that will keep you watching despite the language issues (the subtitles were a bit wonky in our review copy). What we'll keep quiet about is something that happens roughly 16 minutes in, quietly, after the explosive scenes of the policeman-father racing into a Rio de Janeiro favela, a dangerous somewhat lawless ghetto, to pull out his son. Once home, the father does something that will make viewers gasp. In addition, they'll wonder if it's characteristic of Brazilian fathers to employ extremely tough love toward their children. In any case, it sets up a terrific drama. - "Domina," premiere, 9pm, Sunday, **Epix**. It remains important to encourage and applaud stories about strong women. Few were stronger than *Livia Drusilla*, whose life was upended during the Roman civil war (after Julius Caesar's death). After a decade in exile, she returns to Rome set for revenge. How she does it, though, makes this saga a good watch. The international cast includes *Claire Forlani* and *Isabella Rossellini*, who always seems to show up in large, global productions. - *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (05/24/21-05/30/21)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
TNT	0.751	2,312
FNC	0.619	1,906
MSNBC	0.424	1,307
HGTV	0.397	1,224
ESPN	0.348	1,072
DISC	0.269	827
TLC	0.247	761
HIST	0.246	757
CNN	0.244	750
INSP	0.235	725
USA	0.223	687
FOOD	0.222	683
HALL	0.212	652
TBSC	0.209	643
ID	0.187	575
TVLAND	0.174	536
SYFY	0.168	517
LIFE	0.159	491
BRAVO	0.154	474
NBCSN	0.145	447
FX	0.142	437
A&E	0.140	430
WETV	0.139	429
PARA	0.139	427
GSN	0.132	408
HMM	0.131	404
NAN	0.127	391
ADSM	0.125	385
NATGEO	0.114	351
COM	0.113	349
TRAVEL	0.108	333
AMC	0.108	332
APL	0.105	324
NICK	0.098	301

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

CONGRATULATE the **CABLEFAX 100** and **REACH** the Top Leaders in Cable, Broadband & Digital

Magazine Publish Date: July 28

**Ad Space Close: June 30
Ads Due: July 15**

**Advertising Contact: Ellen Kamhi,
Director of Business Development
917-626-5574 | ekamhi@accessintel.com**

WWW.CABLEFAX100.COM