

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## All-in-One: Fox One Wants the Superfans and Cord-Nevers Alike

What better time to debut your all-in-one DTC streamer with an emphasis on live sports content than right before the **NFL** and college football seasons? It's undoubtedly why both **ESPN** and **Fox** debuted their DTC products this week. But these feel like starkly different launch experiences thus far.

On day one, ESPN feels like a [puzzle](#) to solve for MVPDs and their customers in terms of the authentication process and which providers have deals in place to offer full access to the app's content and features. In comparison, **Fox One** seems like a more straightforward affair so far, helped by the fact that it doesn't offer exclusive, DTC-only content at all. Priced at \$19.99/month, the streamer is designed to be an accessible, all-in-one-place hub for Fox's linear channels and VOD programming (you can also bundle SVOD **Fox Nation** for an extra \$5/month), with the added bonus of curation and recommendations personalized for each user. And for those wondering: yes, **CFX** tried the TV provider authentication experience on both DTC services and found that Fox One had the more simplified, direct approach to getting users logged in with their provider credentials.

During a press event last week, Fox One CEO Pete Distad emphasized the importance of a distributor- and customer-friendly approach for the new product. That effort includes "not making it confusing and having a significant amount of differentiated programming Day 1...Essentially, we're just

another channel. We're not undercutting the price. We've got a price point that's in line with the prices that they're offering to their customers across their channels. We're selling the same product in general." He added that while "building a customer experience that makes sense for the cord-cutter and cord-never" was definitely a focus for him, "we're also not doing it at the cost of Pay TV."

So, if Fox One basically offers everything you can already get on Pay TV—including **Fox News**, **Fox Sports**, **Fox Business** and local stations—what need is the app addressing and how big is the audience for this new service? The first question seemed a bit easier to answer for Fox than the second. Distad explained that one of the key goals of the launch was to create a more centralized live sports experience for Fox viewers.

"I don't think anybody yet has solved the customer experience problem for a sports fan that doesn't sit in the pay TV ecosystem," he said. "News is different. Obviously we have an incredible news experience that now we're just making available to [the cordless] audience. But sports is still fragmented."

When you log into Fox One for the first time, the app asks what your news, sports and entertainment interests are. On the sports side, you can narrow it down to specific leagues so that the AI-powered homepage can curate live games, scores and highlight reels tailored to each user. The app also gives users the option to watch games from the beginning, catch up to live via curated highlights up to the point when they tuned into the broadcast. They can also watch a condensed version

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of the game or a recap. There's also the ability to record games through a DVR feature.

Distad, who formerly led **Venu Sports**, revealed that Fox One "leverages some of the Venu technology that we had been building" as well as the "foundational technology" used for **Tubi**. (Side note: When ESPN Chairman *Jimmy Pitaro* was asked whether Venu tech helped with the development of ESPN DTC, he said no. "They were separate paths. We were focused on building our own direct-to-consumer experience in parallel with Venu...We didn't need it as we fully intended to launch the direct-to-consumer experience and enhance that, with or without them.")

Fox One's shiny new features seem tailor-built for cordless users and Distad stressed Fox wants to reach as many of those "unserved" customers as possible with the DTC product. But while the company has identified 65 million households of cord-cutters and cord-nevers, it only has "hypotheses" regarding how big the audience for the service will be and what the growth potential is.

"I'm not going to lie to you and say we know where this is exactly going to land," Distad said. "The news viewership on YouTube is insane, right? 1.5 billion over the last quarter. So we know there's an appetite out there for cord-cutters and cord-nevers for our news product. We've got a bunch of hypotheses on what the overlap will be...But we do know that there's a customer base out there." In terms of sub expectations for Fox One, Distad said they're aiming for "single, mid-digit millions over the next few years," but cautioned that he'd be lying if he said Fox knows "exactly where those numbers are going to land... When we don't know how many, we're going to say it's probably a modest number, especially while we're figuring it out."

Distad added that "the key message is we're not going out and saying we're going to get 50 million subs or 20 million subscribers, and not talk about profitability, and not talk about doing it in a way where we can continue to afford to pay our content costs and continue to invest in content. We're mostly focused on profitability, and how do we build a business that's sustainable."

Profitability and sustainability are also the reasons why Fox isn't spending money on exclusive DTC content. "We already spent billions of dollars on programming for our ecosystem, which includes cable, broadcast [and] digital. We're just extending that now and taking it into an audience that currently isn't served there," Distad said. "We've got a lot of great programs, and we know there's a lot of sports fans and news fans that aren't getting served today [but] going out and spending a ton of money on additional programming at this point and giving it to those customers without even knowing what they want and need...I don't think is prudent."

## DEMS OPEN INVESTIGATION INTO PARAMOUNT-SKYDANCE

A pair of House Democrats are throwing a challenge flag on the **Skydance** and **Paramount** merger. Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member *Frank Pallone Jr.* (D-NJ) and Judiciary Committee Ranking Member *Jamie Raskin* (D-MD) wrote a letter to Paramount's new CEO *David Ellison* seeking information on whether the company made promises or offers to President *Trump* prior to the transaction's approval. The two alluded to the timing of the FCC giving a green light in the weeks after Paramount settled a lawsuit with Trump over a "60 Minutes" interview with former VP *Kamala Harris*. They also want clarity on Trump's previous claims of an additional "side deal" in which Paramount offered between \$15-20 million worth of PSAs or similar programming. Although Paramount denied such an agreement, Pallone Jr. and Raskin wrote the settlement "raises significant concerns that Donald Trump demanded and Paramount paid an illegal bribe—a \$16 million payment to the President in exchange for merger approval from the FCC." "Two wrongs do not make a right—illegitimate demands from the FCC or the Administration do not absolve your company from wrongdoing," the letter said, adding that the supposed side deal offer would violate federal and state anti-bribery laws. "Similarly, if Paramount forced out CBS's longtime leaders, spent \$16 million to settle a sham lawsuit with President Trump, or canceled a highly popular comedy show that President Trump dislikes in order to curry favor with the Administration and to receive regulatory approval for the merger with Skydance, these actions would likely further embolden President Trump to use lawsuits and regulatory authority to attack media organizations that he finds objectionable in order to silence them." Pallone Jr. and Raskin asked for a copy of the settlement between Paramount and Trump and a copy of all related communications involving Trump, employees or FCC/White House reps by Sept. 3. They want Ellison to confirm if he or a company representative offered Trump PSAs in addition to the settlement, as well as further communication and documents regarding the Paramount-Skydance merger itself.

## NCTA READYING THE CONTINUUM

The industry's taking advantage of **SCTE TechExpo25** being held in D.C. from Sept. 29-Oct. 1, with **NCTA** stepping up to host an interactive exhibit to showcase how innovation and smart policy go hand-in-hand to advance America's future. The 10,000-square-foot immersive space is dubbed "The Continuum" and will feature interactive tech modules on topics such as AI, rural broadband and network convergence. It will

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also be the site for mini briefings in a theater setting as well as the stage for the Technology Policy Track, which is set to include **FCC** commissioners, policymakers, Hill staffers and others delving into topics such as spectrum, cybersecurity and broadband access. There will also be keynotes at The Continuum from **Comcast** Connectivity & Platforms CEO *Dave Watson*, **CableLabs** CEO *Phil McKinney* and **Mediacom** CTO *JR Walden*.

### MORE DELETING AT FCC

The **FCC** touted that its Media Bureau is removing 43 rules or requirements that applied to cable and satellite providers that it has deemed obsolete or unnecessary. Among the rules in the trash bin are requirements for a standstill in program carriage complaint proceedings. **Comcast**, **Time Warner Cable** and other operators successfully challenged the rule in 2013, with the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals vacating the rule that allowed the FCC to consider requests from programmers for a temporary standstill to deal terms when program carriage complaints are filed. The Bureau also nixed encoding rules of cable and satellite programming that was thrown out by the D.C. Circuit in 2013.

### PEACOCK, WWE EXTEND SAT. SERIES

It seems like each major streamer is staying busy nowadays, and recently, so has **WWE**. The organization signed a multi-year deal for **Peacock** to continue as the exclusive home of the "Saturday Night's Main Event" shows. It'll stream four times per year in primetime and feature **WWE**'s various popular figures, though **Peacock** will get the ball rolling with two streams slated for the latter part of 2025. The first will take place Nov. 1, and the second may generate heightened interest with *John Cena* in his retirement match on Dec. 13. Saturday Night's Main Event originally premiered on **NBC** in 1985, where it'd remain until 1991. As for **Peacock** and **NBCU**'s other **WWE** content, its **WWE Network** library will stick around through the end of this year while **NXT Premium Live Events** will remain through March 2026. **USA Network** will continue as the rights holder of "SmackDown" on Friday nights (its library will stay on **Peacock** on a 30-day delay).

### CARRIAGE

**Main Street Sports Group** and **FanDuel Sports Network** re-upped a distribution deal with **Comcast**. Xfinity TV customers in **FDSN**

markets will continue to get the RSN through the Ultimate TV package, giving them access to the network's national programming as well as regionally specific content. Financial terms weren't disclosed. – Six of **Scripps'** national channels are joining **Peacock's** 24/7 lineup. **ION**, **ION Mystery**, **Bounce**, **Court TV**, **Court TV Legendary Trials** and **Scripps News** can now be viewed by **Peacock** subscribers, adding to a lineup that exceeds 50 options. Other available channels include **NBC Sports NOW**, **SNL Vault** and select local **NBC** stations.

### FIBER FRENZY

**Mediacom's** network upgrade in Howard Lake and Winsted, Minnesota, was completed recently. More than 2,400 households in the two communities will now be able to choose from three plans the provider offers: Internet 300 with 300 Mbps/100 Mbps, Internet 1Gig Symmetrical and Internet 2 Gig Unlimited (2 Gbps/1 Gbps). That's in addition to the 100 Mbps/20 Mbps low-cost option that's priced at \$14.99/month.

### PROGRAMMING

As it continues a summer of ratings momentum, **HGTV** is keeping up the heat with a litany of show orders. "The Flip Off," featuring exes *Tarek El Moussa* and *Christina Haack*, will return for a second season in 2026 following a debut campaign that reeled in nearly 14 million viewers across linear and streaming. "Love It or List It" and "Renovation Aloha" will also return with new episodes next year, while "Home Town" will begin a new season in early 2026 in addition to a spinoff "Home Town: Inn This Together" that'll come later in the year. Additionally, **HGTV** greenlit a pair of new series: "Cheap A\$\$ Beach Houses" and "Tropic Like It's Hot."

### PEOPLE

**Fubo** might be working through merger dealings with **Disney**, but co-founder/CEO *David Gandler* is adding another item to his list of responsibilities by joining **Newsmax's** board, effective immediately. He joins five others on the board: network CEO *Chris Ruddy*, U.S. Secretary of Labor *Alex Acosta*, Ambassadors *Nancy Brinker* and *Paula Dobriansky* and Christopher Nixon Cox, the grandson of President *Richard Nixon* and CEO of the private equity group *Lightswitch Capital*.

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(08/11/25-08/17/25)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.753</b>	<b>2388</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.243</b>	<b>771</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.216</b>	<b>686</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.199</b>	<b>630</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>0.188</b>	<b>597</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.163</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>TBS</b>	<b>0.127</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.122</b>	<b>387</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.119</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.117</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.116</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>355</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.111</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.110</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.106</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.103</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>HALLMYS</b>	<b>0.092</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.089</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.087</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.080</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>MLB</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>NWSMX</b>	<b>0.064</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.062</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.060</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.059</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.059</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>ADSM</b>	<b>0.057</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>TENNIS</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>FRFM</b>	<b>0.049</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.047</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>IFC</b>	<b>0.046</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>NICK</b>	<b>0.045</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>ESPN2</b>	<b>0.045</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>MTV</b>	<b>0.043</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>MGNLA</b>	<b>0.042</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>PRMNT</b>	<b>0.042</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>HLN</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>APL</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>MOTOR</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.037</b>	<b>119</b>

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