

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Losing Trust: VAB's Cunningham on Ad Fraud in the Industry

The advertising industry has been through tumultuous times over the past year. Amid economic pressures, companies and agencies have had to go to the drawing board to figure out how they can be as efficient as possible. However, there are other factors muddying the waters. A Wall Street Journal report citing data from Adalytics revealed Google [violated its standards](#) when placing video advertisements on other websites "about 80% of the time" from 2020-23. Another report from Media Village states the current open web programmatic media ecosystem has as much as [\\$20 billion in waste](#). We spoke with VAB President/CEO Sean Cunningham about the state of ad fraud in the industry and what can be done to alleviate concerns. Below are edited excerpts of the conversation.

What's the current state of ad fraud in the industry in your eyes? It's hard to see to the left or to the right of what's in front of us right now, which is of a stunning scale—the Wall Street Journal exposé on the analytics report, the 162-page report on the three years of ad fraud by YouTube ... we do know from the intimacy with the industry that fraud on digital continues to be a way bigger issue than it is in 'TV.' There's probably 10% of all activity in the digital ecosystem is still thought to be fraudulent. Whereas the only isolated piece that you can say is part of TV, that has any suspicion around being fraudulent, I think there's some programmatic activity in the CTV space

that people are looking at very carefully.

Media Village reported that the open web programmatic ecosystem has as much as \$20 billion in waste—23% of the total web programmatic media investment by marketers. How can that number be brought down? It comes to transparency and visibility. And these things are happening because people are allowed a degree of black boxing for all sorts of different reasons. They can say it's proprietary. They can say you know, a lot of different things, but it comes down to you know, when you allow for any level of black, black boxing, you have to assume that there's going to be abuse.

What's the next step for advertisers to fix these issues? I think what it comes down to is that the double standard on transparency in the premium video ecosystem where there's full transparency and has been basically forever on the TV side, is one standard. And then there is very little transparency on the walled garden side. At one point, the collective buy side created a marketplace where they were going to have a heck of a lot of 'trust us' when push came to shove with these walled gardens. They were happy to share some of their data with you—data of their choosing—but when it came down to anything that was real transparency or transparency that could be mentioned in the same paragraph as what TV transparency is like, they declined on that and just said, 'Well, you're just going to have to trust us.' This is the net effect, and this is something that went on undiscovered for over three years of a massive scale. So to me, it has to start with the dynamic of the

Cablefax Daily

**Partner
with
Cablefax
Daily**

Contact Ellen Kamhi at
917.626.5574 or
ekamhi@accessintel.com



people who are the most burned, and that's the advertisers.

How can the industry strike the balance of achieving accurate targeting practices while also ensuring privacy for consumers?

If you look at the rise in the ecosystem of very sophisticated players in data identity—if you look at companies like Blockgraph and things like that, you realize that some of the fastest-growing cottage industries inside of the whole advertising data ecosystem are growing up quickly around ensuring just that: How do we get the most out of first-party data, and still have entities that we can point to that our world-class providers with respect to privacy and compliance? The growth of those companies and providers in the ecosystem has been really, really impressive over the last few years because the need is there. The companies are showing up and they're starting to scale out.

You attended the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity last month. What were your takeaways from the event in regard to advertising?

Partnerships, and the idea that in a pretty complex ecosystem that's moving from demography to identity. With the advent of TV companies streaming so they have first-party data and their desire to house that in a way where they can give all the transparency that agencies and advertisers want, to do that you need partners. It seemed like there were so few things that I attended where it was a subject line or a storyline that was about one media company, in meaning that how everything was being accomplished in the next couple of years had to do with really productive partnerships.

OPENVAULT NABS NIMBLE THIS

OpenVault is kicking its broadband technology up a notch, acquiring the software solutions provider **Nimble This**. The move combines OpenVault's profile management application (PMA) solution with Nimble This' proactive network maintenance (PNM) technology, which will lead to increased network capacity, subscriber quality of experience and operator profit margins. With the acquisition, OpenVault named *Brady Volpe*—the founder Nimble This—as Chief Product Officer. When talking about what made the acquisition an enticing idea, OpenVault Founder/CEO *Mark Trudeau* said the success Volpe had before even having a dedicated sales team added credence to the quality of technology and content Nimble This created. "Brady's got a great engineering team in such that we're able to now combine with our engineering team, I think it's going to create a lot of flexibility and scalability for us as we as we get out more into the market," Trudeau told **CFX**. Volpe echoed that sentiment, adding that there were quite a few companies vying to acquire Nimble This amid a rise in interest in PNM technology, but what ultimately made OpenVault the right choice was the value customers will see with both PNM and PMA solutions.

RATINGS

Fox News swept the weekly primetime and total day ratings among cable nets for a second consecutive week. It led with 1.22 million viewers P2+ in prime, followed by **USA** at 882,000 thanks to the Tour de France and Quaker State 400. **MSNBC** checked in at third with 856,000, and **Hallmark Channel** and **INSP** capped the top five with 814,000 and 790,000, respectively. For total day,

THE FAXIES

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN PR & MARKETING

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2023 FAXIES winners!

The FAXIES recognizes excellence in PR & Marketing across the industry.

Visit our site to view the complete list of 2023 finalists, and be sure to check out our personalized congratulatory videos from the Cablefax team.

www.TheFaxies.com

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 Cynopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Associate Editor: Noah Ziegler, 301.354.1704, nziegler@accessintel.com | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, ekamhi@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: \$1,899.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

Fox News had a healthy lead with 975,000 viewers. MSNBC was second at 599,000, and Hallmark (491,000), **HGTV** (436,000) and **CNN** (424,000) followed. – The **Ovation** “Death in Paradise” July 4 marathon was recorded as the network’s second-strongest household prime performance this year and the 8th-most watched audience in network history in the A35+ demo. The special had 129,000 households and 161,000 A35+ tune in. – All eyes were on this year’s No. 1 overall pick in the NBA Draft on Friday. **ESPN** had the second-most watched NBA Summer League game ever as *Victor Wembanyama* made his debut. The game had an average audience of 1.39 million viewers and peaked at 1.63 million. It helped the network achieve the most-watched Summer League opening weekend ever across its platforms, averaging 456,000 viewers across 12 games.

INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

Several companies in the industry were recognized by the [Disability Equality Index](#), a joint initiative from the American Association of People with Disabilities and Disability:IN. Companies are scored on a 0-100 scale, and those checking in at 80 or above are placed in the “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion” list. Scoring 100 were the likes of **Amazon**, **AT&T**, **Comcast NBCUniversal**, **Cox**, **DISH**, **Google**, **Meta**, **Microsoft**, **T-Mobile**, **TDS**, **Walt Disney**, **UScellular** and **Verizon**. **Fox**, **Altice USA/Optimum** and **Lionsgate** also were featured on the list.

FIBER FRENZY

The optical and digital solutions company **STL** is expanding its partnership with **Windstream** to support its large-scale fiber projects. The two companies originally teamed up in February 2021, and since then Windstream has worked on fiber construction projects including a route from Raleigh, NC, to Jacksonville and NYC to Montreal. – North Carolina-based provider **CloudWyz** is bringing high-speed fiber internet service to the community of Bailey. Service is expected to launch in select areas in early fall. – **Comcast** has completed the initial phase of expansion to nearly 200 homes and businesses in Eagle Creek and Estacada, Oregon. Construction began in March and will continue through February 2024, and once complete, residential customers can get speeds above 1 Gbps and businesses up to 100 Gbps.

BLADE SUPPORTS PETITION TO DENY FOX STATION RENEWAL

The *Toledo Blade* has come out in support of **Media and Democracy Project’s** [FCC petition](#) to deny the renewal of **Fox’s** broadcast license for its Philadelphia station. The group is making the push, alleging that senior management of Fox Corp. manipulated its audience by knowingly broadcasting false news about the 2020 election. The newspaper [editorial](#) supporting the petition caught our eye because the paper is owned by **Block Communications**,

which also owns broadcast stations (including Louisville, KY, Fox affiliate WDRB) and **Buckeye Broadband**. “Based solely on the facts and the law, Fox does not deserve a license to own a broadcast station. If the FCC grants license renewals to a station owner that has knowingly and repeatedly reported false news shown to incite violent insurrection against the government, there is no longer any standard of character required by law,” the editorial said. **Fox Television Stations** has called the petition frivolous and completely without merit. “[It] asks the FCC to upend the First Amendment and long-standing FCC precedent. WTXF-TV / FOX 29 News Philadelphia is one of the finest local news stations in the country, broadcasting over 60 hours of local news and locally produced programming every week,” Fox TV said.

PROGRAMMING

Blaze Media will air the 2023 Family Leadership Summit, which will feature former **Fox News** anchor *Tucker Carlson* as he makes his first public appearance since departing the network. Coverage will begin at 10am on Friday and include Carlson interviewing Republican presidential candidates such. as Florida Gov. *Ron DeSantis* and former VP *Mike Pence*. – It’s another Summer Under the Stars for **Turner Classic Movies**, which will celebrate a different prominent movie figure every day throughout the month of August. It’ll start with *Lucille Ball* on Aug. 1 before highlighting others like *Jackie Cooper* (Aug. 4), *Debbie Reynolds* (Aug. 6) and *Paul Newman* (Aug. 13). The full list of stars and their respective movies can be found here.

PEOPLE

DISH is making some changes to its wireless team after the departure of EVP, Network Development *Dave Mayo*, who’s set to retire in September (he will transition to a strategic advisory role within the company). Helping fill in will be *Eben Albertyn*, who’ll become EVP/CTO of DISH’s wireless business in September. He’ll guide the network technology strategy and operations, which previously fell under the purview of Mayo and EVP/CNO *Marc Rouanne*. Rouanne will become EVP, Global Partnerships and focus on new key technology and go-to-market partnerships along with new enterprise business opportunities. Lastly, DISH is upping *Satish Sharma* to EVP, Network Deployment, where he’ll oversee the expansion and densification of the DISH wireless network.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Cablefax: The Magazine is [now accepting nominations](#) for the annual Most Powerful Women issue, shining a light on the achievements of women who’ve made a significant impact within their companies and in the industry. This year will continue the crowning of a Mentor of the Year, Women’s Advancement Champion and those continuing to climb the ladder and breaking glass ceilings. The standard deadline closes Aug. 13.