

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Path to Pinpoint: Measurement Takes Focus Ahead of Upfronts

It was this time last year when the celebrations surrounding upfronts were focused on the simple idea of a return to in-person formats. But in a year marked with financial difficulties for companies, the focus has turned to finding efficient solutions, many of which are centered on audience measurement.

With upfront season heating up next week, we're starting to see how some are combating the complex equation of measuring audiences in the modern TV world. A key factor is finding accurate solutions that encompass multiple platforms like linear, digital and CTV, and some like **Warner Bros. Discovery** are penning new partnerships to achieve that.

WBD—which has its upfront Wednesday at The Theater at Madison Square Garden—announced Thursday new partnerships with **605, ABCS Insights, DISQO, EDO, LoopMe** and **Pilotly**. WBD is looking for better attribution and efficacy of ad campaigns across linear, digital and advanced audiences, and the companies will improve insights into the full-funnel impact of an advertiser's investment. With the imminent debut of its streaming service **Max**, CFO *Gunnar Wiedenfels* said last week it's a platform with "significant upside" for advertisers, even with the ongoing limited visibility into the overall ad market.

"Though the market remains challenged, we are cautiously optimistic, particularly coming into the upfront," Wiedenfels said on the company's 1Q23 earnings call. "We see a particularly strong advertising opportunity on Max, both with respect

to the more traditional ads on shows like 'Friends' and 'Big Bang Theory' as well as the very impactful and high-profile opportunity on Max Originals."

A day before WBD's presentation will be **Disney's** event—also in the Big Apple at the North Javits Center. Disney is looking to move over half of its ad sales business to automated buying in the short-term future. After rolling out the ad-supported tier of **Disney+** in December, the House of Mouse made a deal with **EDO** to continue honing in on its measurement and currency strategies. While the partnership began with **Hulu** last month and gave advertisers access to age, gender and geolocation targeting, it's unclear if all other targeting metrics will still come in July following Wednesday's news of a [Disney+ and Hulu combination](#).

Disney CEO *Bob Iger* shares Wiedenfels' optimism about how their respective companies will fare in an up-and-down market, but Iger also sees potential in digital advertising. "We see that there's going to be a substantial growth in digital advertising in this upfront," he said on Disney's 1Q23 earnings call Wednesday. "I mean, quite substantial, suggesting for the obvious reason because digital advertising is so attractive to advertisers that there's an opportunity for us to really lean into ad-supported and again raising our prices on the ad-free [tier], keeping the prices on the ad-supported relatively modest to maybe perhaps no increases, increasing the delta, driving more subs in a higher ARPU direction."

**NBCUniversal** is another that's recently taken a look at ad

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capabilities. It announced four new ad updates to **Peacock** to improve advertisers' ability to connect with subscribers at the beginning of the month. NBCU followed that news on Thursday by revealing it'll start transacting on **Comscore** across its 31 local markets and the 42 stations owned by NBCU and **Telemundo**. That'll help NBCU move to 18+ guarantees on all buys as Comscore measures one in every two to five homes in a local DMA. Additionally, NBCU and **InnovidXP** are teaming up to introduce new impact and attribution metrics. Those will give local marketers outcome-based KPIs across platforms in real time. NBCU's upfront is set for Monday starting at 10:30am.

As audience measurement takes focus, there are other storylines swirling the upfronts this year with the most notable being the **Writers Guild of America** strike. It could be part of the reason why **Netflix** canceled its in-person upfront Wednesday and will opt for a virtual event. But with programmers figuring out how their content will be impacted, the upfronts will add another layer of anxiety.

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## **NFL SCHEDULE DROPS TONIGHT**

While the full 2023 **NFL** schedule won't be officially unveiled until tonight at 8pm on **NFL Network**, some matchups have trickled out. This year will be different for the broadcasts, though. Teams will no longer belong to a specific network, and not all teams will be guaranteed a primetime game. As for the schedule itself, the season will commence with the Cowboys vs Chiefs on September 7 at 8:20pm on **NBC**. The Chiefs and Eagles will meet in a Super Bowl rematch Nov. 20 at 8:15pm on **ESPN**. For the first time ever, the league will have a game on Black Friday with the Dolphins and Jets facing off Nov. 24 at 3pm on **Prime Video**. As previously announced by the platform, no subscription will be necessary to watch that game. On Christmas Day will be the Giants and Eagles at 4:30pm on **Fox**. Additionally, the NFL's five international games were revealed. **ESPN+** will have another exclusive game with the Falcons-Jaguars on Oct. 1 at 9:30am. The Jags will stay across the pond and face the Bills a week later at 9:30am on NFL Network. Ravens-Titans (Oct. 15), Dolphins-Chiefs (Nov. 5) and Colts-Patriots round out the global slate, with each kicking off at 9:30am on NFL Network.

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## **CNN TOWN HALL RATINGS**

Last night's **CNN** town hall event with former President **Donald Trump** reeled in 3.3 million total viewers and 781,000 A25-54, according to **Nielsen**. The event kicked off at 8pm and led cable news networks in primetime with 2.29 million

viewers P2+, followed by **Fox News** with 1.68 million and **MSNBC** with 1.44 million. While a ratings success for CNN, the network did draw criticism from some with #boycottCNN trending on Twitter. Former **FCC** chairman **Reed Hundt** was

## **Cablefax Executive Round Up**

### **What is the biggest consideration you make when marketing an international program to a U.S. audience?**



**Kim Granito**  
Head of Marketing  
**AMC Networks**

"Good and entertaining shows are good and entertaining shows, wherever they come from and wherever they're consumed. Each of our targeted streaming services are built around specific content lanes, in the case of Acorn TV that lane is international dramas and mysteries, a genre fans of these shows cannot get enough of. Our marketing focuses on what makes the programming compelling to Acorn's audience, regardless of where it is made, while still being authentic to each show's specific cultural and creative perspective."



**Karen Paek**  
VP, Marketing  
**Rakuten Viki**

"Rakuten Viki has 70+ million registered users globally, and Korean entertainment has dominated in the U.S., with viewers also consuming more diverse Asian content. To effectively market to the rapidly growing U.S. audience, Viki offers a wide range of content from other Asian countries, including Japan, Mainland China, Taiwan and Thailand. We're strategic about introducing this content and making it easily accessible to new viewers."



**Gita Rebbapragada**  
CMO  
**Crunchyroll**

"At Crunchyroll, we frequently bring experiences, products and content from Japan to a large, passionate global community of fans. Critical to delivering those experiences authentically is preserving the original inspiration of the creators that put so much intent and hard work into their creations. We strive to preserve that original creative intent and that drives our approach to everything - from how we subtitle and dub the shows on our streaming service to how we market our lines of business including theatrical, games, e-commerce products and more."



**Robert Schildhouse**  
EVP, North America and GM, Group Marketing Services  
**BritBox**

"At BritBox we strive to know our audience extremely well and have developed a deep understanding of their viewing interests. We are laser-focused on continuing to deliver unforgettably entertaining series like 'Karen Pirie,' 'The Tower,' 'Line of Duty' and many more, that our viewers—especially the core 40 plus female quality-seeking viewers that we have built our success through - have proven they cannot get enough of. We are fortunate that while we are exclusively focused on streaming international programming, it is all in English language and often features talent very familiar to American audiences."

among those who questioned the decision to give the town hall to a single candidate. He [tweeted](#), “Didn’t CNN just give a presidential candidate a huge gift of free time? And if this did happen, isn’t there any agency with the legal authority to examine the legality of this gift?”

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### AT&T, BLACKROCK JV CLOSES

AT&T and Blackrock have closed their jv to form Gigapower. The company plans to provide fiber networks to ISPs and businesses across the country using a commercial wholesale open access platform. AT&T is Gigapower’s first tenant as it looks to expand AT&T Fiber. It is still on track to pass 30 million locations in its traditional service areas with AT&T Fiber by the end of 2025. In addition to its previously announced plans to deploy fiber to Mesa, Gigapower plans to build to the Chandler and Gilbert areas of Arizona as well as parts of northeastern Pennsylvania, Alabama and Florida that are outside of AT&T’s current service areas.

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### VERIZON’S WV 5G ULTRA WIDE-BAND

Verizon deployed its 5G Ultra Wideband network in communities across West Virginia after turning on 100MHz of its C-band spectrum. Residents and businesses in areas including Huntington, Morgantown, Fairmont and Bridgeport will have access to higher speeds and greater capacity, and Verizon plans to add more bandwidth as more C-band spectrum is made available to it. The expectation is that the spectrum will be available by the end of the year.

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### BET+ WITH ADS LAUNCHES IN JUNE

Another streamer is adding the ads, with **BET+** to launch lower-priced, advertising supported BET+ Essential on June 25. The launch is timed to hit the same day as the signature **BET** Awards telecast. The service will retail for \$5.99/month and feature all of the same content as the ad-free \$9.99/month service. At launch, ads will be a mix of 15 and 30 seconds playing before and during programming with BET using **Nielsen’s** Digital Ad Ratings for measurement.

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### COME WITH TELEMUNDO

“Come With Us,” is the theme for **Telemundo’s** upcoming upfront, and it has a lot planned for 2023-24. Leading off is the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup that’ll take place in Australia and New Zealand. All 64 matches will be televised live in Spanish across Telemundo and Universo, and will stream on Peacock. It’ll be the first time in U.S. TV history that the women’s competition will be available on linear platforms entirely in Spanish. The network also revealed the return of

“El Señor de los Cielos” for a ninth season. Other programs that were announced include “Vuelve a Mi,” “El Conde: Amor y Honor,” “Mujer de Oro” and “La Casa de Los Famosos.” Moving to Telemundo’s AVOD **Tplus**, it’ll expand its FAST channel offerings with the addition of Telemundo Deportes Ahora. It’ll have bilingual content for sports fans produced by Telemundo Deportes.

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### PARAMOUNT+ FINALLY FLYING HIGH WITH DELTA

**Paramount+** and **Delta Airlines** are moving forward on their previously announced partnership that will make the streamer available to Delta SkyMiles members. The Delta Sync Exclusives program is now testing on select aircraft and will be rolled out this summer, and a free trial of Paramount+’s premium tier will be included in the program. Other features of the program include access to *New York Times* games and free WiFi from **T-Mobile**. By year’s end, more than 700 domestic mainline aircraft will be upgraded to support the program, and the global fleet will be by the end of 2024.

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### FUBO INKS MLB PARTNERSHIP

**Fubo** is teaming up with the **MLB’s** Cleveland Guardians to launch Fubo branding throughout Progressive Field, as well as other fan engagement opportunities. It’s the second MLB partnership the vMVPD has made after [making a deal with the Boston Red Sox](#). Guardians’ season ticket holders can get in on a free 30-day trial, while all other fans can still get a 14-day trial.

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### RATINGS

The end of the **XFL’s** third inaugural season is near with the championship game set for Saturday. Across **ESPN, ABC, FX, ESPN2, ESPN+** and **ESPN Deportes**, the XFL reached over 50 million total viewers throughout the season. Of those viewers, approximately 1/3 are in the P18-49 demo. XFL also finished as one of the top programs on FX and ESPN2 so far this year.

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### PEOPLE

*Pete Distad*, the head of **Apple TV+** and its sports businesses, is leaving the company later this month according to *Bloomberg*. Distad oversees business and operations for the Apple TV app as well. He originally joined the company in 2013 after overseeing marketing and distribution for Hulu.

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### EDITOR’S NOTE

**Cablefax Daily** will not publish a newsletter edition Friday, May 12, but [Cablefax.com](#) will keep you in the know until Monday’s issue hits your inbox.



# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## AXS TV Gets the Bands Together

We've seen plenty of music competition series that focus on individual voices, but **AXS TV's** new entry "Banded" flips the concept by placing the 25 contestants into five bands to see if they can come together in collective harmony. The music they create spans all genres and they get some guidance each week from a rotating roster of mentors and guest judges, including Mötley Crüe's *Vince Neil*, drummer *Mark Schulman* and *Kip Winger*. Part of what makes Banded unique is that it isn't just about who has the musical chops. "It's just as important to be able to jive together along with having talent. The show actually digs into how well each person performs and how they get along with the others. We can actually see when the bands are not getting along and then see the progression over time," explains producer Robert Davidman. "From a producer standpoint there was a lot of heavy lifting. There was a lot of coaching to get 25 people to all get along, let alone be creative on top of living together 24/7." Season 1 consists of eight episodes, with six hour-long episodes bookended by the 90-minute premiere and finale. It's accompanied by a video podcast that Davidman says is aimed at creating a dialogue around the show while providing deeper insights into the contenders. Serving as hosts are musician and reality TV personality *Brandon Jenner* and "American Idol" finalist *Didi Benami*, who both know a thing or two about the spotlight. "Brandon is a charismatic individual living in the shadow of very famous immediate family members and yet still manages to create a unique identity of his own. He is a talented musician in his own right. He knows what it's like to live in the public eye," says Davidman. "Didi understands the whole music competition genre having finished in the top 10 on the 9th season of American Idol. She brings her passion for inspiring and uplifting musicians." Of course, the biggest question is can any of the Banded groups get us singing and tapping our feet? Davidman says yes: "The music that the bands created really came out amazing. The show will release some incredible tunes that industry insiders have said can become hits." Banded premieres on AXS TV on May 13 at 9pm ET. – *Amy Maclean*

### REVIEWS

"Fatal Attraction," streaming, **Paramount+**. Yes, it's that "Fatal Attraction," the one from 1987, where *Michael Douglas'* Dan risks his career and family for a fling with *Glenn Close's* Alex, who turns out to want more than that. We can hear you snarking: 'Oh, great, yet another televised remake of an iconic film.' Yet there's plenty to recommend in this reimagining of the hit film. We use the word reimagining purposely. Who's to say re-telling a story with the depth that an 8-part TV series affords is wrong? Moreover, it's not a stretch to say that many viewers haven't seen the Fatal Attraction film. As such, this production serves several audiences: for one, it adds elements to a familiar story for those who've seen the original, but it also is a new experience for viewers who haven't. All that aside, the leads, *Joshua Jackson* and *Lizzy Caplan*, are first rate. If you've seen Jackson as Dr. Christopher Duntch in **Peacock's** excellent "Dr. Death," you know he's an ace at portraying a good guy with a fatal flaw. And while Close was excellent as a scorned and troubled lover, Caplan's controlled, subtle reading of the part is compelling in a different way. There are negatives, including too many competing plotlines and a needless psychiatric subplot. Still, it's worth a look. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(05/01/23-05/07/23)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
TNT	1.042	3254
ESPN	0.758	2366
FNC	0.470	1468
MSNBC	0.370	1155
HGTV	0.251	783
INSP	0.234	731
TBSC	0.217	679
HIST	0.211	660
TLC	0.191	597
HALL	0.177	551
USA	0.176	549
DISC	0.174	544
FOOD	0.171	534
CNN	0.158	494
ID	0.154	481
BRAVO	0.128	400
TVLAND	0.127	397
FX	0.109	340
HMM	0.108	338
A&E	0.107	335
GSN	0.105	329
LIFE	0.105	329
WETV	0.102	319
REELZ	0.101	315
NWSMX	0.097	301
AMC	0.084	261
NATGEO	0.079	247
BET	0.077	241
SYFY	0.076	237
OXY	0.075	233
NAN	0.071	220
FETV	0.069	215
SUND	0.068	213
APL	0.067	209
ADSM	0.066	205

\*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.

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