

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Blurred Lines: Cable Unsure About Content Vendor Diversity Data Proposal

Cable industry associations have major concerns about a petition to establish a new **FCC** report focused on the diversity of content vendors.

The proposal in question from **Fuse**, **Common Cause**, the **National Hispanic Media Coalition**, **Public Knowledge** and the **United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry** would see the creation of an annual report charting content vendors used by FCC licensees in cable, broadband and satellite as well as any licensees' affiliated or commonly owned streaming video platforms that don't currently fall under the FCC's jurisdiction.

In a joint filing, the **American Television Alliance**, **NCTA** and **USTelecom** said they and their members know that the work of promoting diversity and inclusion isn't finished. At the same time, they said the proposal would place significant burdens on FCC-regulated entities and affiliates and raises more questions than it would answer.

One major topic that would need to be addressed before movement could occur on the petition would be whether the FCC could exercise jurisdiction over online video providers without receiving approval from Congress. There are additional concerns over the sheer scope of the data needed to be collected.

"And it is unclear what the limits of the data collection would be. For instance, if an MVPD provides the Prime Video app on

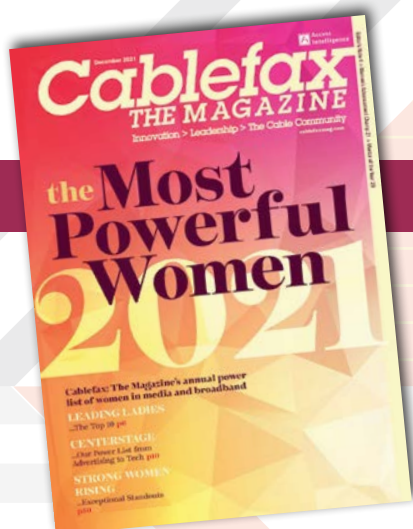
its set-top box, must it acquire diversity data on the entirety of **Amazon**, or only those parts of the company that relate to Prime Video?" the associations said. "Would the MVPD also be required to collect data for each programmer that provides content to Prime Video?"

The lines are also blurry when it comes to production companies. As an example, **IMDb** has five production companies listed for **Hulu** original "Only Murders in the Building." It is unclear whether or not **Disney** would be required to collect and report diversity data for each of those production partners. Another gray area is sports programming or special events like the Emmys or the Super Bowl, or on how to address the duplicative work that would occur when all MVPDs survey the same content vendors.

"Each 'content vendor' has a single set of diversity data," the associations said in their joint filing. "By definition, any time spent by, say, the second, third, or fiftieth MVPD to obtain diversity data from the same programmer is wasted time. The duplicative nature of the proposal, in addition to the burdens it imposes, among other things, makes it unworkable."

UP Entertainment argued in its own filing that there are other varieties of programming diversity that should also be considered in the report, and the Commission shouldn't keep its eyes focused only on minority ownership. It should take into consideration all companies that are playing a role in supporting diverse communities and talent.

"The employee base of UP Entertainment is highly diverse,



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and the company also actively seeks and engages numerous Black-owned production companies, agencies and marketing partners for the creation and marketing of content in our normal course of business,” UP said in its comments. “In short, we believe that the data collection and minority ownership report proposed by petitioners would be not only burdensome to distributors, but also likely misleading as the sole indicator of programming diversity.”

Fuse’s proposal has gained some allies, mainly on the programming side. **Kids Street** called the content vendor diversity report a meaningful and long overdue solution that would highlight the lack of independent and minority-owned television stations in the U.S., arguing that any burden associated with it would be de minimis.

“MVPDs are accustomed to collecting data and certifications from programmers annually including compliance with the CALM Act, Children’s Television and Closed Captioning requirements, as well as to document compliance with Most Favored Nation provisions,” it said in its filing. “Collecting and reporting the information sought by the rulemaking would not be a hardship for the well-staffed and well-organized companies that serve the public with their respective programming options.”

The National Diversity Coalition and **National Asian American Coalition** also filed comments that mentioned the upcoming launch of AAPI network **ChimeTV**. The groups said they were reserving judgment at this time on whether such a report should be conducted by the FCC or a professional organization steeped in research, such as **SNL Kagan, Horowitz Media, Nielsen** or others.

Allen Media Group wholeheartedly supports the need for the report proposed by Fuse. What it doesn’t want to see is the FCC use such a data collection as an excuse to push back real action to support minority ownership of media. “However, at this point, the Commission appears to have little information documenting the limited minority ownership of linear video and other video programming services and the even more limited distribution of those minority-owned services by traditional and OTT distributors of video programming,” it said in its comments.

NCTC NOTIFIED OF COVID AFTER INDY SHOW

NCTC is alerting Indy Show attendees that some guests have tested positive for COVID since returning home from the Orlando conference. In an email to members, the co-op encouraged attendees to self-test and, should they test positive, take precautions and follow CDC-recommended guidelines. “We take the safety of our members and staff seriously. Out of an abundance of caution, we are alerting attendees that we have received reports from a small number of attendees that they have tested positive so that others may be proactive in the care of themselves and their families,” NCTC CEO *Lou Borrelli* said in a statement. “We will not share any specifics due to privacy and other legal regulations and concerns.”

SUDDENLINK FINALLY TRANSITIONS TO OPTIMUM

Altice USA finally renamed its **Suddenlink** brand to **Optimum** Monday and is introducing its customers to the newly-nationwide brand with a “Get Closer, Go Farther” brand campaign. The campaign includes two new TV [spots](#) as well as spots across rebranded social media accounts. In the



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months to come, the company will transition all Suddenlink properties and assets to Optimum, including vehicles, stores, uniforms and its websites. Customers that previously used Suddenlink's websites and support apps will now have to use their Optimum equivalents in order to access their accounts, but will be able to do so using their existing credentials. On a [help page](#) designed to walk customers through the transition, Altice USA announced that Suddenlink customers migrating to Optimum would no longer be charged data overage fees as of Aug. 1. The provider has also renamed its video packages and transitioned its Altice One app into the Optimum TV app.

BROADCAST DMA DATA AT FCC

Comments are due in the **FCC's** NPRM regarding what **Nielsen** data is used to determine broadcasters' local DMAs on Aug. 29, with reply comments due Sept. 26. The Commission adopted the NPRM at its July meeting, but couldn't set the comment deadlines until its publication in the Federal Register. The item prompted Commissioner [Nathan Simington to call](#) for the agency to open a proceeding into Nielsen's inclusion in a host of FCC rules. "If there are opportunities to identify or generate new sources of broadcast data, we should take them. If there are improvements to be made in our usage of broadcast data, we should make them," he said. "And if our ties to Nielsen ultimately represent a structural impediment to the public interest, necessity, and convenience—we should break them."

DIRECTV STREAM DEALS

As back-to-school season creeps up, college students can get \$10 off of **DirecTV Stream** for 10 months via the service's student page. DirecTV Stream is also giving new customers \$20 off their first two months of service. Additionally, **Google Fiber** added DirecTV Stream to its lineup of streaming options for existing customers. As of today, the vMVPD is offering a five-day free trial to new customers. In a [blog post](#) Monday, Google Fiber played up the number of live sports options and RSNs on DirecTV Stream.

FIBER FRENZY

Construction of **Metronet's** fiber-optic network kicked off in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The two-year, \$130 million project will connect its first customers later this year, and residents will receive communication via mail about construction activity in their respective neighborhoods 30 days prior to starting.

FCC ISSUES FINE OVER EQUIPMENT MARKETING

The **FCC** fined Brooklyn-based **Sound Around** \$685,338 for marketing 32 noncompliant radio frequency device models, specifically wireless microphones. The Commission requires that wireless devices sold in the U.S. successfully go through its equipment authorization process to prevent harmful interference between spectrum users, and it is illegal to sell, manufacture or advertise products that are unauthorized. Sound Around has been on the Commission's radar for years after never responding to a citation from the Enforcement Bureau for marketing violations.

PROGRAMMING

Showtime greenlit comedy series "Mason." **A24** will produce the project. – **Acorn TV** original "Recipes for Love and Murder"

will premiere Sept. 5 with two episodes. Two new episodes will premiere weekly on Mondays through Oct. 3. – **HBO Max** made all eight seasons of "Game of Thrones" available in 4K Ultra HD, HDR 10, Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos on select devices. Users in the U.S. must be subscribed to HBO Max's ad-free tier.

PEOPLE

Longtime **Turner/WarnerMedia** exec *Jennifer Mirgorod* is leaving her post as EVP, Partnership Distribution at **Warner Bros. Discovery**. "It feels good to leave on a high note with such an incredible group of people in place to take the business forward," she wrote Monday on **LinkedIn**, adding that she's grown as much in the past 18 months with the launch and growth of **HBO Max** and the merging of legacy WarnerMedia teams as she did at the beginning of her career with Turner Broadcasting. – **Nexstar Media Group** extended Chairman and CEO *Perry Sook* through March 31, 2026. Sook, who's served as CEO since he founded the company in 1996, has grown revenue from \$87 million in Nov. 2003 to \$4.6 billion in 2021. – *Elita Fielder Adjei* was named VP, Corporate Communications for **National Geographic Content**, reporting to President *Courtney Monroe* and **Disney General Entertainment** VP of Corporate Communications *Charissa Gilmore*. In the newly created position, Adjei will handle the overall communications strategy and lead internal and external communications. – **NCTC** named **Vexus Fiber** VP, Special Projects *Elaine Partridge* as its next board Chairman and **Comporium's** *Karl Skroban* to the role of Vice Chairman. They'll replace **Buckeye Broadband** Chairman *Brad Mefferd* and **Antietam Broadband** President/GM *Brian Lynch*. Partridge has served in various roles on NCTC's board for eight years and Skroban for two.

WHAT TO LISTEN TO

Nice shout-out in the *NY Times' The Morning* newsletter over the weekend for "Basic," a [podcast about the history of basic cable](#) hosted by former **Viacom** exec *Doug Herzog* and *New York* magazine TV critic *Jen Chaney*. Recent episodes have featured "Chappelle Show" co-creator *Neal Brennan*, former **ESPNer** *Jemele Hill* and "Yo! MTV Raps" host *Fab Five Freddy*. As the podcast teases, "before binging, there was cable."

OOPS!

In Friday's issue, **Cablefax** wrote **Spectrum Mobile** unlimited plans started at \$29.99/month for three or more lines. Those plans actually start at two or more lines.

C2HR HONORS

Congrats to **C2HR's** Aspiring Leaders honorees, *Laura Fields*, Senior Director of Talent Selection & Acquisition for **Charter Communications** and **Christine Simmons**, Director of Learning and Development for **WOW!** **ESPN's** Career Center won the association's Employee Engagement award, while three companies—**Mediacom**, **Warner Bros. Discovery** and **WOW!**—are being honored for Workplace Wellness. Turn the page to read more about each winner and check out the [virtual C2HR Con](#) next week to learn more about top issues in today's workplace.

Congratulations, Mediacom Human Resources!

WINNER - C2HR Award for Workplace Wellness

Three cheers to Mediacom's Human Resources department on winning the 2022 Cablefax C2HR Award for Workplace Wellness. All of your coworkers join you in celebrating this well-deserved honor for a talented and trustworthy team.

Rocco B. Commisso

Founder, Chairman & CEO
Mediacom Communications

And the 4,000 men and women
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C2HR AWARDS

The acronym “HR” means home run in baseball, but in Content & Connectivity Human Resources’ (C2HR) world, it’s all about the Human Resources folks, the linchpins in making sure a company’s most valuable assets are supported, engaged and continually evolving. C2HR is once again recognizing those who hit it out of the park this past year with a pair of Aspiring HR Leaders, an Employee Engagement Award and Workplace Wellness honorees.

ASPIRING HR LEADERS



LAURA FIELDS CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS

The workplace has undergone a massive change since Laura Fields joined Charter in 2018, especially when it comes to hiring new employees. Now imagine being responsible for the recruiting technology for a company with more than 93,000 total employees. In 2021, Fields partnered with Modern Hire to develop a 10-minute recruitment survey that gauges a prospect’s skills and interests. She also created “Fit Finder,” a personality assessment that matches applicants with local openings in retail sales, customer service and technical operations. This helped the recruiting team receive over 840,000 applications, conduct more than 348,000 virtual interviews and host 400+ virtual career fairs, leading to the hiring of over 42,000 employees. Fields’ meticulous craft while allowing her team to work as a unit helps them run “Laura Fields’ Mission Impossible.”



CHRISTINE SIMMONS WOW!

“The hungry will be fed,” is a common phrase said by WOW! Director of Learning and Development Christine Simmons, but it holds many different meanings. For Simmons, it’s a saying that encapsulates her commitment to enhancing opportunities within the company from all aspects. She launched WOW! Learning Workshops in 2021, giving employees the option to participate in 45-minute sessions designed to raise knowledge relating to WOW!. But the learning platforms don’t stop there. Simmons helped create online learning portals that are constantly refreshed with new training, exercises and more. Her initiatives stemmed into management when she built a leadership development program (LDP) that over 60% of WOW!’s leadership took part in. The LDP includes a five-step program designed to formulate high-performing teams. At the beginning of 2022, she launched another LDP that aligns with the ideas of sustainability, scalability and increasing reach. A hustler at heart, be on the lookout for another program to come soon.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ESPN CAREER CENTER

ESPN dubs itself the worldwide leader in sports, but that mantra is met by the investment in its employees. Enter the ESPN Career Center, a platform designed to support employees at the network in career growth and development. The idea sparked when VP of Development, Inclusion and Wellness Tonya Cornileus and her team wanted to mimic career counseling that many universities provide students. The team made five personas—Career Starter, Career Upskiller, Career Shifter, Career Returner and Career Accelerator—that align employees to the type of guidance they’re seeking at that current time. Of course, each persona enters a sports-themed world that entails unique experiences at different stages through Microsoft SharePoint. It even features music, voice-overs and crowd noise to deepen the experience. Overall, the Career Center reeled in over 11,000 page views, and six monthly winners have earned career development experiences by being active on the platform.



- » Overall, the Career Center reeled in over **11,000** page views.
- » **Six monthly winners** have earned career development experiences by being active on the platform.
- » Over **500** employees participated in the ESPN All-Star Talent Showcase Competition.

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

MEDIACOM COMMUNICATIONS

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, many were able to transition to a remote setting without many problems. But on top of the day-to-day interaction with co-workers that was greatly impacted, so was the knowledge of resources companies provided to help their employees stay safe and informed. That's when the Mediacom Benefits Team came together to come up with a plan to help employees stay connected. Its HR, Training Department and Ad Sales Group produced three in-house, educational videos featuring Mediacom employees. The first, "Mediacom Employees Share Their Personal COVID Stories," features how people were either personally or indirectly impacted by the pandemic with the goal of encouraging taking precautions that were recommended by the CDC. "We Can't Wait to See You Again" promotes the idea of getting vaccinated and "The More You Know" is a series of interviews with healthcare providers to separate facts from fiction regarding the vaccine. However, as Mediacom returns to in-office work and the world creeps back to "normal," the Benefits team made webinars that cover topics such as managing anxiety, coping with uncertain times and balancing work and life. Those are available to employees at any time through an online portal.



- >> The three in-house videos have accumulated nearly **15,000** views to-date.
- >> Mediacom has **4,000** employees.

WOW!

WOW! likes to ensure it's seeing the tangible results of improving employee wellness through scores measured by Officevibe. In January 2021, WOW!'s hub of resources called "The Gig" launched a wellbeing section, and those wellness scores have continued to rise. The wellbeing section promotes a healthy lifestyle by providing care for mental health and healthy habits by offering articles, webinars, apps and more. Since the launch, personal health submetric scores have improved from 8.1 to 8.4 and stress (which measures whether employees feel supported when experiencing stress) from 7.6 to 8.1. Overall wellness currently averages a score of 8.3, which marks well above the industry standard. WOW! also offers monthly sessions centered on topics such as overcoming burnout, digital detoxing and self-care. It also hosts weekly mindfulness sessions to help employees take a step back from their day-to-day workload.



- >> When WOW! began monitoring wellness scores in 2017, the average overall score was 5.6/10. Today, it's **8.3**.
- >> Since "The Gig" launched in Jan. 2021, personal health sub metric scores increased from 8.1 to **8.4**, and stress (measures whether employees feel supported when experiencing stress) improved 7.6 to **8.1**
- >> **70%** of WOW!'s employees (over 1,500 total) have used "The Gig" since launch.

WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

Now that it entered the post-merger world, Warner Bros. Discovery puts employee engagement at the top of its priorities. While the company is starting to ease its way back to in-person events, it had many virtual offerings as well. Discovery's Global Wellbeing Festival was started with the idea of encouraging employees to take a look at their personal well-being in a constantly changing world combined with the multitude of social-justice issues that remain today. The two-day event came loaded with content that spanned the globe. Among sessions included breathwork with "The Circle's" Bryant Wood, fitness classes with Elise Young and conversations with Oprah Winfrey regarding trauma, healing and resilience. Some of these sessions were presented in different languages like Spanish and Italian as well. More than 3,000 employees participated in the event and the number of employees that registered to the company's virtual wellbeing program jumped from 48% to 57%. Many sessions from the festival have now become permanently available for employees to utilize.



- >> Over **3,000** employees participated in the Wellbeing Festival.
- >> Employees registered for the company's global virtual wellbeing program went from 48% to **57%** of eligible employees.