

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

DID YOU KNOW?

Comcast Business [said](#) its Security EdgePreferred solution blocked threats against small businesses at an average of 230+ per second in May. Those threats range from malware, phishing attempts, botnet communications to malicious traffic. Both Comcast Business and Cisco note that small businesses are taking heat from cyber threats, with the latter [reporting](#) 43% of cyberattacks being aimed at small businesses—and 60% of victims close their doors within six months of an attack.

FOX'S TRANSFORMATIONAL ROKU DEAL

Fox spent decades knocking on cable's door asking for carriage; now it's about to own the doorbell. The company largely stayed out of the subscription VOD land grab until last summer's debut of **Fox One**. And even then, it stressed that the play was more about building a customer experience that makes sense for the cord-cutters and cord-nevers. Monday's news that Fox will pay roughly \$22 billion for **Roku** changes the storyline, positioning it as a streaming/FAST leader with a platform that recently surpassed 100 million households worldwide.

In the past, when Fox negotiated with **Comcast** or **YouTube**, it was primarily as a supplier of content. Owning Roku also makes it a distributor of content. Fox CEO *Lachlan Murdoch* downplayed the idea that the shift creates conflict. "I think we're partners now in many ways with YouTube and **YouTube TV** and Comcast. That doesn't change. Those businesses themselves in many cases are both distributors and content providers," he said. "This is the business and the ecosystem that we exist in today, and we exist in going forward, and we look forward to continued healthy partnerships with all of our distribution partners."

For cable operators and other MVPDs worried about sports migration, Murdoch offered a notable reassurance, saying tier-one sports rights will continue to rest primarily within broadcast and cable (and Fox One, from a streaming perspective). That doesn't mean Roku can't help. "The discovery of those sports rights and the viewer-

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ship of those sports rights can really be assisted with distribution across Roku and discovery through the Roku home screen,” he added.

Roku Founder/CEO *Anthony Wood* offered the example of Sports Zone, where Roku helps consumers find live sports events across the fragmented ecosystem. “More deeply integrating, for example, Fox Sports in the sports zone is not going to impact other sports properties, but it will provide more visibility to sports content, and it’ll be useful to our viewers,” said Wood, who is to have an ongoing role in the combined company and will join the Fox board. He gave the example of **Roku Channel**, which sees 25% of its viewing from direct clicks on the home screen, with the rest from other ingress points, such as search, what to watch, etc. There’s “almost an infinite supply” of ways to promote content, he said.

Fox has suggested it plans to keep the **Tubi** platform and Roku Channel separate, but there are obvious advantages to combining the two. **Pivotal Research** estimates that combining the two would create an ad-supported juggernaut with roughly 65+% market share of FAST viewers and 10.2% of total TV engagement, putting it just behind **Disney’s** 10.5% and YouTube 13.2%, per **Nielsen**. “As traditional pay TV dies and parts of the economy weaken, FAST channels usage has taken off, positioning the combined entity perfectly to capture this shift,” said a Pivotal research note.

Fox management also pledged that Roku will remain an open, neutral platform for third parties like **Netflix** and Disney that reside on the platform. Murdoch said Fox has experience balancing its own content with the distribution of others, pointing to its previous ownership of **Sky** in the U.K. and pan-Asian service **Star TV**.

Plus, the idea of favoring its own content isn’t exactly a new problem. “We have historically had owned-and-operated services, as well as partner services that we promote on our platform and the home screen,” said Roku’s Wood. “We know how to promote our own services, as well as promote our partner services, and we intend to continue doing that.”

While many dubbed the deal a surprise, LightShed Research seemed to suspect something was brewing, releasing a note Friday handicapping who could buy Roku. Fox made its list of 10 potential buyers. “Given how tied Fox is to the legacy TV ecosystem, a Roku acquisition would enable Fox to meaningfully reposition its narrative with investors toward a streaming future that began with its Tubi acquisition,” the firm declared, reminding folks that Fox sold its 6 million shares of Roku at \$58/share back in 2020 to help finance the acquisition of Tubi.

LightShed noted that the deal means Fox can leverage two sets of relationships. “When it is negotiating with an MVPD/vMVPD for carriage of the FOX Network, **Fox News** and **FS1/FS2**, Fox now has the added leverage of MVPD/vMVPD app distribution across the Roku platform, whether that is YouTube TV, **Peacock**, Xfinity, **DirecTV Stream**, Spectrum, etc,” the firm said.

The deal, which was unanimously approved by both boards, is expected to close in the first half of 2027 and achieve approximately \$400 million of run-rate cost synergies with additional revenue upside. Fox will pay \$96 in cash and

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0.9693 shares of FOX Class A common stock for each Roku Class A and Class B share outstanding immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. Upon closing, existing Fox shareholders are expected to own approximately 73% of the combined company and Roku shareholders approximately 27%.

The transaction is subject to regulatory approval, with the two agreeing to a mutual termination fee of \$866 million if either walks away. Fox is on the hook for a \$1.237 billion regulatory termination fee if the deal doesn't get the necessary government approval. Pivotal Research thinks Fox is in a pretty good place, and doesn't see competing bids coming from **Amazon**, **Google** or Netflix because they'd likely face antitrust issues.

DIRECTV HAS CONCERNS OVER FCC'S LEO SPECTRUM RULES

Spectrum concerns are an issue everywhere, including LEO satellite broadband operators and satellite TV service providers. At its April meeting, the **FCC** voted to update its satellite spectrum sharing rules to boost space-based broadband. Now **DirecTV** has filed a petition for reconsideration or clarification of the rules. "DirecTV has invested billions of dollars in infrastructure to deliver DBS services to these subscribers and has a strong interest in ensuring that the services that it provides to customers throughout the United States continue to operate free from harmful interference," the provider said. It gets a bit technical, and includes a request for clearer technical criteria for the minimum arc avoidance angle, but the gist is that DirecTV wants assurances that NGSOs using the spectrum won't interfere with the video service it provides through satellite.

WSJ: DOJ STAFFERS SURPRISED BY PSKY-WBD NEWS

If Friday's news of the **DOJ** blessing for **Paramount-Warner Bros. Discovery** caught you by surprise, you weren't alone. In an exclusive, the *WSJ* [reports](#) that senior DOJ leadership signed off before career staffers who were leaning toward a legal challenge to the deal could object. The staffers were concerned particularly about whether merging two movie studios would violate antitrust law, the *WSJ* reported. On Friday, the DOJ issued a lengthy [statement](#) outlining why it doesn't believe the deal is likely to hurt consumers. There is still the possibility that state attorneys general may try to stop the combo.

WORLD CUP OFF TO A HOT START

The **2026 World Cup** is underway throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and it's no surprise that fans are tuning in en masse. **Fox Sports** said 7.19 million viewers watched Mexico's 2-0 tournament-opening win over South Africa across **Fox**, **Fox One** and **Tubi**. That's the largest audience for a non-U.S. men's World Cup group stage telecast in English-language TV history, peaking with 9.41 million viewers from 4:45-5pm. Top markets include San Diego, Austin, Kansas City, D.C. and West Palm Beach. Spanish-language coverage of the match reeled in a total audience delivery of 12.1 million on **Telemundo**, **Peacock**, and Telemundo digital platforms, making it the most-watched World Cup opening game in history, regardless of language. The Thursday nightcap that saw South Korea prevail 2-1 vs Czechia had 3.07 million viewers on **Fox Sports 1**. That set the stage for the U.S.' debut bout against Paraguay on Friday, and after the 4-1 win, there's some momentum behind the American team and the networks showcasing it. Fox, Fox One and Tubi combined for 15.99 million viewers, peaking at 18.86 million from 10:45-11pm and posting a 106% improvement from the U.S.' first group stage game at the 2022 World Cup (7.76 million), per preliminary Nielsen FAST nationals. Not only is that the most-watched U.S. men's World Cup telecast in English-language TV history, but it also became the most-streamed English-language U.S. men's team match on record. However, it didn't come on Fox One—Tubi checked in with an average minute audience of 1.13 million. It did set the Spanish-language TV record as well, with Telemundo and Peacock garnering 8.9 million viewers. The U.S.' next match is Friday at 3pm vs Australia.

CARRIAGE

Swerve Women's Sports scored distribution deals with **Fubo**, **Plex**, **Amazon Fire TV** and **Anoki AI**. The **Swerve TV**-owned 24/7 FAST channel features more than 10 hours of live sports every month, ranging from tennis to timbersports. Swerve Women's Sports has existing carriage on **Pluto TV**, **The Roku Channel**, **Free Live Sports** and **Zeam**.

INCOMPAS: BROADBAND THE BACKBONE FOR RAIL INNOVATION

INCOMPAS CEO *Chip Pickering* penned a [recent blog](#) urging Congress to move the Broadband and Telecommunications RAIL Act forward, saying the legislation would ensure that connectivity infrastructure is deployed quickly and responsibly. Pickering zeroed in on the ways technology has helped the transportation and freight industries, a subject the Association of American Railroads President/CEO *Ian Jefferies* touched on during a **Senate Commerce** hearing earlier this month. Jefferies discussed improvements in safety, planning and reliability, but in Pickering's view, "None of this works without robust broadband connectivity." The modern rail system is no longer just steel, signals, and locomotives. It is also data, connectivity, automation and intelligence. Broadband infrastructure is now part of the operating foundation of the rail network," Pickering wrote. Because of that, Pickering thinks the Broadband and Telecommunications RAIL Act would remove barriers with various build-outs. He touted the bill creating clear timelines, compensation standards and resolution mechanisms that'll mitigate delays and lower costs. "If we want railroads, energy systems, supply chains, and other critical sectors to harness AI and advanced technologies, then we must ensure the broadband networks supporting them can be deployed without needless barriers," Pickering wrote.

TRUSTY'S T-MOBILE TRIP

FCC Commissioner *Olivia Trusty* found herself in Bellevue, Washington, last week to pay a visit to **T-Mobile's** HQ. In a [LinkedIn post](#), T-Mobile CTO/President, Technology *John Saw* said leaders spoke with Trusty about the state of wireless technology and the company's role in its development following a tour of the uncarrier's Innovation and Cyber Defense Center. The group also talked about spectrum policy—timely, given the ongoing AWS-3 auction—in addition to the U.S. leadership position in AI, cybersecurity, global technology standards and 6G. Trusty has been adding up the frequent flier miles lately. She's had recent meetings with **Amazon Leo, Prime Video, Fox Sports** and other film, TV and music studios.

DOING GOOD

Charter's Spectrum Digital Education initiative awarded \$1.1 million in grants to 56 nonprofits that focus on expanding access to technology and improving digital skills for families and individuals in need. This year's recipients include NYC's Fund for Public Housing, which will expand an intergenerational tech program designed for education, career readiness and community engagement, in addition to L.A.'s Urban League, Dallas' CARDBOARD Project and others. This year's grants means Spectrum Digital Education has given more than \$12 million to 233 organizations since 2017, helping distribute over 20,000 laptops and devices and sponsor 50,000 digital education classes as well.

AI CONCERNS IN CONTENT

A group of media and technology companies are joining hands to help protect creators, consumers and companies as AI continues to develop. **The Alliance for Responsible Innovation in the Arts & Media (ARIAM)** will collaborate across the content and tech industries to establish legal and policy frameworks "that are underpinned by fairness and accountability principles." Headquartered in L.A., former **Netflix** exec and **Birdella Group** co-Founder *Victoria Furniss* will lead the organization. Founding members include **Adobe, BBC, The New York Times** and **Disney**. -- **QVC** hosts intend to unionize with **SAG-AFTRA**, with the union filing an election petition with the NLRB today to begin the formal certification process. The primary motivators for QVC hosts were concerns about artificial intelligence, particularly the use of their image, voice and likeness without informed consent or fair compensation.

PROGRAMMING

ESPN greenlit a new original series that looks into the inner workings of a **WNBA** franchise being born. The four-episode show "Setting the Tempo" spotlights the all-women leadership team that founded Canada's first WNBA team, the Toronto Tempo. Additional details will be announced at a later date. -- **Disney+** greenlit "Journey" (working title), a musical animated series that follows Journey on a call to save her city and discover the magic within herself. It's from *Matt Munn* ("Ice Age: Collision Course," "Spies in Disguise"), who will serve as executive producer alongside *Steve Loter* ("Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur," "Kim Possible").