

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

New Kids: Smart TV Execs Investigate Future of Measurement

Smart TV manufacturers have found their way into nearly every corner of the industry, whether that is the creation of FAST channels, measurement enhancements and, of course, advertising. And while they're now able to produce granular, first-party data at the device level, they face challenges to being able to offer household-specific data.

"That data at a device level is very good... but in many cases, households have multiple TVs and unless they're from the same manufacturer, you don't have that complete view of the viewing at that household level," *Claudio Marcus*, VP of Strategy at **Comcast Advertising**, said during a panel at **TVOT** Wednesday. "Overall, it's a great improvement and certainly the ability to action on the data is very critical. But I want to make it clear that while we're plugging a very important gap... it doesn't solve for when households have multiple types of TVs within the home."

Travis Hockersmith, the VP of Platform+ at **VIZIO**, agreed that there is still work to be done. But that doesn't mean there haven't been significant strides made to present platform partners with as clear a picture as possible. For example, Automated Content Recognition, a capability that allows platform holders to detect any time an ad hits the television screen independent of application or input, isn't perfect in terms of offering an entirely accurate view of each consumer, but it is still lightyears better than what existed a few years ago.

A huge part of the why behind the smart TV boom is the platform's ability to reach both linear audiences and gain first party data and analytics on the growing streaming ecosystem. And when searching for partners, the smart TV manufacturers are doing their best to serve both video marketplaces and bridge the gaps between them when possible.

"It's not an either/or tradeoff, and I don't think any of us are positioning counter to linear TV. It's about how do you make both ecosystems work to their maximum," *Justin Evans*, Global Head of Analytics and Insights at **Samsung Ads**, said. "The nice thing about being a partner to agencies and advertisers in our situation is that we can shed light on the effectiveness of the linear advertising... and then we can help them be as effective as they can be in the Samsung and the CTV ecosystem."

The future of measurement has been a huge debate among programmers, distributors and everyone in between as first party data has become more valuable than gold. Where exactly things shake out remains to be seen, but it does seem like advertisers will have greater flexibility than ever before to tailor campaigns and track their success.

"We're moving into a time and space where the advertiser is going to be able to dictate the type of currency that they want to buy. I don't think we're going to have a universal currency going forward the way we have in the past," Hockersmith said. "Advertisers who want to buy on outcomes will have that capability, advertisers who want to buy on some sort of currency that's connected to content will have that ability, and everywhere

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Cablefax 2022 Award Submission Deadlines

Cablefax 100 Nominations	Deadline: January 21
The FAXIES Awards	Deadline: March 11 Final Deadline: March 28
Top Ops Nominations	Deadline: April 1
The Diversity List Nominations	Deadline: June 3 Final Deadline: June 10
Most Powerful Women Nominations	Deadline: August 12 Final Deadline: August 19

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in between.”

LG Ads Chief Business Development Officer John Gee and Evans are still hoping there will be some universal currency, and ideally that will be tied to outcomes rather than content. It could be a shift for some clients that have primarily been investing in the linear ecosystem where data on attribution or conversion rates hasn't always been available. Still, Marcus also cautioned there is still a huge need on the content side of the marketplace to understand what types of content appeal to different audiences, especially in cases where content is being licensed or acquired.

“And there may be a comical reversal here where as the OEMs get more and more invested in their own free ad-supported streaming television services, suddenly we become very interested in qualifying the audiences for content and so forth,” Evans quipped.

Each of the smart TV providers agreed that offering up as much content via apps on their platforms as possible is a goal. But if that isn't balanced with investments in search and discovery, that potential positive to a consumer can turn negative fast.

“All of our capabilities are improving there to make sense of all the options that a viewer has these days, everything from suggesting content based on what they've watched in the past... to creating an easy way for a viewer to search for exactly what they want to see and then make it really seamless for them to be able to get to that content,” Hockersmith said.

CIRCLE CITY, DISH HEADED TO ORAL ARGUMENTS

Circle City Broadcasting's lawsuit accusing DISH of racial discrimination continues on, with a federal judge scheduling oral arguments on DISH's motion for summary judgment for Jan. 28. Circle City filed the suit in a U.S. District Court for

Indiana in March 2020, claiming DISH has refused to negotiate a retransmission consent contract in a non-discriminatory manner. It has a similar lawsuit pending against DirectTV. Circle City was formed in 2019 by DuJuan McCoy to buy WISH-TV and WNDY-TV in Indianapolis from Nexstar for \$42.5mln. Circle City claims DISH has offered what it believes are only a tiny fraction of the fees the satellite provider paid to Nexstar. DISH sees it differently. “A small broadcaster owning two local TV stations unaffiliated with any Big-4 networks (NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX) demanded unrealistic retransmission rates from DISH, refused to continue negotiations, then brought this action claiming that the reason DISH would not pay its demanded rates was race discrimination,” the company told the court. DISH argues that Circle City can't claim racial discrimination under Section 1981 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 because it's a business entity with a majority white board of directors that's owned not by a minority individual but by two corporate entities. DISH also says there's no evidence its decision-maker handling the negotiation discriminated against Circle City by not agreeing to the price the broadcaster wanted. **The National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters** initially joined Circle City in the suit, but it dismissed its claim with prejudice after the discovery phase, stipulating that it doesn't allege that it has suffered any race discrimination by DISH and that it has no info on any of its members besides Circle City contending they were unable to reach a carriage deal because of alleged race discrimination. Last week, DirectTV filed its own motion for summary judgment, claiming there are no genuine issues as to any material facts.

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The advertisement features a large, bold headline "Corporate Licenses" in yellow and white, followed by "Cablefax Daily" in a large, white, serif font. Below this is the tagline "WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST." in white. The main body of text is in white and yellow, promoting reduced subscription rates for multiple readers. At the bottom, there is a yellow call to action to contact client services and the website URL. On the right side, there is a smaller image of the Cablefax Daily magazine cover, showing the date "MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020" and the headline "Deal Talk: RCN/News/Grande CEO Discusses \$6.1bn StrongTalk Deal".

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | www.cablefax.com | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com | VP/Group Publisher, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, ekamhi@accessintel.com | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com | Production Manager: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com | Annual subscription price: \$1,799.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

SOHN NOMINATION WATCH

Politico [reported](#) this week that **Comcast** has hired **Consilium Consulting's Kirk Adams** to lobby on **FCC** nominations, suggesting his strong ties to Arizona may help sway Sen *Kyrsten Sinema* (D-AZ), a moderate Dem who hasn't expressed a stance on nominee *Gigi Sohn*. Advocacy firm **Free Press** is concerned Comcast is trying to "torpedo" Sohn's nomination, sending out a missive Wednesday urging folks to call Senate Commerce chair *Maria Cantwell* (D-WA) to urge a vote on Sohn before the end of the month.

UNITED WE ASTOUND

RCN, Grande, Wave, enTouch and **Digital West** are transitioning all of their regional brands to the **Astound Broadband** name, effective immediately. In the coming weeks, Astound will be updating all branding of its properties and assets. Each entity will retain sub-brands under the Astound umbrella in order to keep some regionality within the company. "Astound Broadband powered by RCN" will live in the Northeast, while Texas will see "Astound Broadband powered by Grande." The West Coast will be served by "Astound Broadband powered by Wave." There's been a slow build towards this moment for more than a year, with Astound Broadband CEO *Jim Holanda* telling **CFX** last summer that the company wanted to wait until after it had completed all of its outstanding acquisitions. Astound purchased fiber company **Digital West** in January 2021, three markets from **WOW!** in June and **Harris Broadband** in July. The rebranding of Harris Broadband and the WOW! Systems in Illinois, Indiana and Maryland will come later, but should be completed by mid-year.

CARRIAGE

Hemisphere Media Group struck a multi-year carriage deal with **fuboTV** Wednesday. All five Hemisphere cable networks—**WAPA América, Cinelatino, Pasiones, CentroAméricaTV** and **Televisión Dominicana** will be available as part of fuboTV's Latino plan in the U.S. and Puerto Rico in 1Q22. – **Frdly TV** and **Family Entertainment Television** signed a new agreement that brings **FMC** (Family Movie Classics) to the streamer's channel lineup. FMC launched on Oct. 27 and offers classic films that can be enjoyed by all members of the family.

FCC TAKES AIM AT SECURITY BREACHES

Recent security breaches in the telecom industry have spurred **FCC** chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* to circulate a proposed rule-making for new data breach reporting requirements. Her suggested updates would eliminate the current seven business day mandatory waiting period for notifying customers of a breach and require carriers to notify the FCC, in addition to the FBI and U.S. Secret Service, of all reportable breaches. The notice also seeks comment on whether the FCC should require customer breach notices to include specific categories of information to help ensure they contain actionable information useful to the consumer. Recent data breaches have included a cyberattack on **T-Mobile's** network that may have impacted 50 million existing and prospective customers and a [hacker impersonating a support agent](#) and gaining access to **Cox Communications'** customer info.

CTIA LEADS TESTING FOR 5G NETWORKS

CTIA launched a security testing and validation initiative designed for commercial 5G networks. Located in a lab facility at the **University of Maryland**, the 5G Security Test Bed allows for the testing of 5G security recommendations in real-world conditions using commercial-grade equipment and facilities. Its primary focus will be on verifying recommendations for 5G networks put forth by the **FCC's** Communications Security Reliability and Interoperability Council. The founding members behind the test bed include **AT&T, Ericsson, T-Mobile, US Cellular, MITRE** and the University of Maryland.

HBO LEADS SAG NOMS

HBO and **HBO Max** scored the most **Screen Actors Guild** nominations of any TV network or streaming platform, notching 14. **Netflix** trailed with 10 nominations, followed by **Apple TV+** (9), **Hulu** (8) and **Disney+** (2). **Nat Geo** and **Paramount Network** each received one nomination (ensemble in a drama series for Paramount's "Yellowstone" and an actor nod to *Cynthia Erivo* for her role in Nat Geo's "Genius: Aretha"). Five of HBO's nods went to "Succession," including for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series, while "Mare of Easttown" received four, including best actress noms for *Kate Winslet* and *Jean Smart*. Smart's also nominated for Outstanding Female Actor in a comedy for her role in HBO's "Hacks." Apple's "Ted Lasso" is up for five SAGs, while Netflix's "Squid Game" and Apple's "Morning Show" each have four. The 28th annual SAG Awards will be simulcast live on **TNT** and **TBS** on Feb. 27.

NBCU'S OLYMPICS WATCH PARTY

NBCUniversal unveiled its full schedule for watching the Winter Olympics across its properties. While **Peacock's** premium tier will live stream everything (and host replays), there's still plenty to watch across broadcast and cable. **USA Network** will televise nearly 400 hours across 19 days. That includes live coverage on Feb. 13 while **NBC** broadcasts Super Bowl LVI. **CNBC** will televise roughly 80 hours of the Games, mostly in the evening after its traditional business coverage has wrapped. Coverage of the Opening Ceremony begins on Feb. 4 at 6:30am ET on NBC and Peacock, marking NBCU's first-ever live morning presentation of the Winter Games Opening Ceremony. There will be an enhanced primetime presentation of the ceremony on NBC and Peacock from 8-11pm that night. NBCOlympics.com and NBC Sports app will live stream 2,100+ hours from Beijing, a record for a Winter Olympics.

UNIVISION'S STREAM TEAM

Univision added four senior execs to its streaming team as it gears up to launch a global Spanish-language streaming service. *Roger Sole* joins as CMO, Streaming, having previously served as CMO at **Sprint**. *Vincenzo Gratteri*, who has spent nearly 20 years at production houses such as **Lux Vide** and **W Studios**, will serve as SVP of Development, Streaming. *Adam Waltuch* left **Netflix** to serve as SVP, Streaming Partnerships, where he'll support global streaming partnerships with MVPDs and vMVPDS in the U.S. and Latin America. Former **Telemundo** VP *Rita Chertorivski* was named SVP, Business and Legal Affairs, Streaming.

Think about that for a minute...

The Big Apple

Commentary by Steve Effros

Nope, not that “Big Apple.” This is about the company, not the city. There was an article in the New York Times recently, listing some of the largest companies, including many in our industry. It included Walmart, Disney, Netflix, Nike, Exxon Mobil, Coca-Cola, Comcast, Morgan Stanley, McDonald’s, AT&T, Goldman Sachs, Boeing, IBM and Ford. It then noted that Apple has a higher valuation than all of those companies (wait for it...) combined! Now that’s one big Apple! The current valuation of Apple is three Trillion dollars!

For perspective, as the Times article mentions, that valuation is roughly the equivalent of the gross domestic product of Britain or India. That one company is worth more right now than the total of all the world’s cryptocurrencies.

It’s no wonder that with companies becoming that large, and I might point out that Microsoft appears to be on its way to those heights as well, you are going to be hearing a lot more about antitrust laws, breaking up “Tech” monsters and the like.

Of course right now, with everything so maniacally focused on the political fractures in the country, the debate seems to be focused on things like privacy on the left or alleged conservative bias on the right. Is Google using all that data it’s collecting about us for untoward things? Has Facebook (Meta) done enough about the use of its platform to spread massive amounts of misinformation and actually tilt elections? Is it appropriate to sequester those who are intentionally spreading lies?

That’s what the headlines will be about. That’s what we’ll hear on the news and at the hearings. But it seems to me the underlying issue is simply how big these companies have gotten. Essentially they are so big that there’s no societal control of them. They can initially have a motto “don’t be evil” as Google had, before they changed it to “do the right thing,” but the problem is they also get to define what “evil” and “the right thing” are! Can that work in the long run? I doubt it.

Granted, this all gets very complicated because of the politics and the varying views of economics that are mixed in. Then

you add the legal gobbledygook and the subject becomes almost impossible to decipher. In this case, as noted, we will be treated to unending diatribes from the left and right about the danger of data collection and the outrage of editorial control. The lawyers and regulators will focus on whether one company can, or should be allowed to buy another even if they are not, technically, in the same business (or “relevant market” for you lawyers out there) and thus trigger anti competitive concerns.

But again, just as Amazon can buy Whole Foods and not violate current laws, wouldn’t you be concerned about it if you were running a local grocery store? And on the other side, if Walmart comes to town and builds a megastore which threatens all the local shops, is that good or bad if they also bring far more fresh produce and lower prices?

Unfortunately, yet another overlay on this whole subject these days is the political culture war pitting those who claim they want a “free marketplace” and oppose “excess” government against those who are concerned about the effects of things like climate change, eroding privacy and the like and see government as a solution. Of course on any given subject, the “sides” switch, which makes thing even more difficult (think abortion, First vs Second Amendment fights, etc).

I have said before that it may be better to simplify all this, stay away from all the details, and stick with just not letting any company get as big as Apple. After all, what do you do when something that big rots?



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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