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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Crystal Clear: Insight TV Brings First 4K Service to Cox

Insight TV is bringing its SVOD service to **Cox** customers in the latest in a string of carriage deals for the 4K-focused content company. Insight TV 4K is the first full UHD HDR stand-alone streamer available to Cox and Cox Contour customers and will be available for an additional monthly fee on top of their video subscriptions.

Insight has been on a steady upward trend over the last four months, expanding its distribution across the U.S. It came to **Comcast's** systems in December and joined **Sling TV's** free content portfolio in February. The agreement with Cox, who leases the X1 set-top box software nationwide, was a natural progression from Insight's agreement with Comcast.

"We had to convince Cox that we had decent programming and we worked with a really great group of folks there, in particular [Executive Director, Content Acquisition] *Kristen Cuffee-Brown*, who just happened to get it," Insight TV VP, Americas *Mark Romano* told **CFX**. "They thought it was perfect in the sense of it attracts Millennials and Gen Z audiences, which are kind of a dying breed in regards to cable."

Operators and content platform holders have put a greater focus on 4K-capable devices over the last 12 months. In July, **Altice USA** unveiled Optimum Stream and Suddenlink Stream, 4K streaming devices designed for the company's broadband-only customers. **Roku** bolstered its streaming stick portfolio in October with two additions designed to allow their users to access 4K

HDR content from apps carried on the platform. Going one step further in the same month, **Comcast** introduced its XClass TV product lineup, offering both 43-inch and 50-inch 4K UHD models.

Romano said Insight TV has been able to gain momentum recently in part because of greater consumer demand for 4K content destinations. Viewers often lack options outside of major events like the Olympics, and even then, their provider may decide to not carry the enhanced feed offered by the programmer. For example, **DirectTV** is one of the few providers to announce plans to carry this week's Masters in 4K. It's creating two channels—one from holes 15 and 16 and another from a triad of holes at Amen Corner—for the golf classic.

"The viewers are looking for it other than just special events," Romano said. Even so, 4K content is still considered niche and it remains an uphill battle with traditional MVPDs in carriage negotiations, especially when their aim is to pack as much mainstream content as possible into their video lineups.

The focus for the rest of 2022 will be on bringing Insight TV to more vMVPDs and on driving distribution of the company's five FAST channels. The company will also have a presence at in-person events like the StreamTV Show in an effort to grow its relationships with and begin talks with the likes of Roku and others.

KILAR, SARNOFF SET WARNERMEDIA EXITS

WarnerMedia CEO *Jason Kilar* and WarnerMedia Studios and Networks Group Chair/CEO *Ann Sarnoff* are officially leaving the company. Kilar set his last day as Friday, but no word yet on if the same is true for Sarnoff. The timing comes as WarnerMedia and

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Discovery work out the final details to their merger, expected to reach completion any day now. Kilar, who broke into the streaming ecosystem as the founder of **Hulu**, joined the company in May 2020 and has played a major role in the launches of **HBO Max** and **CNN+**. He and Sarnoff collaborated on the structuring of Warner Bros' pandemic film strategy, and she's dedicated her time to strengthening the content brands that set Warner Bros apart. Kilar's exit was expected from those following the WarnerMedia-Discovery merger. In the weeks and months after the announcement of the agreement, neither AT&T CEO *John Stankey* and incoming **Warner Bros Discovery** CEO *David Zaslav* would offer answers about Kilar's future, leading many to conclude he'd be leaving once the deal closed. He has already lined up his next adventure, but he's keeping quiet on his plans for the time being. "I'm not going to a beach to go and reflect or retire and I'm very excited about what comes next but right now I'm focused obviously on WarnerMedia," Kilar said on **CNBC's** "TechCheck" Tuesday. Sarnoff, on the other hand, is a surprise. Zaslav has consistently praised her team on the work of the Warner Bros. film and television studios, even saying during Discovery's 3Q21 earnings call that he was "anxious" to get in a room with Sarnoff to discuss the merger. Where she goes next is anyone's guess at this point. She's likely not to be the last WarnerMedia exec to depart in the coming days. At our deadline, *Variety* reported that HBO Max Chief *Andy Forssell* is leaving ahead of the merger.

NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES SCORE BIG

Last night's **NCAA** Men's Basketball National Championship game between Kansas and North Carolina was the most-watched title game telecast ever on cable TV, delivering an

average of 18.1 million viewers based on total audience delivery. The game aired across **TBS**, **TNT** and **truTV** and is the third most-watched college basketball game ever. Saturday's UNC/Duke Final Four National Semifinal matchup averaged 18.5 million viewers, ranking second as the all-time game. The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament as a whole averaged 10.7 million viewers, up 13% from last year. – South Carolina's win over UConn in the 2022 NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament championship garnered 4.85 million viewers on **ESPN**, making it the most-watched women's title game since 2004. This is an 18% YOY increase and 30% compared to 2019. The game peaked in the 10-10:15pm window with 5.91 million viewers across ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU. For the women's Final Four, it averaged 3.46 million viewers, the most since 2012.

DISCOVERY, EDO COLLAB FOR AD DATA

Discovery partnered with data measurement and analytics company **EDO** to enhance TV advertising in their clients' business objectives. EDO's Ad EnGage offering allows Discovery to measure consumer interest and intent with proprietary data measurement tools that focus on search activity following a TV advertisement. Data from Ad EnGage will be used during the 2022-23 upfront season. According to EDO data, Discovery held seven of the top 10 spots when ranking the most engaging entertainment programs in primetime cable.

NRBY VU HITS THE BIG TIME

Dynamic location intelligence company **Nrby** and **Sisense** have teamed up to create a new business intelligence tool granting service providers more visibility into network events and activity. Called *Nrby Vu*, the system allows providers to create customiz-



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able dashboards tracking everything from a technician's daily tasks to the amount of network incidents taking place within a particular market. In a test deployment, the company said an unnamed U.S.-based operator saw a 22% increase in preventative maintenance calls and a 62% in scheduled service calls. Nrbv CEO *Kurt Dobbins* told **CFX** that the system is built to support operators from the design of a network expansion through construction, operations and ongoing maintenance and track trends through that part of the network's lifetime. That data can be mined by Nrbv to generate action items to those operators that could drive greater operational efficiencies. Updated every two hours, Nrbv Vu also gives greater visibility into how efficient teams are at maintaining the network. "Anybody in their market can see what the tech is doing, what's been done today and what's still open today," Nrbv VP, Product Management and Customer Success *Ron Miller* said. "It opens up more collaboration from the supervisor level to the maintenance teams... they're more in-sync now with what's really going on and collaborating more on the actual day-to-day activities."

REP. UPTON TO RETIRE

House Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member *Fred Upton* (R-MI) will retire at the end of this Congress. He's been a long-time leader on the larger committee, serving as Chair of House Commerce from 2010-2016. "As Chairman, he always led us to focus on solving problems. Bipartisan bills were always a priority because Fred knew that is what would drive the best results," House Commerce Ranking Member *Cathy McMorris Rodgers* said in a statement. "His announcement is sad to many, for both Democrats and Republicans alike." Upton was first elected to Congress in 1986.

WIFI 6 GATEWAY NOW AVAILABLE TO CUSTOMERS

Comcast debuted its Business Gateway last week, and it's now making the WiFi 6E capable device available to Xfinity Internet Gigabit and Ultrafast customers. The WiFi 6 certification means the gateway is built to optimize wireless connectivity with improved range. Capable of delivering speeds faster than 1 Gbps, the gateway allows customers to connect many home devices while reducing interference and tripling bandwidth with three WiFi bands of 2.4 GHz, 5 GHz and 6 GHz.

WINDSTREAM SETTLES USF FUND INVESTIGATION

The **FCC's Enforcement Bureau** reached a settlement with **Windstream Communications** Tuesday to resolve an investigation into practices tied to the Rural Health Care Program. That program offers financial support to rural health care providers for the implementation of modern communications systems. An investigation by the Bureau found that Windstream did not use any of the three rate-setting methods available to service providers under FCC rules and developed its own way to prepare bids and seek USF support. It did not submit proper documentation to explain those processes, and was found to have received more than \$1 million in improper payments from the USF from Funding Years 2017-2020. Windstream will pay back \$1.204 million to the USF.

CARRIAGE

In partnership with **NBCUniversal's** **IMD** division, **Comcast** launched the **Eros Now** app on its X1 and Flex platforms. Eros Now is an Indian OTT platform with 224 million registered users and over 12,000 digital titles. The Eros Now app replaces the Eros Now SVOD product, and will be available to Xfinity customers at \$4.99/month.

LIGHTPATH CONNECTS DATA CENTER HUB TO NYC

Lightpath is building a new fiber long-haul route between Ashburn, Va., and NYC. The route will span 300 miles, offer up to 800 Gbps optical transport and support Lightpath's ethernet services. Customers can directly connect to cloud providers in Ashburn, as well as data centers in the area.

GLO FIBER EXPANDS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Shentel is bringing its fiber-optic network **Glo Fiber** to several areas in Lancaster County, Pa, including Lancaster Township, Mountville Borough, East Hempfield Township, West Lampeter Township and Manheim Township. Construction will begin this month and be completed in two years, bringing the network to more than 35,000 homes and businesses.

PROGRAMMING

Paramount+ acquired the rights to "Finestkind," a crime thriller set to begin production in the coming weeks and release on Paramount+ in late 2022. It'll be available in the U.S., Australia, Canada and Latin America, as well as the U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and South Korea when the service launches in those markets later this year. – **Acorn TV's** three-part drama series "Signora Volpe" debuts May 2. Remaining episodes will be released on May 9 and 16. – "Snowfall" has been renewed for a sixth and final season on **FX** and will premiere in 2023. The fifth season—on track to be the most-watched in the series' history—is currently available on FX and streaming on **Hulu**. – **Freeform** is adding three new nonfiction series: "The Deep End," "Dear Pony: Keep This Between Us," and "Day to Night." The Deep End and Dear Pony: Keep This Between Us are four-part docuseries premiering May 18 at 10pm and June 15 at 10pm, respectively, while Day to Night is set to debut this summer.

C2HR ANNOUNCES 20TH COMPENSATION SURVEY

C2HR is once again inviting industry employers to participate in its Annual Compensation Surveys to better understand compensation movement and how companies are responding to various issues affecting the workforce. Participants will provide data from 2022 budgets for base salaries, short- and long-term incentive plans and sales compensation. The surveys and results will be separated into two categories: connectivity providers and content developers. Data is due in late April and results will be posted in Sept.

PEOPLE

Peacock added *Shannon Willett* as CMO and *Brian Henderson* as EVP, Programming. Both are newly established positions and report to President *Kelly Campbell*. Willett, who previously was VP, Global Marketing and Strategy and Operations at **Netflix**, will oversee global marketing for the service. Henderson comes from **Hulu** and will lead Peacock's global content strategy.