

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Mobile First: Altice USA Kicks Off Optimum Rebrand

Altice USA is rebranding its mobile product from **Altice Mobile** to **Optimum Mobile** on Sunday, and it is all part of a larger plan to align all Altice USA brands under the Optimum name.

Altice USA launched its mobile service in September 2019 with a \$20/month offer to all **Optimum** and **Suddenlink** customers. Non-customers living within Altice USA's footprint could also subscribe to the service, but at the slightly larger \$30/month price. The service was powered by an MVNO agreement with **Sprint** in its early days, a move that prevented the service from enjoying the same success as some of the company's cable competitors that have also taken the dive into wireless.

T-Mobile's merger with Sprint seemingly solved that problem. During the company's 1Q21 earnings call in April, CEO *Dexter Goei* said the migration of customers onto T-Mobile's network had substantially improved the customer experience, contributing to a 20% reduction in churn from the prior quarter. He teased at the time that the team would start pushing its mobile product again near the end of the summer.

"As churn rates continue to fall, given the better performance and the increased focus on the IT tools that we have and that we continue to deliver, the anticipation is that we would start investing more heavily in media toward the back end of this year. Let's call it back to school, September onwards, where we'd anticipate we would only do that to the extent that we'd

expect to get a lot more gross adds," he said.

It is still unclear when Altice USA will make its next rebranding move, but the company indicated no one should be holding their breath waiting for the next announcement to drop.

"The decision to embark on our journey to a single, converged Optimum brand was made with our consumers' expectations and needs in mind. However, the unification of brands will take time, as our priority is to ensure a seamless journey for all customers," Altice USA told **CFX**.

Altice USA has previously defended its decisions to maintain the individual Suddenlink and Optimum names after acquiring the brands in 2015 and 2016, respectively. That was primarily because the two brands were well regarded in the marketplace and each had strong growth trajectories. It is for some of those same reasons that Optimum became the name of choice for the rebrand.

"The Optimum brand has strong recognition and brand value in the tri-state area, and we look forward to ultimately extending its reach," Altice USA said.

More details on the rebrand and what's to come next could be revealed during the company's 2Q21 earnings call Wednesday.

THE OLYMPICS ARE HERE

If you skipped out on **NBC's** first-ever live morning broadcast of the Olympics Opening Ceremony today (and since it started at 6:55am ET, we don't blame you), don't worry. You can watch it in primetime from 7:30pm to midnight on the broadcaster. And the primetime coverage will repeat overnight from 1:38am-

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5am. **NBCU** isn't letting Tokyo's 13-hour time difference put a damper on the first worldwide gathering since the pandemic began, scheduling thousands of hours of coverage across its entire portfolio, including Peacock. The Games of the XXXII Olympiad mark the first time NBCU will provide live coverage of the NBC broadcast network's primetime show in certain markets in 4K UHD format with HDR and ATMOS sound. In addition, live competition coverage of all Tokyo Games programming on **Golf Channel** and **Olympic Channel: Home of Team USA** will be made available in 4K HDR throughout the Games. The advanced tech doesn't end there. **Telemundo Deportes** is using its first multicamera virtual reality set for the Games. The Tokyo Olympics VR studio features three cameras, augmented reality capabilities, live graphics and custom interfaces to help the production team to go on air.

MUNICIPALITIES STILL MINDING BROADBAND GAP

We've heard a lot from the ISPs, the **FCC** and Congressional leaders on the digital divide and various efforts to close it, but what about the towns and municipalities that are affected by it? "The data that ISPs share with the FCC is not at a level that is super-useful for us to be able to identify gaps, particularly those last-mile gaps," San Diego Association of Governments executive *Antoinette Meier* said during a **Cisco**-hosted virtual roundtable this week. "That's been a huge challenge, we've had to cobble together a lot of different data sources—public data sources, private data sources—to try to paint a picture of the digital divide in our region and make sure that we're developing the right strategies and investing our resources wisely." As Congress contemplates a \$1.2 billion bipartisan

infrastructure plan that tackles physical infrastructure such as bridges as well as broadband buildouts, public-private partnerships, nicknamed P3s, are the buzzword. Cisco's U.S. Municipal Infrastructure Index 2021 found that among local government officials polled, 57% agreed communities need public-private partnerships to accomplish necessary infrastructure projects. The kicker is that 48% said they did not have those arrangements in place. Operators are likely to see a continuous uptick in RFPs from local governments. "We've got to make sure there's access for all walks of life and that's the reason why we put out our fiber broadband RFP; was, we were looking for that P3 in order to help us establish fiber buildout. Not only for the town in general, but for the community because we want to make sure that there's opportunities for people to take advantage of these things and provide that equitable access that we keep talking about," *Eugene Mejia*, deputy CTO for the Town of Gilbert, AZ, said at the Cisco event.

PITTSBURGH GETS LOCAST

Broadcast streaming app **Locast** expanded into the Pittsburgh TV market. The streamer, now serving 35 markets, will reach more than 1 million residents in the DMA, which also covers Morgantown, West Virginia. Locast offers residents access to 40 local TV channels in the Pittsburgh DMA. The city also houses university students who may qualify for the Locast Cares Program, which allows users who do not have the financial capability to donate to watch local TV channels via the service without donation request interruptions. The program is open to the first 25,000 applicants, lasts for one year, and is available to students, first responders and

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The advertisement includes a smaller image of the Cablefax Daily magazine cover. The cover features the headline "Deal Talk: RCN/Altice/Grande CEO Discusses \$6.1bn Strategic Deal" and "Save the Date: Dec. 4 Most Powerful Women Magazine & Virtual Celebration Event". The magazine cover also displays the date "MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020" and "VOLUME 31 | NO. 211".

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low-income households. Locast continues to launch in new markets while a copyright suit from the big broadcasters is pending in federal court. The parties recently requested a November trial date.

RATINGS

TNT's "AEW: Dynamite" dominated the ratings Wednesday as the nights #1 cable program for 18-49s for a second consecutive week. The pro wrestling league delivered 575,000 total viewers in the demo, 150,000 18-34s and 1.15 million total viewers. Year-to-date, AEW is up 5% in P18-49 and +3% in total viewers. Both nights of FYTER Fest were up significantly over last year, +48% in both P18-49 and total viewers.

PROGRAMMING

Turner Sports will drop the puck for its first live **NHL** regular season programming slate on Oct 13. The **TNT** primetime doubleheader begins with the New York Rangers at the Washington Capitals, followed by the Colorado Avalanche hosting the Chicago Blackhawks. – **ESPN** platforms will provide coverage of all Little League Baseball and Softball U.S. Region and World Series content across **ABC**, ESPN linear nets and **ESPN+**. The action begins Saturday on ESPN+ with the Little League Softball Region Tournament slate, encompassing 75 games. Longhorn Network will televise the final four games of the Southwest Region tournament. The Little League Softball Region Tournament coverage ends July 30 with the West Region Championship on ESPN+ at 1pm ET.

PEOPLE

Tom Whitaker has exited **Shentel** after more than 16 years with the company. His tenure included serving as svp, fiber operations, where he helped stand up the new FTTH Glo Fiber brand. He's joined rural utility association **NRTC** as vp, member operations. – Fiber provider **Consolidated Communications** promoted **Greg Flanagan** to vp, carrier sales and business development and **Travis Graham** to vp, commercial and carrier products. Flanagan has most recently served as the company's senior director, business development. Graham previously led the sales engineering team.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Twitter Hits

The Cable Center @TheCableCenter

Honoree Spotlight: Cathy Hughes' humble beginnings were a part of the catalyst that fueled her ambition to empower African Americans & tell stories from their perspective. Today, @RadioOne_inc is the largest African-American-owned, diversified media corp in the nation. #CableHOF

CATHY HUGHES
FOUNDER & CHAIRWOMAN,
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@naomiosaka | #Tokyo2020 🇯🇵

Rich Greenfield, LightShed @RichLightShed

Interesting to see how Charter is advertising @spacejammovie free on @hbomax to drive video service upgrades, esp when you cannot even watch @hbomax on a Spectrum set-top box

Illustrates the power of @jasonkilar window shattering approach

Spectrum @GetSpectrum - Jul 16
Watch #SpaceJam 🏀: A New Legacy on #HBOMax when you upgrade to #SpectrumTV Silver.

9:36 AM - Jul 23, 2021 - Twitter for iPhone

Research

(Source: NBCUniversal)

- > 41 sports will be contested at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.
- > There will be 7,000 hours of programming hours across NBCU, and 5,500+ hours of coverage across NBC Sports Digital Platforms.
- > 206 countries and territories took part in the Parade of Nations at the Opening Ceremony.
- > Four sports are making their Olympic debuts: skateboarding, surfing, sport climbing and karate.

Up Ahead

- JULY 25-28:** Fiber Connect, Nashville
- AUGUST 6:** CFX Regional Rainmakers Nominations Due
- AUGUST 9-13:** CableLabs Innovation Boot Camp, Virtual
- AUGUST 11-12:** Kaitz Foundation Hollywood Creative Forum, Virtual
- SEPT 28:** T Howard Dinner, NYC

Quotable

"Pat Esser's contribution to our industry has been invaluable. He's a true cable success story, rising through the ranks from local executive to company CEO. Throughout, he has represented the heart and soul of our industry, always committed first to the welfare of Cox customers and employees. Pat has been a leader and innovator in cable marketing; a visionary in cable operations and technology; an ally and champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion; and a thoughtful, forward-looking President & CEO of his company. He has also been a stalwart for NCTA over the years, dynamically leading our Board of Directors and trade show several times. As one of our industry's most trusted and authentic voices, Pat has immense credibility with policy makers. He has helped provide a strong presence for our industry here in Washington and always has committed Cox Communications to the public good. I will miss Pat enormously as a friend, mentor, and advisor on all of our critical issues. We wish only the very best for him in his next chapter. We're looking forward to working with Mark Greatrex, another formidable presence in our industry who will be a positive force as we move into the future."

– NCTA president/CEO Michael Powell on the retirement of Pat Esser