

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Future First: CableLabs' Long-Term Vision for 10G Challenge

CableLabs CEO *Phil McKinney* is looking for the next big thing. What he's sure of is that it is going to rely on the power, capacity and stability of cable networks. That's why there's no better time than now to launch the 10G Challenge, a grant program offering innovators prizes for the next generation of ideas and innovations that can be made possible by 10G.

"We're at the stage now where we're at a major inflection point with these gigabit networks coming online and being so broadly available globally, meaning innovators can invent entirely new kinds of experiences never before conceived of now that customers can get that network capacity today and enjoy whatever this totally new experience is," he said during a call with reporters Tuesday.

The blueprint for the 10G Challenge came from CableLabs' Innovation Showcases. The organization would go out and find companies of all sizes and give them a stage to present the latest test cases from their labs, offering the rest of the industry and partners outside of it a look into what the future could offer.

"It was trying to highlight the really creative, really innovative things that are going on," he said. "We do a fantastic job on building great infrastructure, great capabilities into our network. But consumers are looking for those experiences. What can they do across the network?"

The deadline to enter the 10G Challenge is July 1. To par-

ticipate in the challenge, entrants must submit a short video describing their idea and showing how it would use at least a 1Gbps network. The submissions will be split across four categories based on topics covered in CableLabs' Near Future video series: Live, Learn, Work and Play. CableLabs has lined up partners like **Mayo Clinic**, **Zoom** and **Corning** to assist with judging, and an announcement on what industry partner will judge the Play category is coming soon.

More than \$300,000 in prize money is up for grabs. One winner in each of the four categories will be awarded a \$50,000 prize, and one grand prize winner will be given \$100,000. There is room for the public to join in and voice what innovation they most want to see come to life. Consumers will be able to vote for their People's Choice Award winner, and that project will be given a \$10,000 prize. It will all culminate with the announcement of the award winners at the 2022 **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo** in Philadelphia.

"There's probably some college kid out there, he's got this crazy idea but doesn't realize the availability of the capacity to make his idea real," McKinney said. "We want to encourage any and all players. If a sole person comes up with the idea and then they want to use the money to start their startup, God bless them. We're there to support them and help them in any way we can."

It's been less than a month since the 10G Challenge was announced, so it's still too early to make any predictions on how much interest the program will gather. But CableLabs is interested



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in putting on some version of the grant program for years to come, especially if it means potentially discovering the next big thing.

“We’re not committing that we’re going to do five years of it and do \$300,000 every year, but think about it as a step on a longer-range program to encourage the innovators that are out there,” McKinney said. “We want to see the responses. Is this something that gets people excited or do we need to change or tweak the program as we get more experience with it? It’s the first time the industry has ever done this.”

SPECTRUM NEEDS FOR IOT

The **FCC** recently asked how it can support the growth of IoT devices. Comments were due to the Commission this week and, not surprisingly, unlicensed spectrum was one of the debated potential solutions. **NCTA** encouraged the agency to work with **NTIA** and federal spectrum users to make available the 7125-8400 MHz (7 GHz) band for unlicensed use and the 3100-3450 MHz (Lower 3 GHz) band for CBRS-like shared use without disrupting any existing government operations. “By freeing technologists from the need to seek permission from government or private exclusive licensees, unlicensed spectrum allows for and promotes more rapid innovation than exclusively licensed spectrum,” NCTA said. **The Wi-Fi Alliance** called on the FCC to enhance the 6 GHz band’s potential to support IoT. “Some of the IoT use cases that could be supported by taking these actions include delivering multi-gigabit Wi-Fi to home and businesses allowing more connected devices to operate on a single network; mobilizing Wi-Fi connections for industrial or agricultural monitoring; and protecting user data by permitting transfers directly between devices without connecting through a

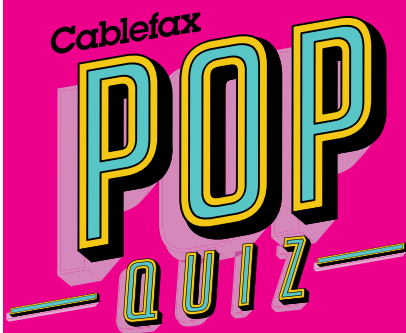
public access point,” the Alliance said. **CTIA**, whose members include **AT&T**, **T-Mobile** and **Verizon**, argued that there is no near-term need for additional spectrum for unlicensed or shared uses. “Given the massive growth in the IoT market, security of the devices must be paramount. A major benefit to relying upon licensed wireless spectrum for IoT is that it is designed to allow the entire wireless ecosystem—network operators, device manufacturers, operating system developers, application service providers, and others—to work together to develop security features to protect networks and customers,” CTIA said.

NBCSN WINDING DOWN

As **NBC Sports Network** prepares for its previously announced year-end shutdown, more sports programming is headed to **USA Network**, starting with a Jan. 1 Premier League Tripleheader that kicks off at 7am ET with the Arsenal hosting Manchester City. USA will be the primary beneficiary of NBCSN content, including **NASCAR**, the Olympics, Tour de France, horse racing and more. However, some programming will move to **CNBC**, **Peacock** and other **NBCU** platforms. Come Jan 1., NBCSN will display a slate to inform viewers about tune-in information. In addition, there will be extensive marketing and social media campaigns as well as content within telecasts to alert viewers about the situation. NBC Sports’ partners will also educate their fan bases about the change. Exact timing of the network’s decommissioning may vary based on distributors.

OCTOBER RATINGS

ESPN was October’s most-watched cable network, averaging 2.77 million viewers for the month. That’s up from ESPN’s average of 2.61 million last October. Of course, October 2020



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

Last week’s answer: “Silk Stalkings” started on CBS before moving to USA Network.

Kudos to last week’s winner: Patrick McOwen, Comcast

What 1980s NBC sitcom featured Regina King in her first TV acting role?

[CLICK HERE TO ANSWER](#)

was dominated by election news coverage, so it's not surprising Fox News couldn't replicate last year's 4.9 million October average—its highest-rated October on record. But the newer still managed to take second place in prime last month with 2.3 million viewers. Rounding out the top five cable nets in prime were **TBS** (2mIn), **MSNBC** (1.2mIn) and **Hallmark Channel** (926K). Fox News was #1 in total day, averaging 1.4mIn vs runner-up ESPN's 892,000. MSNBC placed third at 680K.

MAVS MAKE DIRECTV STREAM/BALLY SPORTS DEAL

Last week, Dallas Mavericks owner *Mark Cuban* highlighted a plan to encourage the **NBA** team's fans to sign up for the only streaming service offering Bally Sports Southwest, which shows the team's games. This week, it came to fruition. The Mavs and **DirectTV Stream** have collaborated on an offer that will provide a \$50/month credit to the first 10,000 new DirecTV Stream subscribers who sign up for a Choice package and above. The credit is available for up to five months for each month of maintained service. This offer was first made available for Club Maverick Members and is now open to all Mavericks fans, ending Dec. 28.

VUIT NABS MORE BROADCASTERS

Gray Television's free, ad-supported national streaming service, **VUit**, scored agreements with eight stations groups and independent stations including **Hearst Television**, **Cox**, **Citadel Communications**, **Morris Network** and **News Press & Gazette**. This adds 71 stations to the VUit platform, including stations in Boston, Orlando, and Pittsburgh.

DISH SAYS YES TO CSG

Big repeat customer win for **CSG**, with **DISH** agreeing to a multi-year contract extension. CSG has been a DISH partner for more than 25 years. The contract aims to enhance DISH's digital engagement and revenue management operations.

PROGRAMMING

Newsmax added former Sen *Rick Santorum* (R-PA) as a senior political analyst. The former **CNN** senior political commentator

will be on the net tonight for its special election coverage. – **NFL Media** will debut a four-part series featuring *Cam Jordan* and his community partnership with **Crescent City Corps**, a New Orleans-based nonprofit that equips police officers with leadership development, racial equity and community engagement training. The series will air exclusively on **NFL Network** and NFL.com, beginning on Thursday, Nov. 11 and run for four weeks with new eps debuting during NFL Net's "TNF First Look."

CHARTER, OVATION STAND FOR ARTS AGAIN

Ovation TV and **Charter** are teaming for the fifth consecutive year on the Stand for the Arts Awards, with the programmer to award \$150,000 to 15 arts and cultural organizations in Charter markets. Since the initiative began in 2017, Ovation and Charter have bestowed 50 awards totaling \$500,000. This year's winners include the first-ever tribal arts organization to be selected, Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians Interpretive Center in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, a center dedicated to educating the public about the Native American point of view for a better understanding of Indigenous ways of life.

PEOPLE

Pete Aronson, most recently EVP, Programming and Production for **AMC Networks**, has joined **J30 Studios** as Head of Development and Production. The newly named company was founded by writer-producer-actors *Bashir Salahuddin* and *Diallo Riddle*, creators and stars of current series "South Side" on **HBO Max** and "Sherman's Showcase" on **AMC**. – **A+E Studios** continues its expansion, naming *Lucia Gervino* to Head of Production. Gervino was most recently a senior production executive at **Amazon Studios**. Finance executive *Valerie Spiller* was promoted to SVP, Head of Production Finance; veteran film and television production and distribution executive *TPaul Miller* joins as SVP, Strategy & Operations, and producer *Tom Lerner* joins as VP, Creative Affairs.



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