

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

DISH Update: DISH's Wireless Dreams Include Enterprise

Two years ago, *Charlie Ergen* was the keynote speaker at **The INCOMPAS Show**. At the time, **T-Mobile** and **Sprint** were still awaiting regulatory approval for their merger, and DISH was in the early days of its 5G network buildout. A lot has happened since then—and there's still a lot to come with the only current launch a beta test in Vegas.

"In June of 2019, when we were negotiating with the **DOJ** and the **FCC**, obviously no one knew there was a pandemic coming, so we made some pretty significant commitments around our buildout—20% of U.S. population coverage by June of next year and 70% by June of 2023," DISH EVP, Corporate Development *Tom Cullen* said during a return appearance this week to the internet and competitive networks association's annual INCOMPAS Show. "We have made really good progress because we had no choice. We've made these significant commitments, and despite the pandemic, we had to charge forward. We've had our challenges—from a supply chain standpoint, from COVID and obviously now with labor shortages."

He said DISH has had a team in the office since May 7. "With our agenda and the things that we have to get done, we just knew we had to have that teamwork and collaboration and couldn't afford to do it remotely," Cullen said.

Things are moving along. In the past 14 months, DISH has opened 36 regional offices—each fully staffed with engineering, legal, permitting, etc. There's construction activity going

on in more than three dozen markets and thousands of tower permits and leases signed, Cullen said.

Another sign of progress.... longtime DISH exec *Jeremy McCarty*'s title recently flipped from VP & GM of Smart Home Services—which had him heading up DISH's direct-to-consumer brand for professional installation of smart home devices—to VP & GM of Retail Wireless.

Then there's all the partnerships DISH has announced, with new ones coming almost weekly. Case in point, yesterday the company announced a deal with **Helium** that will make it the first major carrier to utilize the Helium Network's unique blockchain-based incentive model with customers deploying their own 5G CBRS-based hotspots. "If you come to our office, we put the logos of all the companies that we've entered into contracts with on the wall. It spans probably a 100-foot section of the building," said Cullen. "We've signed with every major tower company and many smaller ones, and then we have transport and fiber agreements going on literally every day."

One of those partnerships that has received a lot of attention is DISH's decision to host its 5G network inside **Amazon Web Services'** cloud computing service. "I think the industry understands that moving telco workloads into the cloud is a different breed of cats," said Cullen. "But I think everyone knows that success will yield a new global vertical market, so we selected AWS. We've architected it so eventually we can be multi-cloud because when you get into the enterprise, they are going to demand that. Amazon is a very impressive



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BRESNAN AWARD RECIPIENT: TED TURNER

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company... We're making good progress."

Note that use of "enterprise." Today, DISH doesn't have an enterprise salesforce. It'll likely market to enterprise clients through partners. A number of the partnerships DISH has struck, such as those with **IBM**, have been to unlock capabilities, like 5G slicing for enterprise private networks. As Cullen put it: "we're bringing enough spectrum to the marketplace that there's going to be more than just supporting the consumer handset market."

When it comes to Washington, DISH is hopeful this week's FCC nominations will help push forward a proposal to open 500 megahertz in the 12 GHz band for 5G. "It's pro-competition and pro-consumer to bring more spectrum to the market," said Cullen. "You can't underestimate how much demand we're going to have for spectrum going forward. I think COVID has opened everybody's eyes to not only the need and the demand for connectivity, but as 5G really becomes mature, you're going to see use cases that will impact every industry."

ANOTHER ROUND OF COMSCORE VS. NIELSEN

Comscore is fighting back against **Nielsen** after the latter asserted the big data sets used by Comscore for measurement purposes have a number of flaws. In a column [posted](#) earlier this month on *Broadcasting+Cable*, Nielsen SVP, Data Science *Molly Poppie* said when it cross-checks those data sets with information from its panels it finds that they lack demographic profiles and increase the possibility of waste and fraud. Comscore CEO & Executive Vice Chairman *Bill Livek* [penned](#) a blog of his own in response Wednesday, reiterating his confidence in his company's data sets and its ongoing commitment to pushing measurement methodologies forward. "Perhaps we

shouldn't be too surprised at their admitted skepticism regarding the use of large-scale data, given the challenges they've had moving away from small panels with single digit response rates within their own service," he wrote. "While others in the industry are only now beginning to consider a future of measurement that puts audiences first, Comscore has the infrastructure, methodology, and secure data assets in place to realize this future today." He also claimed that Comscore is the only company capable of delivering "stable, reliable, accurate reporting built for the future of media, today." **The Media Rating Council** suspended accreditation for Nielsen's National Ratings Service and Local TV Ratings service in September after both Nielsen and others requested a pause in the measurement firm's accreditation processes. At the time, **Video Advertising Bureau** President/CEO *Sean Cunningham* said the move proved Nielsen needed to modernize its processes.

REPS CALL FOR MORE JEWISH PROGRAMMING

Rep *Kathleen Rice* and four of her colleagues sent letters to **Comcast, Cox, Charter, AT&T, Altice USA, DISH** and **Verizon** asking the providers about their intent to offer more Jewish programming. They posited that such content can have a significant impact on Jewish populations while also increasing the levels of understanding and acceptance for those outside of those communities. "Culturally specific programming fosters community and, for those outside of the community, exposure to Jewish programming can be an important and effective antidote to the scourge of hate and bigotry against Jewish people," the letters said. The lawmakers requested answers to a number of questions by Nov. 9, including what

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obstacles the providers face in offering additional Jewish themed English language content and what plans, if any, they have to increase the amount of content offered on their systems. **JLTV** (Jewish Life Television) is a 24-7 Jewish-themed television network, available in more than 45 million North American homes through **Bell, Comcast, DirecTV, Charter** and other video providers.

NCTA: CABLE'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ONLY GROWING

The cable industry's economic impact in America is only growing, now reaching approximately \$460 billion. That's according to a [report](#) from **NCTA** and **Bortz Media & Sports Group** investigating how cable's investment in infrastructure and programming has affected consumers in the U.S. The cable operator industry directly and indirectly accounted for more than 2.3 million domestic jobs and the program network industry accounted for 1.25 million in 2020. Cable operator employees can be found in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and U.S. territories, accounting for more than 300 cable operator employees in each U.S. congressional district.

C-SPAN, HULU GET FAST COMPANY'S OK

Fast Company released its first-ever [list](#) of "Brands That Matter," recognizing nearly 100 companies and nonprofits that "give people compelling reasons to care about them—and offer inspiration for others to buy in." Among those making the cut are **C-SPAN** and **Hulu**. They join a list that includes **McDonald's**, **Yeti**, the **NBA** and **No Kid Hungry**. "While C-SPAN is often referred to as 'boring' with a smirk, what passes as dull to Beltway-addled brains is also consistent, impartial balanced coverage without commercials or commentary," **Fast Company** wrote. It dubbed Hulu "one of the best, most affordable streaming platforms among an ever-expanding list of options," giving it bonus points for its co-viewing 'Watch Party' feature.

AMG ADDS HBCU STREAMER TO PORTFOLIO

Allen Media Group announced its acquisition of **HBCUGo.TV** from **Symonds-Evans Media** Tuesday. The streaming network aims to deliver culturally relevant content to the nation's 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities while also providing the next generation of creatives a platform to hone their skills. Allen Media has also acquired HBCUGo.TV's library, including more than 5,000 hours of content featuring HBCU students and alumni. In addition, HBCUGo.TV has struck a partnership with the **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association** to broadcast 44 Black college games during the current football season as well as the men's and women's basketball seasons.

ON THE COMMISSION'S AGENDA

The **FCC** will vote on a measure at its November open meeting to allow mobile phone users to text 988 to connect to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The FCC has already established 988 as the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, effective July 16, 2022, to increase the resource's accessibility. This measure would require wireless providers to offer users the ability to text that number and reach the Lifeline by the same effective date. The Commission will also consider rules for an

enhanced competition incentive program that would allow spectrum licensees to partition, disaggregate or lease spectrum. The hope would be that such a program would free more spectrum for small carriers and Tribal communities.

HONORS

CTAM is awarding **NCTA** SVP, Industry & Association Affairs **Rob Stoddard** its 2021 Beacon Award for Communications Excellence. The honor is designed to spotlight leaders who showcase innovation and creativity in the field, finding unique ways to inspire others to succeed. Stoddard, who plans to retire in January, leads NCTA's member relations and public affairs programs while also managing relationships with other industry associations. He's also spent time leading NCTA's Communications Department and as Chief Communications Officer for companies like **Continental Cablevision**, **MediaOne** and **AT&T Broadband**. **CTAM** also revealed the winners of its TAMI Award, an honor for individuals that have made significant contributions to efforts critical to the industry's continued success. This year's honorees include **Cox Communications** VP, Consumer Marketing Strategy **Tony Maldonado**; **Spectrum Business** Senior Marketing Manager **Chris Hebbard**; **Cox Business** Channel Marketing Manager **Steven Gorman**; and **AMC Networks** VP, Intellectual Property Protection and S&P **Alfred Perry**. Award winners will be celebrated during the virtual **CTAM Think** on Nov 4.

WWE INVESTS IN NFT MARKETPLACE

WWE and NFT business and creative studio **Blockchain Creative Labs** signed an exclusive agreement to launch a marketplace for licensed digital WWE tokens and collectibles. Blockchain Creative Labs, which was formed by **Fox Entertainment** and **Bento Box Entertainment**, will create NFTs that celebrate the company's catalog of digital assets as well as its most iconic moments. The marketplace will serve as a destination for customers to purchase, trade, sell and store digital tokens that will be authenticated through **Eluvio's** blockchain. The marketplace's name and launch date will be announced in the coming weeks.

PROGRAMMING

Haystack News launched a live stream of **Newsy** Wednesday. **Scripps** re-launched **Newsy** as an over-the-air channel in October to 90% of U.S. television households. – **Showtime** is kicking off its celebration of the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop in December. "Video Music Box (wt)," a look at the longest-running music video show in the world, will premiere Dec 3 at 8pm. "Ricky Powell: The Individualist," debuting Dec 10 at 8pm, tells the story of the famed pop culture photographer. "Rolling Like Thunder" airs on Dec 17 at 8pm and investigates the world of freight train and graffiti culture.

PEOPLE

Discovery named **Anil Jhingan** President & Managing Director, Asia Pacific, effective Nov 1. He'll replace **Simon Robinson** who is stepping away from the APAC business to lead integration planning activities tied to Discovery's proposed merger with **WarnerMedia**. Prior to joining Discovery, Jhingan served as Group Director, M&A and International Development for **Sky**.

Think about that for a minute...

People Power

Commentary by Steve Effros

There were several big pieces of news about folks in the telecommunications business this week. No, I'm not talking about Mark Zuckerberg! Indeed, I might point out that Zuckerberg and his ilk try to suggest that they are not in the telecommunications business! But that's a column for another time.

Nope, today I want to talk about Jessica Rosenworcel, Gigi Sohn and Rob Stoddard. I grant you the grouping of those three is a little unusual, but they all made news in that they are either coming or going from key positions that have a very direct effect on us.

The Biden White House has announced that it is nominating the current acting FCC Chair, Jessica Rosenworcel, to have that position formally. Gigi Sohn was nominated as a Commissioner. The backroom buzz on all this has been caused by the fact that the delay in naming folks to these key positions has put a lot of potential regulatory action in limbo. Indeed, if no nominations had been made (and approved by the Senate) by the end of the year, Rosenworcel's term would expire and she would have had to leave. That would have left a three-person Commission with Republican-appointed Commissioners in the majority.

Rosenworcel has shown great competence as the acting Chair, getting things done even though she did not have a majority of Democratic Commissioners. The FCC has been split evenly because there was one Democratic vacancy already. For whatever reason the administration was very slow to fill it.

Speculation is that there was a lot of maneuvering behind the scenes over whether Rosenworcel would be named permanently as Chairwoman or whether, possibly, Gigi Sohn would get the title. I don't claim to know if this is true or not and it's not important now. There's no question that both Rosenworcel and Sohn are on the same page when it comes to their regulatory response to the challenges of the FCC.

Of course, you've read a lot about Gigi if you have been reading this column for a long time. I've known her, argued with her, had drinks with her and laughed with her for many years.

We definitely come at lots of issues from different perspectives. Gigi was one of the founders of Public Knowledge, the advocacy group that spearheaded things like "net neutrality." She's a very, very smart person. She was the lead counselor for Tom Wheeler when he headed the FCC. She's articulate and passionate about her beliefs regarding how the telecommunications business should be run, the pricing that should be charged (de minimis if possible) and her view of what the "public interest" (including a lot of companies that support regulations, especially if they affect their competitors) is.

I have a great deal of respect for Gigi. I suspect once on the Commission, assuming she is confirmed, she will find as most Commissioners do, that actually regulating rather than advocating for regulation is a more leavening challenge. I hope so.

And then there's Rob Stoddard. You read about him in a [piece](#) here in **Cablefax** just the other day. He's finally going to end a very long and successful career representing the industry at the NCTA and at a series of major cable companies. One thing that was left out of the summary however, is what I'm very proud of: I was the one who convinced him to leave trade press journalism and join me as my head of communications at the Cable Telecommunications Association (CATA). That's where he first earned the moniker of "the nicest guy in cable!" He was then, and he still is. He's also extraordinarily gracious and low key. He exemplifies the power of people to make a difference, as do the two newly nominated Commissioners. Congratulations to all.



Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)



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