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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Steps Forward: Industry Offers AI Policy Recommendations

Everyone wants guidance on how the *Trump* administration is approaching regulation of artificial intelligence, and they made their voices heard over the weekend. Comments were due to the **Office of Science and Technology Policy** on what should be included in an AI Action Plan.

The comments will ultimately be reviewed and incorporated into an AI Action Plan defining policy actions that would ultimately fuel private sector innovation and ensure the U.S. is a leader in the space.

A number of technology organizations urged the federal government to reverse course on the approach laid out by the *Biden* administration in its 2023 executive order. President Trump revoked that order upon his inauguration, and the **Consumer Technology Association** argued in its comments that Biden's approach favored costly regulations in certain areas that would have risked slowing innovation and growth.

"For example, the prior administration's reliance on the Defense Production Act to mandate complex 'know your customer' data collection and disclosure rules reflects the type of regulation that this Administration must avoid," CTA said. "A more balanced federal policy for AI would encourage the continued development of accurate, ethical and trustworthy AI without imposing burdensome government mandates and reporting requirements of the past that slowed innovation and growth."

**NetChoice** also called out regulatory red tape in its comments,

even shouting out the BEAD program for having similar issues to the AI approach of the Biden administration. As for suggestions on how to move forward, the organization pushed for the **Department of Justice** to settle its antitrust cases against companies that have been major investors and innovators in AI. As an example, it pointed to the Biden DOJ's proposed remedies in its investigations into **Google** which suggest that the tech giant should be prevented from owning or investing in any rival query-based AI product or ads technology, among other things. NetChoice noted that would require Google to pull funding from successful AI firms like **Anthropic**, which it has already invested \$3 billion in.

The DOJ under President Trump has revised the remedies to be looser, but even those would prevent Google from unlocking all the benefits of investments into artificial intelligence.

"While the remedies would not explicitly prevent Google from making AI investment, they would deny Google and its customers much of the benefits of AI integration," NetChoice said. "The impact on AI investment and innovation of the revised remedies therefore retains some of the restrictions in Biden's proposed remedies. The Trump administration should seek a settlement with Google, and should reexamine other Biden cases and investigations of the American firms pulling the most weight in the global AI race."

**INCOMPAS** submitted recommendations on how the federal government could spur AI advancement while also not creating an AI divide where adoption is concentrated in only a few cities or only urban areas. The association's belief is that the right policies could lead to the creation of regional AI hubs that would ultimately

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expand employment opportunities and give SMBs the opportunity to get involved.

“Congress could work together with local employers but also scale up place-based investments in emerging AI communities. Renewed funding through the NDAA for the DoC’s Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs program is allowing for new awards that will have regional impact as well as support national economic development and national security,” INCOMPAS said. “The December 2024 Bipartisan House Task Force on AI Report suggestions to determine SMB resource needs, support SMB AI literacy while also lightening compliance burdens for small businesses is practical and implementable.”

It also encouraged the creation of workforce development programs focusing on the next generation of innovators along with targeted immigration reform that would create mechanisms for top talent with STEM and AI skills to more easily obtain green cards.

## STARKS TO EXIT FCC

**FCC** Commissioner *Geoffrey Starks* stunned Washington Tuesday with the news he intends to resign from the agency this spring. “With my extraordinary fellow Commissioners and the incredible career staff at the agency, we have worked hard to connect all Americans, promote innovation, protect consumers and ensure national security,” he said in a statement. “I have learned so much from my time in this position, particularly when I have heard directly from Americans on the issues that matter to them.” Starks, whose current term was not set to expire until 2027, was nominated by *President Trump* in June 2018 to fill a Democratic seat on the Commission and was confirmed in 2019. His decision ultimately means Chair *Brendan Carr*, who thanked Starks for his tremendous run in public service, will have a Republican majority without having to wait for the Senate to confirm nominee *Olivia Trusty*. As for what will happen with the fifth seat, **New Street Research** has heard from some sources that Trump may name another Republican or an Independent instead of a Democrat to replace Starks. “If so, it would break a long-standing norm, but from the investors’ perspective, it will not change the outcome of the FCC decisions, as Carr will determine that, whether his majority is one or two,” the firm said. It also noted that should another Democrat be confirmed and join lone Dem *Anna Gomez*, it isn’t their vote that matters. Instead, it is how effective they can be in questioning and drawing attention to Carr’s agenda. New Street noted that Carr was successful in doing that when he was a Commissioner in the minority, and that opposition can create an agenda for when the minority party retakes majority control of the FCC. Changes may also be coming at the **FTC**. At our deadline, sources [told](#) the *WSJ* that President Trump fired Democratic Commissioners *Rebecca Slaughter* and *Alvaro Bedoya*.

## SPECTRUM REACH INTRODUCES NEW PLANNING TOOL

**Charter’s** ad sales arm Spectrum Reach underwent a full-market rollout of its newest planning tool called Audience Reach Optimizer (ARO). It’s designed to help with the effectiveness and efficiency of ad campaigns while ensuring TV ads reach their intended audience. ARO identifies new opportunities for multiscreen engagement across traditional TV and streaming platforms. It sources broadcast ad log data from Spectrum Reach’s partner **MediaRadar** and gets its cable ad log information from Spectrum’s campaign orders, using the two sources to better pinpoint where an advertiser’s audience may primarily be. During ARO’s pilot phase, for example, a high-end furniture store in Tampa discovered its intended customers were spending more than 70% of time watching cable networks as opposed to local broadcast nets, which it’d been previously investing heavily in. Spectrum Reach began piloting the tool in key markets in 2024 and has since run more than 5,600 reports to showcase performance data.

## POPULARITY IN AD-SUPPORTED STREAMING RISING, VAB FINDS

Ad-supported streaming is now mainstream in the eyes of **VAB**. The bureau unveiled its latest study “Bigger, Bolder & More Ad-Supported: 25 Streaming Trends That Are Impacting Marketing Plans in 2025,” detailing streaming behaviors as well as platform usage, the importance of quality content and how much ad-supported options have grown. Among the findings: non-pay TV households are projected to overtake total pay TV households during 2025 (69.9 million vs 65 million). Approximately 57% of adults now fall under the category of cordless, with 33% of them being cord-cutters and 24% being cord-nevers. Ad-supported streaming now reaches around 90% of adults who stream, and CTV is projected to increase its share of total U.S. TV ad spend over the next few years. VAB anticipates CTV to produce \$33.4 billion of the \$84.9 billion total this year. In 2028, that number is expected to grow to \$46.9 billion, which would overtake traditional TV’s spending (\$45.1 billion). When it comes to viewing streaming as either a replacement for traditional TV or a complement, 69% of A18-34 and 68% adults 35-49 think it’s a substitute while 47% of respondents 50+ said it’s complementary. Sixty-four percent of adults prefer ad-supported services and tiers because of the costs benefits and value exchange. As of 3Q24, 43% of total quarterly subscriptions were ad-supported. While FAST services are growing, the average commercial minutes per hour aren’t. The figure for 2Q24 came in at 9.1 minutes per hour, staying even with what it came in at for 4Q23, 2Q23 and 4Q22.



## C-SPAN FOUNDERS DAY

Happy (almost) birthday to **C-SPAN**, which is getting ready to celebrate 46 years of service Wednesday. The festivities will see the public affairs net's founder *Brian Lamb* join former co-CEO *Susan Swain* and current CEO *Sam Feist* in a conversation titled "The C-SPAN Story" to celebrate C-SPAN Founders Day. The three will talk about stories from C-SPAN's early days and the work to bring coverage of the happenings from the White House, the Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court and beyond to TVs across the U.S. They'll also discuss what's in store for C-SPAN as it continues to deliver "Democracy Unfiltered." The conversation will premiere Wednesday at 8pm on C-SPAN and be available online [here](#).

## CARRIAGE

The new **Rangers Sports Network** inked a carriage deal to bring Texas Rangers' broadcasts to **Fubo**. The vMVPD will stream coverage of available games in addition to pre- and postgame shows for subscribers of English-language paid channel plans within the team's market across Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma. Fubo will also offer RSN as a standalone subscription that can be added to the Fubo Free or Latino plans in those markets. Additionally, Fubo will become a sponsor of the team and roll out branding at Globe Life Field—including behind home plate—on top of offering fan engagement opportunities with the team.

## PENTELEDATA, OPENVAULT EXPAND PARTNERSHIP

**OpenVault** is extending and growing its collaboration with **PenTeleData**, an internet, business phone and I.T. services provider stationed across Pennsylvania and New Jersey. PenTeleData will expand the availability of OpenVault's solutions to improve reliability and online quality of experience for over 400,000 subscribers in Eastern Pennsylvania. That includes the addition of OpenVault's Profile Management Application to account for higher levels of available bandwidth, network performance and reliability for those using DOCSIS 3.1 or higher modems. OpenVault's products will enhance PenTeleData's data analytics, revenue generations and network health as well.

## HBCU GO TO STREAM FIRST BCIC

The inaugural Black College Invitational Championship is set for Thursday-Sunday in Charlotte, and **HBCU GO** will be its official streaming partner. The event will feature 16 men's and women's basketball teams competing for the title of Black College Basketball Champion. HBCU GO will livestream marquee matchups in addition to airing behind-the-scenes coverage and feature stories about HBCU basketball.

## RATINGS

The top five cable networks in the weekly primetime and total-day ratings were nearly identical for a second straight week. For March 10-16, **Fox News** kept its usual spot atop the primetime mountain with 2.98 million viewers P2+. **ESPN** came second with 1.45 million, though **MSNBC** wasn't far behind with 1.17 million. **HGTV** was fourth with 698,000 and **CNN** came fifth with 571,000. Fox News, ESPN and MSNBC led in total day with 1.82 million, 740,000 and 635,000, respectively, while CNN (420,000) and HGTV (359,000) swapped the fourth and fifth spots. – It's been the week since "Moana 2" was added to **Disney+**. The film reeled in 27.3 million viewers globally in its first five days of streaming, making it Walt Disney Animation Studios' biggest premiere since "Encanto" in 2021 and the third-largest animated theatrical premiere ever on Disney+. As for how the original "Moana" is doing, it's now eclipsed 1.4 billion hours streamed, equivalent to streaming the film more than 735 million times consecutively or listening to "How Far I'll Go" on repeat for over 50,000 years.

## PROGRAMMING

Well before Season 2 of "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" premieres on **Disney+** in December, **Disney** is renewing the show for a third season. Season 3 will be based on "The Titan's Curse," the third installment of *Rick Riordan's* Percy Jackson book series. Speaking of Disney+, it's adding a new 24/7 always-on stream for "The Simpsons." It'll have 767 episodes from Season 1-35 in chronological order at launch, amounting to nearly 300 continuous hours of Simpsons content. Ay caramba!

## PEOPLE

*Alex Wellen* was named the new President/Chief Growth Officer for **QVC Group**, a changeup from his role as President/CEO of **MotorTrend Group**. Effective immediately, Wellen will spearhead QVC's growth strategy across social, streaming, digital, new business development and platform distribution while also overseeing a multifunctional team that'll introduce new capabilities and functions for the company. Wellen's change comes after **Warner Bros. Discovery** finalized the sale of MotorTrend to **Hearst**. Wellen been under the WBD umbrella since 2009 when he joined **CNN** as a Senior Producer, eventually climbing to Global Chief Product Officer and then GM/SVP, Innovation and Corporate Strategy for **Turner**. Wellen became the head of MotorTrend in July 2018. – **Hiawatha Broadband Communications** has a new chief after the retirement of *Dan Pecarina*. The company appointed *Dan Wigger* as President/GM, where he'll oversee HBC's operations and strategic initiatives for the **Schurz Communications** subsidiary. Wigger has more than three decades of experience in the communications services industry, including stops at **Comlink Solutions**, **Aventiv Technologies**, **Integra** and **Eschelon Telecom**. He'll be based at HBC's HQ in Winona, Minnesota.