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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Changing Big Tech: CTA's Shapiro Cautions Against Quick Antitrust Action

Consumer Technology Association president/CEO Gary Shapiro has some concerns about a package of antitrust bills being discussed on the Hill these days. **House Judiciary** has a markup scheduled Wednesday that would tackle bills raising the fees tied to major mergers and place larger prohibitions on what businesses could be purchased by the Big Tech platforms. Shapiro argued that there has been a lack of process in how the bills have been introduced, and said everyone should scrutinize their potential impact.

"I am very concerned about barring companies from acquisitions. If you bar big companies from acquiring small guys, you will dry up immediately a good portion of venture capital around the United States," he said during a virtual appearance before **The Media Institute** Tuesday. "If we choke off our seed corp, if we hurt entrepreneurs, we're hurting our country."

He also cautioned folks on being too quick to judge Section 230, which provides general immunity for large internet platforms from third-party content. He said that at times, that third-party content can show the uglier sides of what people think, but that's ultimately part of the First Amendment. With that in mind, one major change of Section 230 won't solve content issues on social media platforms, he argued.

"There's nothing wrong with the 230 liability protection. That was what allowed our internet to grow and be the envy of the world, frankly," Shapiro said. "Those that have platforms,

they need more transparency, they need public discussion. I think the oversight boards are very helpful, but I think it is evolutionary. This is not all or nothing, and we just have to keep getting better on that."

He also cautioned against bills like the Filter Bubble Transparency Act, which would notify platform users of how that platform's algorithm is shaping the content seen by each user. It also proposes offering users a "filter bubble-free" view of the platform with which they are engaging.

"If there's a requirement that you must reveal certain aspects of what your algorithm is doing that the public should know, that can make sense. But if you have to reveal everything about an algorithm... there's so many factors to it, so those disclosures would be pretty meaningless because it'd be so lengthy," he said.

It may still be six months away, but Shapiro is already fully wrapped up in the organization and planning of **CES 2022**. The world's largest technology convention is scheduled to be held January 5-8 in Las Vegas, and CTA is going to offer in-person and digital programming. As of now, all is going according to plan.

"There's a lot of new technology. We have a huge focus on self driving, AI and robotics, as well as a big health push," he said. "There are pandemic issues we're dealing with, especially outside the United States. We definitely think there will be fewer international people coming, although many are coming and we actually have a record number from different places that are signing up."

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SINCLAIR'S RSN STREAMING STRATEGY

Sinclair's RSN-focused streaming service will indeed be multi-tiered, with only those subscribing to the top plan getting “exclusive, live games untethered from the Pay TV ecosystem.” That's according to an **SEC** filing where the company laid out its potential earnings when considering current RSN subscribers, cord-cutters and additional revenues from advertising and sports betting. A Features Only subscription plan would unlock exclusive products and content like betting lines and marketplaces while authentication through an MVPD or other bundle would allow access to authenticated feeds of sports games. Non-authenticated users would have access to highlights, editorial content, eCommerce opportunities and free-to-play games. Sinclair subsidiary **Diamond Sports Group** believes it can potentially generate \$2 billion in annual revenue.

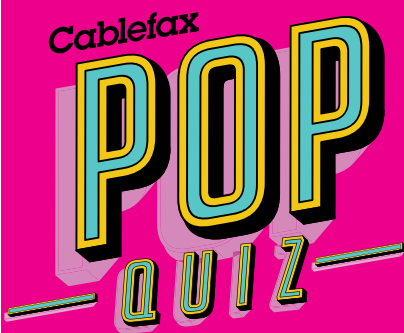
WIRELESS FIGHTS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DOLLARS

It was a battle of the technologies at a **Senate Commerce** hearing on building resilient networks Tuesday. **Wireless Infrastructure Association** president/CEO *Jonathan Adelstein* told lawmakers that the infrastructure package proposed by *President Biden* is the single greatest legislative opportunity for Congress to enhance the reliability and redundancy of broadband networks. But he also said that if legislators failed to allow for some technological flexibility and the embracing of wireless solutions, its efforts to strengthen broadband infrastructure would ultimately fall flat. “Wireless networks get up and running much quicker than fiber. Your constituents need broadband now,” he said. “You don't have to choose one at the expense of the others. If rigid eligibility require-

ments are locked in the statute, like symmetrical speeds that most consumers don't use, it precludes other priorities like resiliency and it can leave many people uncertain.” But **Golden West Telecommunications** CEO/general manager *Denny Law* has his doubts about technologies that aren't as proven as fiber. “Technology that causes connectivity to be spotty when it rains or snows, suffers from degradation or complete shutdown in extreme temperatures and encounters line of sight issues with seasonal foliage, or have network components exposed to the elements may be less expensive to install initially, but those technologies often come with higher operating costs over time and lack of reliability for essential functions,” he said. Law also argued that Congress ultimately needed to make a decision about what kind of network it wanted to build. That will be the largest factor towards shaping what technology or technologies win out. “Do you want the cheapest network, do you want the best network, or do you want something in between? I think there's a possibility for both Congress as well as the agency to define those terms, but I will caution you that you can't have both,” he said. ”

SCULLY LEAVING C-SPAN

Longtime **C-SPAN** political editor and host *Steve Scully* is making his exit from the network on July 6. His next move is to the **Bipartisan Policy Center**, a think tank dedicated to combining the best ideas from both parties and putting them into action. He'll serve as svp, communications. “For 30 years, C-SPAN has given me a front row seat to history, allowing me to explain politics and public policy to our loyal audience. I am excited about



One winner will be selected each week for a Starbucks gift card

Last week's answer: “Woke Up This Morning” from Alabama 3 is the theme song for “The Sopranos.”

What was the name of the ad agency Don Draper worked for in AMC Network's “Mad Men”?

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my next chapter at the Bipartisan Policy Center to help shape that story as well. If ever there was a time where all sides need to reach across the aisle, it is now! I am honored the BPC will allow me to play a part in this important civic process,” Scully said in a statement. His history with the network is long, but hit a rough patch when he was suspended last fall for lying about his Twitter account being hacked.

UK KID'S ONLINE RIGHTS CAMPAIGN COMES TO US

English nonprofit **5Rights** is bringing a spooky social media ad campaign to Americans starting Wednesday. The organization, which advocates for children's digital rights, will launch its “Twisted Toys” campaign with the help of **CommonSense Media, Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, Center for Digital Democracy** and **Parents Together**. The fictional toys advertised highlight and raise awareness for how tech products affect children. One of the highlighted products in the campaign is the “Stalkie Talkie,” which introduces strange adults to young children, much like an unsupervised chatroom online. “What we're saying is, ‘actually, you don't leave it up to the market to decide whether a kid can be served a bourbon in a bar, you don't leave it up to the market to decide whether to give them an adult or a child-sized dose of medicine.’ And, in fact, we've proved you don't leave it up to the market for the tech sector to babysit the kids, it's not on,” *Beeban Kidron*, House of Lords member and 5Rights head, told **CFX**. While the organization isn't connected to any television or wireless industry partners in the US for the campaign, Kidron said the industry is supportive of the initiative in the UK and in Europe. The campaign comes to the US because Kidron says it's the center of online rulemaking. “We can make advances here in Europe, in Australia, in the UK, but actually the culture and the rules of the game are really set in America for all our kids.”

TUBI IMPLEMENTS INTERNET ID TECH

Tubi has implemented third-party cookie alternative **Unified ID 2.0**. The technology serves as a connective tissue between relevant advertisers and consumers in cookie-less environments like CTV. The solution is interoperable and grants consumers more transparency and control over their privacy and data. Tubi said it is the first CTV publisher to implement the alternative.

FUSE MEDIA BETAS FUSE+

Fuse Media is beta launching streaming service **Fuse+** on **Amazon Fire TV** and **Apple TV**. The service will be fully and officially launched later this year. With the official launch, the streamer will add exclusive original content and it will become available on additional devices. Fuse+ will feature extended versions of new series, day-and-date linear premieres and more than 500 hours of original Fuse programming. The SVOD will be \$1.99/month, \$19.99 annually, or available via **TV Everywhere** authentication. Fuse+ will also offer a free tier with access to the first episode of all Fuse originals, the company's catalog of short-form original content and Fuse Media's three FAST brands **Fuse Backstage, Fuse Beat** and **Fuse Sweat**.

MMA FOR PARAMOUNT+

Paramount+ and **CBS Sports** reached a multi-year agreement with **Combate Global** to become the US English-language home of **Combate MMA**. **CBSN** begins its live coverage of the action on June 25, as it continues on Paramount+ exclusively from July 9 through the remainder of the 2021 schedule, ending in December. Paramount+ will feature 30 live events annually in 2022 and 2023 and CBSN will complement Combate coverage with a weekly recap show featuring highlights of the week's card.

WEEKLY RATINGS

TNT took cable's prime crown again last week, averaging 3.61 million viewers as **NBA** playoff ratings continue to sizzle. Sunday's Hawks-76ers Game 7 numbers were especially near and dear to Hawks CEO *Steve Koonin*. Koonin, who previously oversaw TNT and **TBS**, told the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* the numbers, which included a 13.22 rating in metro Atlanta, were “gargantuan.” “It's like my life coming full circle,” he told the paper. Meanwhile, second-place finisher **Fox News** is feeling pretty good as well with its 2.195 million viewer average in prime beating **MSNBC** (1.229m) and **CNN's** (782K) combined viewership.— The Season 3 premiere episode of “Tyler Perry's Sistas” on **BET** on June 9 notched 1.4 million total viewers in L+3 across **BET** and **BET Her**, according to **Nielsen**. Throw in encore telecasts, and Sistas drew 2.5 million viewers. The episode grew 38% in L+3 among Adults 18-49 across **BET** and **BET Her**. Music reality series “BET Present: The Encore” debuted Wednesday with 590K total viewers across **BET** and **BET Her** and was **BET's** most-watched reality series in two years

PROGRAMMING

FX ordered limited thriller series “Class of '09,” which will be available exclusively on **FX on Hulu**. — **FS1** will air an exhibition game between two **14u** baseball teams from NYC and Chicago. “A Dream Fulfilled” will take place on the corn-stalk field next to the Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa, on Aug 11. The next day, the teams and coaches will attend the “MLB Field of Dreams” game between the White Sox and Yankees on a temporary ballpark near the movie site. — Comedy series “Motherland” returns exclusively to **Sundance Now** on July 8 for a third season. — **A&E** series “Fasten Your Seatbelt” premieres July 21 at 10pm. — **Showtime** renewed sketch series “Ziwe” for a second season. — **MTV** greenlit competition franchise “The Challenge” for Season 37.— **Disney Channel** ordered animated buddy-comedy series “Kiff,” influenced by the creators and eps' experiences growing up in Cape Town, South Africa. — **Lifetime** said yes to a reimagined movie series of “Highway to Heaven.” The first movie in the installment will premiere this fall and star *Jill Scott* (also executive producer) as the new angel Angela who comes down to Earth to help people in crisis.

PEOPLE

Eric Harris joined **DISH's** wireless team as director, enterprise program management. Harris has been with the company for 11 years.