

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

25 Years: Steve Doocy Reflects on Fox News' Rise to the Top

This week marked the 25th anniversary of Fox News' launch. Love it or hate it, there's no denying the network's impact on the multichannel universe. It consistently ranks as the most-watched cable channel in primetime and total day, and frequently beats out the broadcasters in coverage of big new events. To mark the milestone, we chatted with "Fox & Friends" co-host Steve Doocy, who joined Fox News shortly after its launch. Doocy also [reflected on](#) the anniversary in a recent Fox News special.

Take us back to the Fox News's launch. What were those early days like? In the beginning, it was a mad dash to get everything ready. I started right after the launch. In the beginning, we were really just trying to figure out how to get on in New York because until we got on in New York, the ad buyers wouldn't see us. It took a long time, but eventually we got on. [Time Warner Cable agreed to carry Fox News in July 1997.] That was really one of the turning points. I believe Time Warner owned CNN at the time, so it wasn't really in their interest to launch another cable competitor. But we were in New York City and it just made sense we'd be on in New York.

What was that initial vision for Fox News and do you think it was achieved or did it evolve over the years? I think the whole idea behind it in the beginning is what we still do today. They've done research and there's a whole part of the country that feels like nobody's talking about things that are of interest to them. So the whole 'fair and balanced' thing

that started in the beginning, where we're going to give you both sides and it's going to be different from other channels because others don't really talk about the other side.

Can you talk about how Suzanne Scott has put her stamp on the network? The whole business has changed in the last five years. Now we have a streaming service, podcasts, radio and, of course, the two channels. And we're opening a third channel with Fox Weather as a streaming service. She and her team have done a great job trying to figure out where the business is going next, and then lining us up in a way that we can take advantage of whatever the next big thing is.

Was there a period of uncertainty with Roger Ailes' resignation? It was a couple years before Suzanne was actually named CEO. I don't remember it as uncertainty. His resignation was certainly sudden, we were all in Cleveland, Ohio, for the GOP Convention. The main thing I remember at that time was that Trump was surging and as we were then heading to the Democratic convention in Philly—trying to figure out how to cover all of that accurately and fairly.

Obviously, Fox News and you yourself are no strangers to criticism. How do you deal with it and do you feel like there was a time over the past 25 years where it ratcheted up or took a different tone? We didn't have criticism in the beginning because we didn't have the audience. The criticism started when we were for the most part number one. When you're number one, everybody's out to get you, so it goes with the territory. Since we became number one over 20 years ago,



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it's been pretty much the same deal.

It was about five years after launch that Fox News really began to tip the ratings scale and have some big quarterly defeats over CNN. What was that like? We had worked for a long time really hard. When we finally caught them and then eclipsed them, it was 'OK, just keep the pedal on the gas.' Because if we want to stay number one, we're going to have to work as hard going forward as we did to get here. At the end of the day, I still look at the ratings every day to see how we did... Everybody knows what's involved, and they work as hard as they can. It's a pleasure to be part of the team.

LUMEN BACKS MEDIACOM IN WEST DES MOINES SPAT

Lumen, formerly **CenturyLink**, is throwing its support behind **Mediacom** when it comes to the provider's dispute with the City of West Des Moines. Lumen has served the city for more than a century and provides Gigabit per second speeds to 8,000 West Des Moines households, but it told the **FCC** this week that its present and future investments in the community are at risk. "**Google Fiber's** exclusive arrangement with the city will materially inhibit the ability of Lumen and other broadband providers to deploy additional broadband services and improve existing broadband services in the municipality," Lumen said in FCC comments. "Google Fiber's agreement with the city guarantees it exclusive access to the city's new taxpayer-funded conduit network ("Conduit Network") for six months. And Google Fiber's preferential treatment does not end there. The Conduit Network is designed to Google Fiber's specifications, without input from its broadband competitors." Mediacom filed a lawsuit in December against West Des Moines, alleging it improperly used taxpayer-backed financing bonds intended to remedy urban blight and poverty to build the network exclusively for the use of Google Fiber. Mediacom and the city have told they court they are having productive settlement talks, which are ongoing. Mediacom also filed a petition at the FCC asking the agency to review the city's rights-of-way management practices to determine if it's in violation of Section 253. Lumen also complained Google Fiber received preferential treatment in permitting and licensing fees and extensive marketing of its services by the city. **ACA Connects** also is backing its member company. "As Commission and court precedent make clear, a state or local legal requirement runs afoul of Section 253 if it 'materially limits or inhibits' the ability of a provider of telecommunications service to compete 'in a fair and balanced legal and regulatory environment' or is not competitively neutral or non-discriminatory," ACAC said in its FCC filing. **NATOA**, the **National League of Cities** and **INCOMPAS** are among those filing in support of West Des Moines and Google.

SCRIPPS' JOURNEY TO REVAMPING NEWSY

It was just a week ago that **Newsy** re-launched as an over-the-air broadcast network. It's available to more than 90% of U.S. television homes across the multicast channel as well

as OTT and connected TV platforms, and promises 17 hours a day of news coverage. *Kate O'Brian*, Head of the News Group at **Scripps Networks**, told **CFX** that the network's goal is to give audiences a news option that isn't taking sides, that offers interesting information so they can decide for themselves their opinion on a given topic. "Newsy's goal is to inform, to answer the 'why' of every story," she said. Planning for the network's launch began at the start of 2021 and accelerated when O'Brian was named to her current role in April. "We essentially built a fully functional news operation and network within six months, including the hiring of numerous seasoned journalists, producers and other key personnel, the creation of 14 news bureaus around the country and the construction of studios, control rooms, a newsroom and technical operations—none of which existed six months ago," Scripps Networks President *Lisa Knutson* said. Scripps isn't the only broadcaster to take another dive into the digital multicast channel pool. Last month, **Nexstar** launched nostalgia-focused **Rewind TV** and wagering channel **SportsGrid Network**. Across the board, broadcasters are strongly optimistic about the future of those networks and their promise for success. "First, we know that more and more consumers are cutting the cord, but that leaves certain gaps including live sports and local news that are often found on over-the-air broadcast stations. Pairing SVOD and antennas are a natural combination, which is part of a larger trend we call self-bundling," Knutson said. "Second, many consumers who don't have antennas are surprised by how many channels are available for free over the air."

MNF RATINGS REPLAY

Nielsen corrected **ESPN's** Week 1 MNF ratings, with **ABC's** audience adding more than 1.7 million viewers from the original report to hit 8.6 million total viewers. That brings the overall viewership across ABC, ESPN and **ESPN2** to 16,974,000 for the overtime NFL game between the Baltimore Ravens and Las Vegas Raiders. ESPN and ESPN2's ratings weren't impacted by the revision. As a result of the change, Monday Night Football's season average has jumped to 14.7 million viewers (four games), now, season-to-date, up 24% from 2020 (5 games, 11.9 million viewers) and up 26% than 2019 (5 games, 11.6 million viewers).

DIVERSITY IN TECH AWARD

SCTE and the **SCTE Foundation**, in conjunction with **NAMIC**, are launching an annual diversity in technology award that will recognize a diverse engineering technology leader who has contributed to the advancement of the cable, media, and entertainment industry and has demonstrated significant professional growth. Nominations for the first award will be accepted beginning in June 2022, with the winner being selected during August 2022. The honoree will be recognized

during **Diversity Week** in October 2022 at NAMIC's annual conference as well as during SCTE Cable-Tec Expo, scheduled for Sept. 19-22 in Philly.

EDITOR'S NOTE
Cablefax Daily will not publish on Monday, Oct 11. We'll be back on Tuesday with the Daily as well as the **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo Show Daily**, which will feature a full download on the technology conference and a look at this year's WIT Award Winner, *Patricia Martin* of **Cox Communications**.

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"Self-care is incredibly important. We just rolled out in September, giving every call center employee like a 20-minute self-care moment, where they could go get a massage, they could go talk to a trainer, a nutritionist. It was an opportunity to say, 'Hey, we really appreciate the fact that you guys continue to muscle through the day-to-day interactions. We hear you. We see the effort that you're putting into it. So, here's a thank you.' I think for our leadership team, remembering that praise goes miles, recognition goes miles, to maintain a positive work environment... We have to not make praise an event. We have to incorporate it into our daily activity."

- Buckeye Broadband President & GM Geoff Shook speaking at The Independent Show

Research

(Source: [Roku and NRG's "The Streaming Decade" Survey](#))

- > More than half of consumers say they're going to watch as much TV as they did during the pandemic even as restrictions loosen.
- > 40% of streaming Baby Boomers added more streaming services in the past year.
- > Boomers who stream have the same number of subscriptions on average, 3, as the younger generations.
- > Nearly 1 in 2 consumers streamed a new movie release at home in the past year.

Up Ahead

- OCTOBER 11-14:** [SCTE Cable-Tec Expo](#), Online
- OCTOBER 13:** [Mid-America Cable Show Live Webinar](#), Online
- OCTOBER 19-20:** [MFM's Media Outlook 2022](#), Online
- OCTOBER 20:** [WICT Signature Touchstones Luncheon](#), NYC
- OCTOBER 29:** [Cablefax Regional Rainmakers Awards Entry Deadline](#)