

DID YOU KNOW?

Starlink has reported a total of over 10,200 on-orbit broadband and mobile satellites and has grown its global subscriber base from 6 million to 12 million between June 30, 2025 and June 30, 2026, according to the FCC's Section 706 [report](#).

COMCAST SIMPLIFIES XFINITY SECURITY

While **Comcast** already offers home monitoring services, it's simplifying things with the new Xfinity Shield, which combines the operator's cybersecurity suite with home security capabilities in an all-in-one platform managed through the Xfinity app. Available to Xfinity Internet customers at no additional cost, the offering is being positioned as a way to consolidate digital, home and family protection without juggling separate (and often expensive) security solutions.

"This isn't a new space for Comcast. We've been in home security for more than a decade with Xfinity Home, giving us deep experience in how customers think about protecting their homes and families," *Kohposh Kuda*, SVP of Xfinity Consumer Product Marketing, told **CFX**. "What has changed is the connected home and the breadth of protection customers need. Consumers increasingly want a simpler, more integrated approach." With Xfinity Shield, Comcast is "giving consumers the easy button with greater peace of mind."

At the center of Xfinity Shield is an opt-in feature that turns Advanced Xfinity Gateway routers and connected devices into motion detectors in the home. Once activated, WiFi Motion sends users notifications on the Xfinity app whenever unexpected activity is detected. While the operator's traditional Home Security service packs cameras and always-on professional monitoring, WiFi Motion is a good option for customers who want a simplified, camera-free security experience bundled with their internet package.



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“Because WiFi is a wave, it’s like throwing a rock in a pool and it ripples,” Comcast Global Chief Product Officer *Fraser Stirling* told CFX in April regarding how WiFi motion sensing works. “If there’s motion in your home between your gateway or an extender and your **Apple TV** or **Google Nest**, we can send you a notification saying motion was detected. Just with our WiFi, we can turn your whole home into a security system.”

WiFi Shield, as the base tier of Xfinity Shield is called, also includes cybersecurity tools that assess threats at the network level to protect connected devices and family settings for managing parental controls and screen time. It offers three protection modes—Home Watch, Away Watch and Dark Watch—so that you can tailor the service to where you are, what you’re doing and the time of day. For \$15/month more, customers can get Shield Select, which adds an AI-powered indoor camera, door/window sensor, cloud video storage and 24/7 urgent response service.

During a recent earnings call, Comcast CFO *Jason Armstrong* said that a top priority for the operator’s connectivity business is to “create an experience holistically across network, product and customer service” to insulate it from increased competition from fixed wireless, fiber and satellite. The security platform is a fresh example of Comcast leveraging its network to differentiate itself from competitors and add value for customers.

Kuda said Comcast is “well positioned” to deliver this more integrated approach to security “because we can leverage assets already operating at scale, including our network, gateways and cybersecurity capabilities, to build protection directly into the broadband experience.”

The operator plans to add additional capabilities to Xfinity Shield in 2027.

ESPN FOUNDER BILL RASMUSSEN PASSES AWAY AT 93

Bill Rasmussen, whose idea of a 24-hour cable sports network blossomed into the behemoth that is **ESPN**, passed away at his home in Florida on Tuesday from the effects of Parkinson’s Disease. He was 93. Rasmussen came up with the idea of an all-sports channel alongside his son, Scott, in 1978, shortly after the older Rasmussen was let go as the communications director of the former hockey franchise New England Whalers. Not much later in September 1979, ESPN went live in 1.4 million homes with the inaugural edition of “SportsCenter,” and away it went to shape the sports—and broader media—industry for the next four decades and beyond. “Bill beat long odds in launching a 24-hour-a-day, sports only cable network in the infancy of that medium. Many experts deemed it a silly concept; who would watch sports 24 hours a day? Who even has cable? Where’s Bristol, CT?” [wrote Chris LaPlaca](#), who spent 43 years at ESPN, most recently as head of corporate communications. “His success remains a testament to his entrepreneurial spirit, his indefatigable energy, his relentless optimism.” Labeled by longtime network host *Chris Berman* as “our George Washington,” Rasmussen served as ESPN’s first President/CEO until 1980. His departure led to a tense relationship with ESPN until 1999, when then-chief George Bodenheimer made amends ahead of the network’s 20th anniversary. Recently, Rasmussen’s efforts were chronicled in a documentary “[Sports Heaven: The Birth of ESPN](#),” which was released as a book in late July as well. “Quite simply, none of us would be here today if it wasn’t for

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EDITORIAL

Editor

Noah Ziegler, 301.354.1704,
nziegler@accessintel.com

Senior Editor

John Saavedra, 908.477.1758
jsaavedra@accessintel.com

Editorial Director

Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760,
amaclean@accessintel.com

Editorial Director, Ad Tech & Convergent Media

Sarah Sluis, 212.621.4706,
ssluis@accessintel.com

ADVERTISING/BUSINESS

Chief Revenue Officer

Dave Colford,
dcolford@accessintel.com

VP Ad Tech/Convergent Media

Gordon Plutsky,
gplutsky@accessintel.com

Advertising and Sponsorship

Vernesa Merdanovic,
vmerdanovic@accessintel.com

MARKETING

Senior Marketing Director

Jessica Dombrowski,
jdombrowski@accessintel.com

PRODUCTION/CLIENT SERVICES

Sr Production Manager:

Joann Fato,
jfato@accessintel.com

Group Subs: Vernesa Merdanovic,
vmerdanovic@accessintel.com

Subscription Questions:

Client Services: 301.354.2101,
clientservices@accessintel.com |
Annual subscription price:
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Access Intelligence, LLC,

9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor,
Rockville, MD 20850

Bill's passion and all the hard work and entrepreneurial spirit he put into building ESPN in the late 1970s—key aspects of our company culture that still carry on to this day,” current ESPN Chairman *Jimmy Pitaro* said, adding that Rasmussen's impact extended to a personal level, too. “I will always cherish the memory of catching the ceremonial first pitch that he threw at Fenway Park in Boston in celebration of our 40th anniversary. His legacy will always be a part of ESPN.” Rasmussen's legacy goes beyond Bristol, Connecticut. He was inducted into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame last year after already being named to DePauw University's Media Wall of Fame in 2012, Rutgers University's Wall of Fame in 2002 and the Connecticut Sports Museum and Hall of Fame in 1997. ESPN noted that in lieu of flowers, [donations](#) can be made to the American Parkinson Disease Association.

DISNEY, ABC FILE FIRST AMENDMENT LAWSUIT AGAINST FCC

The FCC's quarrel with **Disney** escalated yet again Tuesday after the House of Mouse filed a lawsuit seeking to halt the early license renewal review of its eight **ABC** stations. Disney and ABC claim that the FCC is engaged in a “retaliatory campaign” through its early renewal order and a separate inquiry into whether “The View” qualifies as a bona fide news program and is exempt from equal time guidelines. They think the FCC has encroached on First Amendment rights by targeting critics of President Trump, adding that ABC isn't the only network to receive Trump's ire because of editorial decisions made on programming. The FCC views the lawsuit a little differently. “Disney is obviously very concerned about the FCC's proceeding, as evidenced by their ongoing campaign of disinformation as well as their decision to ask a court to stop the FCC from further pursuing matters. The FCC will continue to follow the facts and law wherever they lead,” the agency said in a statement. Although the early renewal order came after Trump criticized late-night host Jimmy Kimmel for his comments following the White House Correspondents' Dinner shooting, FCC Chairman *Brendan Carr* [was adamant](#) that the notice was tied to the ongoing investigation into Disney's DEI policies. Lone Democratic Commissioner *Anna Gomez*, on the other hand, has long voiced her displeasure with the FCC's actions. She said in a statement she was happy to see a company push back against “government intimidation” and hopes other broadcasters will follow suit. “I am hopeful that this will mark the beginning of the end of this administration's disregard for the Constitution and the law, and that the coming months will bring the costly legal defeat this agency has been asking for since it started down this path,” Gomez said.

BREEZELINE LAUNCHES DIRECTV BUNDLE

Breezeline partnered with **DirectTV** to launch a new streaming bundle for its internet customers, starting at \$89.99/month, with a two-year price lock and no annual contracts. Customers who bundle DirecTV with internet service will receive a \$5/month credit on their internet bill. The **Cogeco**-owned ISP said the vMVPD's flexible live sports and entertainment packages will expand viewing choices for streaming-focused customers. Interestingly, Breezeline already offers four Stream TV plans powered by TiVo starting at \$54.99/month, serving up cable channels and local nets. The ISP's website says Steam TV is for “everyday streaming needs,” while its DirecTV bundle offers a “heightened sports experience.” **CFX** reached out to Breezeline to ask whether it was considering outsourcing video customers to DirecTV in the future. “Stream TV remains an integral part of our product portfolio,” a spokesperson said. “While we continually evaluate industry partnerships to enhance our services for our customers, there are no plans to discontinue our existing video offerings.”

PEACOCK RAISES PRICES

It was nearly a month ago when **Comcast NBCUniversal** [revealed](#) that **Peacock** recorded its first profitable quarter. But on Tuesday, the streamer announced price increases for its trio of subscription plans, saying that it allows Peacock “to continue to create the best experience for its viewers, remain competitive in the marketplace and deliver unique content across all genres.” The ad-supported Peacock Select adjusted its monthly cost from \$7.99 to \$8.99 and its annual rate from \$79.99 to \$89.99. Peacock Premium, which still has ads but also carries live sporting events and Peacock originals, will now be offered at \$12.99/month and \$129.99/year, up from \$10.99 and \$109.99, respectively. The ad-free Peacock Premium Plus moved from \$16.99/month to \$19.99 and \$169.99/year to \$199.99. Changes go into effect immediately for new subscribers. Existing users will see them on their next billing date on or after Sept. 17.

BLAIR LEVIN LEAVIN' NEW STREET

Washington's TMT policy soothsayer *Blair Levin* broke the news Tuesday that he won't be returning to **New Street Research** after taking the summer off from advising institutional investors. "What's next for me? I'm not sure. I don't think of it as retirement, but rather a moment for 'rewirement,'" he wrote on LinkedIn, describing how he's in the process of figuring out how and where to continue to provide analysis. Levin has been a policy analyst at New Street since 2016, with his detailed reports explaining the intricacies of the **FCC**, **DOJ**, Congress and the courts—and how they are likely to act. He spent several years himself at the FCC, including as the executive director of the National Broadband Plan (2009-2010) and as Chief of Staff to then-Chairman *Reed Hundt* (1993-1997). His last research note for New Street, a July 1 update on merger activity, noted that he'd produced more than 65 notes, an average of 10 a month, and was looking forward to a break enjoying summer activities with friends and family in the Adirondacks. Telecom's revolving door usually spins you right back in—for now, Levin's just seeing how it feels to stand outside it.

REPORT: KEEP, BUT MODIFY, USF

The Future of Universal Service Reform Task Force, a cross-sector initiative chaired by former **FCC** Commissioners *Mignon Clyburn* and *Rachelle Chong*, released a new [policy framework](#) urging that the \$8+ program be preserved but modernized. The task force, which was convened by Keep Our Communities Connected and the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition, issued more of a statement of principles rather than concrete recommendations. The report declares that contribution reform would take an act of Congress vs FCC action and described widespread support for not switching funding to annual appropriations. It used the expiration of the \$14.2 billion Affordable Connectivity Program as an example of the problems with such an approach, noting millions of families were stranded when Congress failed to appropriate funds to continue the program. Other highlights: the report recommended the FCC's current broadband standard of 100/20 Mbps should be periodically revisited and emphasized that universal service needs to evolve from a telephone-era subsidy into a "modern, equitable, broadband-centric opportunity engine." **Public Knowledge** cheered the report and contrasted it with FCC proposals to reduce eligibility for Lifeline and eliminate the E-Rate schools and libraries subsidy. "While Congress is working on how to bring the USF into the broadband age, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr has issued a stream of proposals designed to stifle eligibility and even suggesting eliminating some programs entirely," said *Harold Feld*, SVP Public Knowledge. The report should "serve as a wake-up call to everyone that there is broad support for continuing the USF program to keep us one connected nation, and consensus on basic principles for how to reform the program."

BURLINGTON TELECOM SAYS 'GO CATAMOUNTS'

Burlington Telecom has signed a five-year deal to become the first official telecom partner of the University of Vermont Athletics beginning in 2027. The operator, part of the **Schurz Broadband Group**, serves communities throughout Chittenden County. It described the sponsorship as creating new opportunities to engage Catamount fans and fostering connections to communities it serves.

PROGRAMMING

Two docu-shorts produced by tennis star *Coco Gauff* are coming to **Tennis Channel** on Aug. 24. "The Zina Effect" will look at the legacy of Olympic medalist *Zina Garrison*, while "Serve: Fashion & Tennis" investigates the intersection of the sport, apparel and players' self-expression. They'll be available to stream on Tennis Channel's digital platforms. -- "The Big Bang Theory" spinoff and **HBO Max** comedy series "Stuart Fails to Save the Universe" got the green light for a second season. Its inaugural campaign is still underway with weekly episodes until its finale Sept. 24. -- Another HBO show that got a second-season renewal: "It: Welcome to Derry." The eight-episode Season 1 wrapped up last December, and its premiere remains among the top-four series debuts globally in HBO Max's history. -- **Disney** had a busy weekend at its D23 fan convention, where it announced a few things coming to streaming soon. "VisionQuest," its next major Marvel series, hits **Disney+** on Oct. 14. Meanwhile, "Ahsoka" Season 2 picks up where the intergalactic battle between good and evil left off on Jan. 20.