

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Day 1: Video Gets A Moment in Spotlight at TechExpo25

For a conference known for its focus on broadband and mobile, perhaps the biggest surprise to come out of Monday's opening **TechExpo25** session may have been video mentioned a few times during an on-stage conversation between **Comcast** CEO of Connectivity & Platforms **Dave Watson** and President, Technology & Product **Charlie Herrin**.

"Everyone is reimagining video and competing fiercely for the total relationship," said Watson, pointing to Comcast's StreamSaver, a streaming bundle featuring **Peacock**, **Netflix** and **Apple TV+** for \$15/month, as well as **Charter's** higher-end hybrid linear and DTC packages. "We're not sitting still even around video, but the value proposition is key. That's why we have things like the five-year price locks, no contracts, no fees, unlimited usage. There are things that we've done that just fundamentally needed to change."

Don't misunderstand. There was still plenty of talk about broadband, including how 90% of smartphone data travels over WiFi as well as how the total addressable market for cable in broadband is around \$80 billion and the wireless opportunity is around \$180 billion. But even when talking about the power of the cable network, video got a nod. Herrin noted that **YouTube's** free stream of the Chiefs-Chargers game on Sept. 5 ranked 54th in terms of highest internet usage ever for Comcast. "Even then, the quality delivered on our network and through our WiFi was higher than fixed wireless. You had

three times less latency and more profiles in the kind of Ultra 4K range," he said, adding that those big events transcend sports. When "Lego Fortnite" was released, Comcast saw more utterances for content around it than **ESPN's** "SportsCenter."

Video even came up in some of the day's Tech Policy track sessions, with **FCC** Commissioners **Olivia Trusty** and **Anna Gomez** asked about the amount of regulation that applies to cable services despite the fact that fewer than a third of customers subscribe to cable these days, with platforms like **YouTube** and **TikTok** serving up a big chunk of video content. Any chance of eliminating some of those regs? Trusty pointed to the FCC's ongoing Delete, Delete, Delete proceeding that's looking to eliminate outdated or unnecessary rules, suggesting it or broader reforms could be an avenue. "I think it is worth mentioning that a lot of the legacy cable regulations are a function of the '92 Cable Act or other statutory requirements," Trusty said, adding that House Commerce Chairman **Brett Guthrie** (R-KY) recently suggested revisiting that Act's statutory framework. "I stand ready to work with Congress if it elects to take up those issues."

Gomez said it makes sense to look at rules and determine what is still necessary to ensure consumers benefit. But she quickly added that any proposed changes should be done through a notice and comment period, complaining about the agency rushing to eliminate rules "under some vague standard" without giving any opportunity for notice and comment.

As always, there's a lot of talk about convergence at a show



HELP YOUR BRAND STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD WITH Cablefax Daily PARTNER

WITH US TODAY TO:

- » Send targeted eblasts to an engaged audience comprised of senior leaders
- » Advertise in our Daily newsletter, send to 43,000+ readers
- » Promote your brand
- » ...And MORE!

For more information, contact Harry Singh at 917-832-0064 or hsingh@accessintel.com

like this. But describing what it looks like to consumers has proven challenging. Comcast may have found the perfect spokesperson—Frankenstein. In a [new](#) two-minute film played at TechExpo25, the monster is struggling with a flashcard for the word “boy.” A frustrated Dr. Frankenstein leaves him, muttering that the creature will never learn. That’s when monster Frank spies an Xfinity Gateway and turns it on. First up, he starts watching “Love Island” where one of the contestants talks about the kind of boy she wants to couple up with. It clicks. “Me boy!” declares Frank. From there, he is on a convergence journey that quickly has him gaming, shopping and posting on social media—even when a storm knocks out the power (thanks, StormReady WiFi). With the help of GPS, he bicycles around town, Facetimes his friend Mummy and watches cooking videos to prepare a gourmet dinner for a stunned Dr. Frankenstein. “The smartest WiFi ever made to make your world come alive. Xfinity, imagine that,” the ad closes. It’s worth a watch.

CAVANAGH GETS CO-CEO ROLE AT COMCAST

Brian Roberts has been CEO of **Comcast** for 23 years, taking over from his father Ralph Roberts, who held the title for 46 years. Soon he will have a partner, with *Mike Cavanagh* to become co-CEO in January. Roberts will continue his duties as Chairman of the Board of Directors, while Cavanagh will join the board in a few months’ time. “He is the ideal person to help lead Comcast as we manage the pivot we are making to drive growth across the company. Mike and I work seamlessly together, and I am thrilled to be partnering with him as Co-CEO and with the rest of our talented management team, for years to come,” Roberts said. Cavanagh joined Comcast in 2015 as CFO after spending over two decades in the financial services sector, most notably with **JPMorgan Chase**. He was elevated to Comcast’s president in 2022 and was a driving force behind the decision to spin off the cable networks under **Versant**.

CABLELABS UNVEILS DOCSIS 4.0 WITH OPTIONAL ANNEX

“To heck with 10G, we’re going to talk about 50G,” **CableLabs** CEO *Phil McKinney* said during the kickoff of **SCTE TechExpo25** on Monday. CableLabs revealed that it’s working on DOCSIS 4.0 with Optional Annex that will support up to 25Gbps on 3GHz, with the tech being shown off on the exhibit floor. But that’s just the beginning, with CableLabs working

with partners on the next step to reach 50Gbps on 6GHz. The DOCSIS 4.0 with Optional Annex follows last year’s Expo announcement that **Charter**, **Comcast** and **Broadcom** were working on jointly developing unified DOCSIS chipsets for network nodes, smart amps and cable modems that would chart a path toward the delivery of speeds upwards of 25 Gbps. With DOCSIS 4.0 delivering speeds around 16Gbps today, it’s clear the cable industry still sees plenty of runway in HFC networks. “This will create an experience that’s magical. Just as we’ve talked about awakening capabilities and experiences never before anticipated, we don’t know what the innovators out there will create on top of our networks, but our networks will be ready,” McKinney said. “We’re exploring territory where the networks become so capable, so intelligent, they basically just totally transform what it means as an infrastructure.”

NEW NCTA CHIEF’S CARR SITDOWN

After one week in the role as **NCTA**’s new President/CEO, *Cory Gardner* took the **TechExpo25** stage Monday to interview **FCC** Chairman *Brendan Carr*. Given the headlines Carr has drawn over the *Jimmy Kimmel* saga, we were holding our breath when Gardner apologized for starting the chat off with a “hardball.” Alas, it was a question about undoing former FCC Chairman *Ajit Pai*’s Kansas City Chiefs approach. Most of the conversation centered on Carr’s Build America agenda, including items at tomorrow’s FCC meeting aimed at streamlining the permit process on the wireline and wireless side. The Chairman touched briefly on the possibility of a government shutdown, saying that for better or worse, government agencies have gotten used to the possibility. “We’re crunching the numbers right now to see how much funding does the FCC have, when exactly do we have to shut down if there’s a lapse,” he said. In another panel, it was noted that **NTIA** can continue working if there’s a funding lapse, but there’s uncertainty over the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which has to do a review of all the states’ budget components. That’s important as NTIA has committed to completing its review of state final proposals within 90 days of submission. “If there’s a shutdown, then it impacts the staffing levels there,” said *Meghan Sandfoss*, Kentucky’s Executive Director of Broadband Development.

GOMEZ ‘WOULD LIKE TO STOP TALKING’ ABOUT FIRST AMENDMENT

Freedom of speech and censorship were of course topics of

discussion during a Monday fireside chat with Democratic FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez at SCTE TechExpo25. Gomez, who was quick to speak out against ABC's decision to take Jimmy Kimmel off the air, said that she "really would like to stop talking about the First Amendment" and that she did not choose the First Amendment to be part of what I focus on" but that it was "hoisted upon me by this administration and its campaign of censorship and control." She stressed during her chat with Russ Hanser, NCTA SVP, General Counsel & Chief Legal Officer, that threats to the First Amendment go far beyond the Kimmel debacle. "It's not just the threats against broadcasters. It's not just Jimmy Kimmel. It's not just the FCC investigating broadcasters because they don't like the content of their broadcast and their news editorial decisions. It is going after universities because of their curricula. It is clearing our national museums of 'corrosive ideology,'" also referencing the indictment of former FBI Director James Comey as another violation of the First Amendment. "The thing I want everybody to keep in mind is it's the process, not the outcome," Gomez concluded. "This administration knows that it does not have the legal authority, the constitutional authority or the ability to take action, but if they make people suffer for what they say or who they platform, it will lead to self-censorship. There will come a point where this administration no longer needs to issue threats. Instead, we will have that chilling effect that we so worry about. It's very important that everyone pushes back."

WHAT NOW FOR SINCLAIR, NEXSTAR POST-KIMMEL?

"Jimmy Kimmel Live!" returned to Sinclair and Nexstar stations after the two broadcast groups announced [their decisions](#) to end their preemptions. While it puts a bow on a saga that placed the FCC and the First Amendment in the spotlight, there are some regulatory ramifications that New Street Research's Blair Levin took away. His reading is that Nexstar and Sinclair didn't gain much from preempting the show, and the decision to end the hiatus was likely economic instead of political. One scenario could've been that the network/affiliate agreements let ABC charge affiliates if they decide to preempt programming. Or, ABC could've threatened to take away the 2027 Super Bowl from the two companies. Although there's no sure way of knowing, the decision to restore Kimmel "implicitly acknowledged that when it comes to Network/Affiliate relations, DIS/ABC have 'the cards' and they don't," Levin's note said. That leverage could shift depending on how the broadcast ownership rules are adjusted, but those are still "at least a year away" and "the trends that shift power to the networks, who have multiple distribution options for their content, will also grow in the year to come." NSR thinks Trump and FCC Chairman Brendan Carr are aware they don't have the authority to revoke licenses, but as seen with the

Paramount-Skydance merger review, Carr will scrutinize deals and attach conditions that may relate to content.

TECHEXPO 25 NOTEBOOK

Charter conducted a successful joint demonstration with Broadcom that displayed next-generation WiFi technology reaching peak throughput of nearly 10 Gbps to a single WiFi device. How did it do it? By combining the entire 6 GHz band with 123 MHz of spectrum in the 7.125-7.25 GHz band. That merging can enable four 320 MHz channels (or two 640 MHz channels) and improve speed, capacity and reliability of Spectrum's network. Spectrum said the utilization of the technology will enable speeds of nearly 20 Gbps. – Comcast pulled the curtain back on some network enhancements ahead of SCTE TechExpo25. With data usage rising and showing no signs of stopping, the operator is looking at how it can get ahead of the game with quantum technology, despite it still being a developing asset. Comcast partnered with D-Wave Quantum and Classiq to launch what it believes to be the industry's first quantum-powered network management trials. It's made to address traffic management across Comcast's infrastructure by using AI to identify issues and resolve them before they become known to the user.

BASEBALL RATINGS

As MLB prepares to slice up the media rights left behind by ESPN, the network enjoyed improvements in viewership in what was its final season as the home of "Sunday Night Baseball." ESPN's 2025 MLB audience came in at 1.8 million average viewers across 30 games, up 21% from last year's mark. The P18-49 demographic had viewership improve by 14% YOY. While rumors have circulated, MLB has yet to name who'll succeed ESPN in Sunday Night Baseball, the Home Run Derby and its Wild Card round games. – FanDuel Sports Network's MLB coverage ended the 2025 regular season averaging a total audience delivery of 1.5 million daily viewers across linear, over-the-air and streaming platforms. That's up 18% from the 2025 season, and since Opening Day, over 900,000 unique users streamed on the FDSN app, a 70% improvement YOY. The 2.8 billion minutes watched made it the most-streamed MLB season in FDSN history. On the linear side, seven of nine FDSN teams saw audience growth, with household viewership climbing 16% YOY.

PEOPLE

A familiar investor is, in his words, "leaving the advisory world and entering the arena." Jonathan Chaplin is departing New Street Research to become EVP, Strategy and Investments for Comcast's Connectivity and Platforms unit. Chaplin had been NSR's Managing Partner since 2012. Coming to NSR to take over the U.S. telecom sector will be David Barden, who was most recently Head of U.S. and Canada Communications Research at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.