

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Get a Glimpse: A Snapshot of an Industry in AI Transition

Cable, media and the world as we know it have long passed the phase of unfamiliar curiosity with AI. That doesn't mean there aren't endless questions about just how far the technology may go and the breadth of its implementation in day-to-day lives, but in the early days, AI's emergence has left its mark on how companies are positioning themselves amid an era of constant change and competition.

To unpack how AI is influencing the industry, **CFX** conducted a "State of AI Adoption in Cable and Media Survey" in 1Q26, featuring insights from 90 leaders and professionals who work in various segments. The full report, as well as an article highlighting AI's various impacts, will be available in the upcoming **CFX 100** magazine that drops April 23. However, there were a few observations that caught our attention and warranted a sneak preview.

### Efficiency a Key Motivator in AI Investments

There's a reason (or two, or three) why AI has commanded the attention it's received. According to 32% of respondents, the primary factor in today's AI investments boils down to improving operational performance. Twenty-one percent said cost reduction was the main catalyst, though just 9% label AI as an existing revenue stream. Approximately 19% of industry leaders are diving into AI for customer experience reasons, while 11% view it as a competitive necessity.

Investments toward efficiency aren't going away anytime

soon, with 63% of respondents pointing to it as their priority in 2026. One area folks (and regulators) have been monitoring is how AI is used to produce content, and 11% of execs went with content creation as their chief focus—although some are wary about the public's level of trust in AI and concerns about it replacing jobs.

### What Challenges Exist Today?

AI might be helping in a myriad of ways. Yet, challenges have impeded the rate at which organizations can adopt and scale it across their operations. As one manager for a broadband/connectivity provider put it, AI "is a moving target," while a director at another provider cited issues with prioritizing the multitude of opportunities for AI deployment.

Talent and skills (24%), legacy systems (21%) and leadership alignment (16%) were picked as the most pressing internal challenges for AI growth within companies. Budget constraints (13%) and data quality/availability (12%) were also listed as roadblocks, while 6% flagged cultural resistance.

Even if a sizeable portion of the public remains hesitant about AI, companies and their employees will continue to improve their grasp of the technology. Over 3/4 (76%) of industry leaders think educational sessions are needed to help raise AI comprehension. Case studies were another method noted by 43% of respondents, with 41% citing one-on-one conversations as a healthy way to improve education.

### Bright Future Ahead?

As AI continues to develop, so has the optimism surround-

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ing it. Well over half of the industry reported becoming more hopeful about AI, far above those who've grown more doubtful.

Around 27% of leaders said they've become "significantly more" optimistic over the past 12 months. However, 45% said they "somewhat" grew more encouraged, and 14% stayed "largely the same." Meanwhile, 14% became "somewhat" or "significantly" more skeptical of AI.

More to come later this month—stay tuned for the 2026 CFX 100.

## CFX DOWNLOAD ON THE VERTICAL VIDEO REVOLUTION

In the past year, several programmers have launched new vertical video features on their DTC streaming apps, all offering sports highlights and altcasts. **ESPN**, **Fox One** and **Peacock** all now serve users curated playlists of vertical sports content. ESPN is even leveraging AI to generate a bite-sized version of "SportsCenter" personalized to each user. Distributors are paying attention to this trend too, including **Fubo**, which is set to launch AI-generated vertical video on its mobile app soon. **CFX Download** dives into all the latest developments. We even took a few of these vertical features for a spin and discussed our experiences so far! You can tune into the new episode now on [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

## NEXSTAR-TEGNA TRO EXTENDED

**Nexstar** and **Tegna's** merger remains on hold, with a district court judge extending a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the merger until April 17 at 6pm PT. In Friday's order, the court said there was good cause to extend the TRO to "maintain the status quo and prevent irreparable harm" while it prepares a ruling on whether to issue a preliminary injunction. Judge **Troy Nunley** also wrote that there's no evidence in the record to contradict its March 27 order granting the TRO. After Tuesday's hearing, court prognosticators said it seemed likely a preliminary injunction would be issued, and **New Street Research** thinks the TRO extension reinforces that view. "If the judge had decided to deny the preliminary injunction, he'd likely just dissolve the TRO now and tell the parties that he will publish an opinion in the near term," read a research note. The judge did make some modifications to the TRO that he said should offer "sufficient clarity to alleviate concerns" in complying with it for another week. These include allowing Nexstar to take reasonable actions to maintain Tegna's day-to-day operations, including authorizing routine financial transactions, such as wire transfers for ordinary course payments,

and establishing a functional governance structure for Tegna, including appointing or reappointing officers to the extent necessary. Nexstar also can appoint or reappoint Tegna officers as necessary for Tegna to exercise independent decision-making authority for retransmission consent matters. It can't appoint current Nexstar employees, or former employees employed within the prior six months, as Tegna officers and no Tegna officer shall be an officer of Nexstar.

## EQUITY GROUP WANTS MORE CHARTER-COX COMMITMENTS

The **Digital Equity Los Angeles Coalition (DELAC)** opposes the \$34.5 billion merger between **Charter** and **Cox Communications** as currently structured. The group, a coalition of community organizations, nonprofits, advocacy groups and public institutions working to ensure that all L.A. County residents have affordable access to high-quality broadband, was granted party status this week in the **California Public Utilities Commission's** review of the proposed Charter-Cox merger. DELAC claims that Californians who support the merger do so because they have been told that Charter offers a \$25 low-income plan that will be extended to Cox customers, but that there is no documented commitment, transition plan or enforceable condition that Charter has put forward in this proceeding. Charter told *CFX* the supplemental comments filed by the coalition are "deeply flawed" and rely on "unsubstantiated and inaccurate allegations, selective and outdated analyses and anecdotal claims without context that do not reflect Charter's actual practices or the robust record developed in this proceeding." A spokesperson reiterated that the operator continues to work with California regulators to complete the transaction review, adding that more than 100,000 pages of data and detailed information have been provided in response to multiple rounds of requests. DELAC asked the CA PUC to require Charter to offer at least one broadband plan with a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps, priced at no more than \$20 per month, to income-qualified households. DELAC pointed to the \$20/month 300 Mbps wireline plans that **Verizon** committed to for 10 years as a condition of its **Frontier** acquisition. The group also shared that it heard from community members across Eaton and Palisades that Charter sent billing notices, equipment return demands and threats of penalties after the area was hit by wildfires in January 2025. It noted that similar stories involve other service providers, but "what makes Charter's conduct particularly relevant to this proceeding is that it is consistent with how the company operates when it faces no accountability, and this merger would give it less of it." DELAC

wants the CA PUC to require Charter to develop and publicly file a disaster-resilience infrastructure plan and to coordinate with emergency management agencies and community orgs in advance of construction in fire-prone areas. Other requests include prioritizing service restoration for low-income and underserved communities.

**GAM GOING WITH CTS**

**NAB Show 2026** is a little over a week away, but **Comcast Technology Solutions** got the ball rolling with a multiyear partnership with **Great American Media**. GAM will receive CTS’ managed channel origination, playout and transmission services via the Comcast MediaOrigination tool, which offers the necessary features to acquire, prepare, create, package and deliver linear channels and video content across devices. The agreement encompasses GAM’s linear portfolio, including **Great American Family** and **Great American Faith and Living**.

**PEOPLE**


Former **Showtime/MTV Entertainment Studios** EVP, Communications **Liza Burnett Fefferman** is joining the production company **Anonymous Content** as Chief Communications and Marketing Officer. It’s a newly created role that’ll have the 2025 **FAXIES honoree** build and oversee communications and marketing across the company. – **TDS** made a few appointments to its senior leadership team. **Mark Nachman** was upped to SVP, Sales while **Henry Adamson** will move to VP, Customer Service. **Meghan Corcoran** will expand her role as VP, Marketing to include product development. **Ilan Pragaspathy** was named VP, Growth and Transformation. – **Patricia Martin** was named CEO of **Dobson Fiber**, effective April 13. She’ll lead the provider’s continued expansion across Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas. Martin most recently was CEO of **Point Broadband**, which signed an agreement to combine with **Clearwave Fiber** in January. Her more than 25 years of operations experience includes time at **Cox Communications**.

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In February, Canadian operator Cogeco launched Welo, a digital-first internet provider that now operates in two of the same Ohio markets as its Breezeline brand. Why launch a second ISP in the state and who is Welo for? Here are the answers:



Welo: Why Cogeco Launched a Second ISP in Breezeline Markets | Distribution ...


**Quotable**

*“Disney already plays an outsized role in the distribution of sports content via broadcast, MVPDs, vMVPDs, and direct-to-consumer streaming options. The NFL, in turn, controls the rights to the most valuable portfolio of live sports entertainment in the country. By consolidating the production, operation and distribution of the NFL Network under ESPN, while simultaneously granting the NFL a 10% stake in ESPN itself, the deal raises concerns of conflicts of interest and potentially disadvantages competing networks, streaming competitors and distributors.”*

**- Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rep. Patrick Ryan (D-NY) in a letter to the FCC**

**Mike O’Rielly** @MPORielly · Apr 9

My monthly @Cablefax column hit last night and it focuses on USF administration problems, arguing that Policymakers should be clear: no USF changes will happen without fixing its administration (and distribution).



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**Up Ahead**

- APRIL 16: Media Institue Lunch** with NCTA CEO **Cory Gardner, D.C.**
- APRIL 16: USTelecom Connectivity Forum, Virtual**
- APRIL 18-22: NAB Show, Las Vegas**
- APRIL 23: 29th Annual Cable Hall of Fame, NYC**
- APRIL 27-29: CableLabs Tech Summit, Westminster, Colorado**
- MAY 5: T. Howard Annual Awards Dinner, NYC**
- MAY 12: WICT Network Signature Luncheon, NYC**