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Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Carriage Wars: TelevisaUnivision, YouTube TV Spat Heats Up, NBCU Looms

The clock is ticking for **TelevisaUnivision** and **Google** to settle a carriage dispute by Sept. 30. The fight went public earlier this month when TelevisaUnivision [TU] posted an ad on social media that accused Google of charging **YouTube TV** customers an "18% Hispanic tax" to access Univision content if the tech company went through with a plan to move the channel to a $15/month Spanish-language add-on bundle. If the two can't agree to terms by the deadline, TU could end up being removed completely from YouTube TV.

This week, TelevisaUnivision continued to urge Google to "do the right thing" in a nationwide advertising campaign running in *USA Today* and major metropolitan newspapers across the country. "Google's planned removal of Univision from YouTube TV on September 30 is an unacceptable threat to millions of Hispanic households who rely on our programming for trusted news, vital information, and cultural connection," said *Daniel Alegre*, CEO of TelevisaUnivision, in a press release about the campaign. "Stripping access to Univision at such a critical time shows a blatant disregard for the communities we serve. We call on Google to respect its Hispanic subscribers and keep Univision within its core programming bundle."

CFX has heard that TelevisaUnivision and YouTube TV are still at the negotiating table ahead of the deadline, but it's unclear if progress has been made. For its part, Google feels that its renewal proposal to TelevisaUnivision has been "mischaracterized" by the programmer. A YouTube TV spokesperson told *CFX* that the distributor "proposed to continue carrying TelevisaUnivision networks—including continuing to carry four of their networks in YouTube TV's base package—at economics that reflect their performance. TelevisaUnivision has rejected that proposal and focused their public statements solely on carriage in YouTube's Spanish package, which mischaracterizes our latest proposal to them."

We reached out to TU for a response, but didn't hear back by deadline. As the clock inches towards midnight on a new carriage deal, we do know that TelevisaUnivision has launched a website informing YouTube TV customers where else they can watch **Univision**, **Unimas**, **Galavision**, **TUDN** and **ViX** programming if it gets removed from the vMVPD. The distributors mentioned are **DirecTV**, **Hulu + Live TV**, **Charter** Spectrum, **Comcast** Xfinity, **DISH Network**, **Cox**, **Mediacom** Xtream and **Verizon** Fios. The site also encourages customers to "voice concern," directing them to contact YouTube TV via their support page, by phone and/or social platforms.

This may not be the only carriage battle Google needs to fight in the coming weeks. **CNBC** reported Thursday that a renewal dispute may be looming with **NBCUniversal** when the current deal is up at the end of September, one that could result in NBCU's networks leaving the platform. According to the report, Google wants lower rates for NBCU channels. Google was previously unhappy with the pricing strategy NBCU had for Peacock. Its ire was reportedly part of the reason why Peacock

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*Applications subject to internal review & approval had a price hike back in July. We're not sure if it's related, but last year NBCU ended a $19.99 promo for Peacock annually earlier than initially advertised.

U.S. Hispanic viewers might have the most to lose if both TelevisaUnivision and NBCU go dark on YouTube TV. That would mean losing access to both Univision and presumably **Telemundo** owned-and-operated stations and all the news, sports and entertainment programming that comes with them. NBCU didn't respond to our requests for comment.

Of course, NBCU has one card up its sleeve at the negotiating table that TU does not: the Spanish-language broadcast rights to next year's **FIFA** World Cup, which will take place across the U.S., Canada and Mexico and is expected to draw a huge audience across 39 days of competition. Telemundo's coverage of the 2022 World Cup drew an average of 2.58 million viewers across its platforms, an uptick of 14% vs the 2018 tournament.

CNBC also noted in the same report that Google and **Disney** will be in renewal talks in October. Disney raised the prices of **Disney+**, **Hulu** and **ESPN** Select this week, but we'll see when the time comes if things get even more interesting in the YouTube TV carriage wars.

PAIR OF VMVPDS SET FOR A MONUMENTAL DISPUTE

There's no shortage of disputes happening in our nation's capital, but there could be another one that'll impact D.C.-area subscribers of **YouTube TV** and **Hulu + Live TV. Monumental Sports Network** issued a statement Thursday evening, revealing the RSN's carriage agreements with the two vMVPDs are scheduled to expire ahead of the beginning of the Capitals and Wizards' regular seasons, which begin Oct. 8 and Oct. 22, respectively. Monumental didn't specify how close the distribution deal deadline was, but it claimed it's "made repeated attempts to negotiate in good faith, including offering numerous economic concessions to reach a fair agreement that keeps Capitals, Wizards, and Mystics games and other local sports available on both platforms in the DMV." It later said it's experienced "a lack of meaningful engagement" from YouTube TV and Hulu + Live TV, before citing existing carriage deals it has with major providers such as **Comcast Xfinity, DirecTV** and **Verizon Fios** as evidence it can negotiate in good faith. Monumental said the potential dispute further adds to the power large tech companies are gaining in the media space. "These actions by Hulu, owned by **Disney**, and YouTube, owned by **Google**, reflect a broader crisis in the pay-TV industry, where large streaming providers are prioritizing large media conglomerates over the interests of local communities, squeezing out independent, locally-owned networks like Monumental to pad their bottom line at the expense of DMV sports fans," Monumental said. "It is no coincidence that the only distributors that are moving to drop the games fans love are part of a group of streaming providers—like Hulu, YouTube TV, and **Fubo**—that are purposefully pursuing a strategy that shapes the future market for sports rights for their own corporate benefit—not for the benefit of D.C sports fans." Monumental is directing fans to voice their frustrations to YouTube TV and Hulu support. Additionally, it launched KeepMonumentalSports.com, but isn't telling fans to quit their subscriptions just yet. It is, however, telling them to "Monitor your subscriptions closely" for any changes to rates.

TRUMP THREATENS ABC AS KIMMEL'S RETURN CONTINUES

Jimmy Kimmel returned to the airwaves with 6.26 million total viewers on broadcast, but as the show goes on, there may be more to the saga that saw—and in **Nexstar** and **Sinclair**'s case, continues to see—"Jimmy Kimmel Live!" pulled from the airwaves. On the same night **FCC** Chairman *Brendan Carr* was lambasted in a new "South Park" episode, Kimmel addressed a post made by President *Trump* on **Truth Social**. Trump, who claims **ABC** told the White House that Kimmel's program was "cancelled" (sic), said he was "going to test ABC out on this." "Let's see how we do. Last time I went after them, they gave me $16 Million Dollars. This one sounds even more lucrative. A true bunch of losers! Let Jimmy Kimmel rot in his bad Ratings," Trump wrote. Kimmel responded by calling Trump a "bully" and compared him to Biff from "Back to the Future." As of Thursday afternoon, still no word on whether Nexstar and/or Sinclair will put Kimmel back on for folks in their respective ABC markets, but Sen. *Bernie Sanders* (I-VT) is hoping to drive some movement. Sanders wrote a letter to Nexstar chief *Perry Sook* on Thursday, demanding the broadcast giant restore Kimmel's show. Vermont is the home to ABC affiliate WVNY in Burlington. He added that there's an external M&A-related factor at play for Nexstar's decision. "I am afraid that Nexstar's decision to cancel Jimmy Kimmel has more to do with getting the Trump Administration to approve its $6.2 billion merger with **Tegna** than respecting 'the diverse interest of the communities' it serves," Sanders' letter said.

LAWMAKERS QUESTION ESPN DEALS WITH NFL

ESPN made all the noise it could amid the unveiling of its direct-to-consumer product, and that included deals the

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network made with the **NFL** and a reported agreement with **MLB** relating to **MLB.TV**. Now, however, a group of legislators are raising a yellow flag and want to find out more details. Sens. *Elizabeth Warren* (D-MA) and *Bernie Sanders* (I-VT), along with Reps. *Joaquin Castro* (D-TX) and *Pat Ryan* (D-NY), signed a letter sent to **Disney** and ESPN leaders *Bob Iger* and *Jimmy Pitaro*, as well as NFL and **MLB** Commissioners *Roger Goodell* and *Rob Manfred*. The group claims ESPN's acquisition of **NFL Network**, **RedZone** and other media assets could lead to higher prices for viewers, adding that the NFL's proposal to take an equity stake in ESPN "gives the NFL an incentive to grant ESPN anticompetitive preferential treatment over other distribution partners." It also noted that NFL ownership could mean ESPN shows the league preference over the other sports rights it has within its portfolio. "Distributors of NFL games are already concerned that ESPN taking over pay TV distribution of NFL RedZone could present 'a potential threat to their own coverage of games.' Distributors who have paid for distribution rights to football games could reasonably worry they may lose viewership to ESPN's RedZone—NFL RedZone currently reaches fewer than 10 million homes, and if ESPN expands its reach, distributors could perceive the move as undercutting their rights." On the baseball front, while it's yet to be confirmed, ESPN could be set to absorb MLB.TV into its DTC product. The lawmakers said that could give ESPN the ability to "force fans to subscribe to the ESPN media ecosystem in order to access games and charge an additional price to watch local teams' games." The letter asks for how the leagues will ensure ESPN doesn't receive preferential treatment over other leagues (and vice versa), as well as more information on the negotiations and deals themselves.

TIKTOK DEAL APPROVED

President *Trump* signed an executive order to push through a deal that will see **ByteDance** sell a large part of the social platform's U.S. operations to a consortium that includes **Oracle**, **Silver Lake** and the Abu Dhabi-based investment fund **MGX** as main investors, with each getting an equal share. The trio will control about 45% of the new U.S. business, while ByteDance will own 19.9% and its investors will retain 35%. Vice President *JD Vance* said the transaction values the U.S. business at $14 billion.

BENCHMARKING THE INDUSTRY

It's good to get a status report on how the cable industry is doing from an economic and workforce standpoint, hence why it's timely for **NCTA** to release its "Investing in America 2024: The Cable Industry's Economic Impact on People, Infrastructure & Programming" report. Broadband providers helped contribute $366 billion of total (direct and indirect) economic impact while supporting 888,000 total jobs in 2024. Direct economic impact of broadband companies was $212.5 billion (jobs were 241,969), and approximately $25.1 billion was invested in infrastructure and networks. For TV programmers, they generated $100.1 billion in direct output and employed 52,750 people, but when adding indirect impacts, those numbers rise to $196.3 billion and 351,700, respectively. When broken down by the state level, NCTA found California had the most total economic impact with $117.4 billion and 209,000 jobs supported. New York followed with $91.8 billion and 165,000 jobs. There's a substantial gap until third-place Texas arrives with $45.8 billion and 116,000 jobs. Florida came in fourth with $43.7 billion and 116,000 jobs.

NETFLIX WANTS MORE HALLMARK

Netflix is feeling the Christmas spirit after renewing and expanding its output deal with **Hallmark Media**, per *The Hollywood Reporter*. It'll bring fresh content to Netflix users in the U.S. while making Hallmark movies available to international markets. Next month, Hallmark's "The Way Home" will arrive for users in the U.S., before Season 3 of the show drops in February and Season 4 later in 2026. Coming in January includes "An Expected Valentine," "Hats off to Love" and "Live in the Clouds," while "Haul Out the Holly," "All I Need for Christmas" and more will arrive for markets beyond the U.S. from November-January. Hallmark and Netflix first signed a deal to bring 10 movies to the streamer last year. *Jesse Wallace*, Hallmark's SVP/Head of Distribution, told THR that the deal gave boosts to both the linear **Hallmark Channel** and **Hallmark+** SVOD.

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*
(09/15/25-09/21/25)

MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.850	2736
ESPN	0.770	2478
MSNBC	0.257	827
CNN	0.175	565
HGTV	0.154	496
TBS	0.120	387
FOOD	0.117	376
HALL	0.114	366
TLC	0.110	353
TVLAND	0.099	320
INSP	0.098	315
GSN	0.094	304
USA	0.093	301
ESPN2	0.093	300
ID	0.087	279
DISC	0.082	264
LIFE	0.081	261
HIST	0.080	258
HALLMYS	0.076	244
A&E	0.067	215
NWSMX	0.065	211
MLB	0.063	203
AMC	0.063	201
FX	0.061	196
REELZ	0.058	188
WETV	0.058	187
BRAVO	0.057	184
OXY	0.055	177
ADSM	0.052	169
NAN	0.052	167
NFL	0.051	166
COM	0.049	158
TNT	0.049	157
BET	0.048	156
IFC	0.043	138
SNDNCE	0.043	137
PRMNT	0.042	135
LMN	0.039	125
TRAVEL	0.038	123
HLN	0.037	120
MGNLA	0.036	116
NWSNTN	0.035	113
FETV	0.034	111
MTV	0.034	110
NICK	0.034	109
NATGEO	0.033	108
SYFY	0.031	100

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