

## QUOTABLE

"I'm not. However, we do need to take safety seriously, and if it means we have to pace the frontier and slow down, absolutely, we're going to listen to our researchers and do that. But as the CFO, I need to then make business decisions around it... We're pacing that frontier and taking that safety and alignment really seriously," - *OpenAI CFO Sarah Friar to CN-BC's Jim Kramer on whether she's afraid of a future rogue actor manipulating agents or misaligning weapons of mass destruction.*

## HARMONIC'S BROADBAND PRIORITIES

**Harmonic's** first in-person investor day in 12 years doubled as a window into where cable and telecom operators are putting their money. And if one thing was made clear, it's that companies are buying flexibility and reliability as much as bandwidth.

Take **Mediacom's** DOCSIS 4.0 rollout that Harmonic has been assisting with as an example, with the operator pushing 650,000 of its 3.1 million HFC homes to multi-gig symmetrical service on unified DOCSIS 4.0. During a panel featuring various Harmonic customers, Mediacom CTO/SVP, Technology *JR Walden* said its investments do account for capacity benefits, but the principal driver boils down to what customers are really looking for.

"Customers don't buy technology. Politicians get excited about technology, and engineers get excited about technology. Customers buy experience," Walden said. "If you're investing in experience, you will win. And if you're investing in technology, you will not."

The same approach appeared in how operators view fiber and HFC allocation. Rather than treating the two as competing strategies, the panel illustrated a use-case strategy that emphasizes deploying fiber where it makes economic sense and upgrading coax where existing infrastructure already reaches the customer. Bluepeak COO *Cash Hagen* called it "a religious debate," but pointed to MDUs as an example of using internal wiring "where HFC is very critical because you may not physically be able to get fiber to the unit."

However, in an earlier keynote, Harmonic SVP, Product *Asaf Matatyaou* brought up how Mexican operator **Izzi** demonstrated a different case, reusing existing cable trunk infrastructure to migrate toward FTTH, rather than overbuilding from scratch. But Matatyaou's overarching message of flexibility was further illuminated by supply chain economics putting more pressure on budgets and planning. He noted how rising memory costs are also pushing operators toward more open, multi-vendor Optical Network Terminal architecture, rather than single-supplier bundles.

"Keep in mind that raising the rising memory prices out there put the most pressure on CPE devices like ONTs. Operators need to have the ability to choose the right CPE for their business, and the ability for us to have open ONT gives them that opportunity of diversity and supply chain," Matatyaou said.

**Comcast** EVP/Chief Network Officer *Elad Nafshi* joined Tuesday's festivities in a video testimony, framing his company's continued investments in Harmonic's distributed access architecture as a catalyst for increased scale, rather than a specific feature. Nafshi added that Comcast and Harmonic have been working together for nearly a decade, crediting the vendor for its help with a 2023 Technology & Engineering

Emmy Award for Comcast's virtualized Cable Modem Termination Systems.

"We're adding 1.2 million homes to our network today, all of that is fed with our joint development DAA platform, and we're very, very excited to do even more," Nafshi said.

One other area where operator dollars may head next remains unclear, though. Harmonic is ready to meet the BEAD moment, but it's not holding its breath, given the stop-and-go nature of the **NTIA** initiative. Because of the unclear timing, it's also not accounting for it to be a near-term revenue generator.

Still, President/CEO *Nimrod Ben-Natan* has bright eyes for Harmonic's future. "With the momentum that we have, with the maturity of the product line, we feel ready to go after the broader opportunity of the telco fiber. Same technology, different customer base, but we are at a point where we are really ready to tackle that market," he said.

## OPTIMUM RATE HIKES

**Optimum** is informing customers of new rates set to take effect on Oct. 1. The operator said rate changes are mostly related to legacy video packages and driven by rising programming costs. Video rates are generally increasing by \$10-\$20 depending on package. "However, we offer a variety of ways for our customers to save money, including migrating to our newer, lower-cost TV packages, using [auto-pay] to pay their bills and bundling internet and Optimum Mobile," a spokesperson said. Current Optimum customers, by paying with auto-pay and by adding mobile, can save up to \$30/month on their internet bill alone. Broadband tiers, the "Entertainment TV" tier and any current promotions customers are on are not impacted by the price increases. Beginning Oct. 1, customers will see a \$1-2 increase for set-top box devices, but customers can bypass this by using an Apple TV device to access the Optimum video package.

## PK WARNS OF COPYRIGHT BILL'S CONSEQUENCES

**Public Knowledge** is sounding the alarm over the American Copyright Protection Act of 2026, a bill introduced Tuesday by Rep. *Darrell Issa* that aims to give rightsholders the ability to secure block orders against foreign websites accused of copyright infringement. The text of it hasn't yet been posted on Congress.gov. Still, the public interest group warns that it would "force any service provider, from residential broadband providers to global DNS resolvers, to disrupt traffic from targeted websites simply accused of copyright infringement." In June, Public Knowledge joined the **Electronic Frontier Foundation**, **Fight for the Future**, **CCIA**, the **i2Coalition**, **R Street Institute** and **Re:Create** to oppose site-blocking legislation. The groups claim such over-blocking has been problematic in Europe, bringing down digital infrastructure for hotels, car mechanics, retail shops, telehealth programs and more. "America's small businesses cannot afford to be treated as 'acceptable collateral damage' for multibillion-dollar entertainment and sports industries," said *Meredith Rose*, Senior Policy Counsel at Public Knowledge.

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## STATE BROADBAND SPEED PROGRESS REPORT

**Ookla** Speedtest Intelligence's State Broadband Speed Performance report for 1H26 found that 46 states and D.C. now provide the **FCC**'s minimum broadband speed benchmark of 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up to at least 60% of Speedtest users. That's a big improvement from the first time Ookla published this report for 1H24, when only 10 states reached that target. Only four states fell below the mark this time around: Wisconsin, Wyoming, Montana and Alaska. That said, Wyoming and Wisconsin, along with Maine and Vermont, saw the biggest improvement between 2H25 and 1H26. Maine saw the biggest gains of all, from 57.6% of users receiving 100/20 in 2H25 to 63% now. Ookla also noted that broadband expansion slowed in top-performing states. Connecticut, which ranks No. 1 in broadband speeds, only grew access to 100/20 by 1.3 points to 74.7%, while second-place New Jersey grew 0.7 to 73.5%. The other big takeaway is that **SpaceX's Starlink** is continuing to make progress in terms of speed. The number of states where at least 50% of Starlink users reached the 100/20 benchmark jumped from five in 2H25 to 17 this time around.

## YOUTUBE TV DROPS FAST CHANNELS

**YouTube TV** began informing customers over the weekend that it was dropping three FAST channels—**Court TV**, **Tastemade** and **The Young Turks**—from its lineup on Sept. 30, at which point the vMVPD's customers will no longer be able to access live content or library content from these channels. The removal also includes Tastemade Español, offered in the Spanish Plus add-on, and Tastemade in 4K from the 4K Plus add-on. But the notice to customers does mention that they can still access content from these brands on regular YouTube. CFX reached out to YouTube, Court TV and Tastemade to learn why the channels were removed but did not hear back by deadline.

## MIDCO LAUNCHES 4 GIG SERVICE

**Midco** launched 4 Gig x 1 Gig internet service in eligible markets Tuesday. The new tier doubles the operator's previous maximum download speed and is designed to facilitate bandwidth-intensive activities like streaming, online gaming, remote work, video conferencing and smart-home connectivity needs. The operator is also introducing WiFi 7 devices to its footprint to support those faster multi-gig speeds. Residential customers with 1 Gig or higher plans are eligible to receive WiFi 7 equipment at no additional cost; new Midco Business WiFi Pro installations will include WiFi 7 as the standard offering.

## XUMO PLAY'S SPORTS WINS

**Xumo**, the streaming jv between **Comcast** and **Charter**, released a status report on its FAST sports offerings. **Xumo Play** now features 45 sports channels, including 31 presenting live sporting events. It's not just niche sports, such as pickleball, bowling and billiards, making their way to the platform, either. Users can now tune in to live Division-I **NCAA** college sports, **ATP Tour** tennis and more. Xumo also simulcast two **2026 World Cup** matches with **Telemundo** this summer, marking the platform's first live broadcasts of a major sporting event. More than 40% of viewers who tuned in were new to Xumo Play, while Hispanic viewership over-indexed by approximately 60% during the matches. Notably, engagement around Latino-focused programming on the platform remained up 60% in the two weeks that followed the matches. Meanwhile, **NASCAR** viewers have watched nearly 3X as many hours of Xumo Play content as non-viewers, explored more than 3X as many channels, and are 21% more likely to return to the platform.

## WOW! ROLLS OUT WIFI 7

**WOW!** is rolling out Eero WiFi 7 devices to its Whole-Home WiFi and Whole-Business WiFi customers. Although previously only available in the operator's fiber markets, Eero's Pro 7 equipment is now being deployed across all service areas in six states. Eligible residential customers can add Whole-Home WiFi service to any WOW! internet plan for \$9.99/month.

## AMAZON BUNDLES UP

**Amazon's** latest streaming bundle is a first for the company, packing five services for \$29.99/month. It includes

**AMC+**, **BritBox**, **MGM+**, **PBS Masterpiece** and **Starz**, representing a savings of nearly 39% compared to subscribing to each service individually. The bundle is available in the U.S. starting Tuesday.

## COMCAST OPENS UNIVERSAL ADS TO CREATOR CONTENT

**Comcast's Universal Ads** is giving customers access to creator-led streaming inventory, giving them new ways to advertise alongside TV content that increasingly shapes how consumers discover, watch and engage with brands. Buyers can now tap into creator-led streaming channels such as **Bizarre**, **Creator TV**, **The Design Network**, **MeatEater** and **Tastemade** as well as programming featuring fan-favorite creators. To underscore the value of adding creator content to your advertising strategy, Universal Ads cited a 2025 IAB report that projected U.S. creator ad spend will reach \$43.9 billion this year, with spend beyond social content up 56%.

## AND THE EMMY GOES TO...

It was a big night for **Apple TV** at the 78th Primetime Emmy Awards on Monday night. The streamer's highly-praised horror-comedy series "Widow's Bay" took home 14 trophies, including for Outstanding Comedy Series, more than double the second most-awarded program, **NBC's** Super Bowl LX Halftime Show, which won seven categories. Apple TV won 26 total awards, beating second-place **HBO Max** (19 wins) and third-place **Netflix** (16). "DTF St. Louis" and "The Pitt" led the line for HBO Max, with seven and six wins, respectively. On the cable front, **Comedy Central** won two awards—Animated Program for "South Park" and Writing for a Nonfiction Program for "The Daily Show." **Adult Swim's** "Primal" also won two animation awards, while **National Geographic** and **FX/Hulu** clinched three prizes each. **CBS's** "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," which ended its run in May, received six awards, including Outstanding Variety Series. – On Tuesday, reports popped up on the trades that **Amazon** is in talks with the TV Academy to make **Prime Video** the new home of the Emmy Awards, moving the annual program away from the Big 4 broadcast nets for the first time since 1949. No details on what an Amazon rights deal would look like, but the talks come after the current "wheel deal" that saw **Fox**, **NBC**, **CBS** and **ABC** rotate hosting duties came to an end with yesterday's ceremony on NBC/Peacock. Were the Emmys to move to streaming, it wouldn't be the first major awards show to do so, with the Oscars set to make its **YouTube** debut in 2029.

## NFL RATINGS

The **NFL's** opening weekend culminated in Sunday Night Football reaching 25.7 million viewers across **NBC** and **Peacock**, down slightly from last year—though that might have to do with the new changes in **Nielsen's** methodology. The Giants' win over the Cowboys peaked at 29 million during the second quarter. However, Cowboys-Giants was the second time the Sunday Night Football crew was on air this season, with the first taking place last Wednesday for the Patriots vs Seahawks season-opener (25.1 million viewers). Now compare that to the 18.5 million viewers **Netflix** averaged for the Rams vs 49ers game in Australia on Thursday. Viewership peaked at 21.3 million and the global audience reached 21.7 million fans from more than 200 countries. Broadcasters might want to bookmark that for their imminent NFL rights negotiations.

## ON THE CIRCUIT

Save the date! The **2027 Cable Hall of Fame** celebration will be held on April 15 at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in NYC. The **Syndeo Institute** event won't just mark the induction of a new class of Hall of Famers but also the 30th anniversary of the annual gathering itself.

## PEOPLE

**Mediacom** appointed *Elena Kilpatrick* as SVP of the Coastal Region. Kilpatrick will focus on the region's operational excellence, network performance, customer experience and continued growth. She joins Mediacom from **Comcast**, where she most recently served as Regional VP of Technical Operations, responsible for end-to-end maintenance and field operations across Florida, Alabama and Georgia. Before her time at Comcast, she spent over 12 years with Frontier Communications



## INDUSTRY SOURCE

COMMENTARY BY JANELLE MORSE

*Janelle Morse is VP, Engagement & Strategy for SCTE, guiding TechExpo, SCTE's Leadership Institutes and membership. Her views do not necessarily reflect the views of CFX.*

Customers should not have to think about which network keeps them connected. Whether using WiFi at home or mobile elsewhere, the expectation is simple: it should work. An unreliable broadband experience makes convincing customers to add mobile harder.

That is why convergence matters. Bringing fixed networks, WiFi, mobile and added services together can improve the customer experience while creating new growth opportunities. Both depend on an architecture that enables them to work seamlessly together.

That convergence is reflected at SCTE TechExpo26. With AMC Global Media joining Spectrum, the event will feature a programmer co-host for the first time. Telecom providers, including T-Mobile and AT&T, along with technology leaders like Google Cloud, will also participate, bringing mobile, content, broadband and technology innovators together to examine how streaming, edge computing and AI are reshaping service delivery, network design and the customer experience.

From Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, more than 175 speakers and over 48 hours of sessions and demos will bring that story to life under the theme "Network (R)evolution: Convergence Powered. Experience Perfected."

### What Convergence Looks Like in Practice

The agenda is designed to connect technologies rather than treat them as separate conversations. Multi-Access Convergence sessions will explore fiber, DOCSIS, WiFi and mobile as one intelligent fabric, including DOCSIS and fiber coexistence, WiFi 8, low-latency networking and cross-domain orchestration. The Experience Era program will focus on turning network performance into customer experience through greater reliability, intelligence and personalization.

AI Infrastructure sessions will examine edge AI in broadband infrastructure, applications and service delivery. Autonomous Networks programming will explore what it takes to build a truly autonomous network—one that can predict, diagnose, optimize and heal itself. The Operations, Planning and Construction track will explore automation, telemetry, resiliency and deployment optimization.

StreamTech will connect network advances to what customers watch and experience, with sessions on AI video optimization, interoperable streaming, edge content delivery and real-time quality of experience. Growth programming will examine network-as-a-service, edge computing and fixed-mobile conver-

gence, connecting infrastructure decisions with new services and revenue opportunities.

### New Ways to Learn and Connect

TechExpo26 will offer more ways to turn ideas into practice. New 45-minute, slide-free Meetups will encourage peer discussion, while Focus Forums will provide deeper exploration of specific industry topics. Half-day Bootcamps will offer hands-on training in areas including DOCSIS 4.0 technology and fiber splicing, and the Connectivity Café will provide space to continue conversations between sessions. For smaller operators in particular, that exchange can be invaluable. TechExpo will deliver firsthand knowledge on what larger operators and technology leaders are doing, compare approaches and make informed decisions with long-term impact.

### Highlights From the Main Stage

The headliner lineup reflects the breadth of the convergence happening across sectors:

- Content and connectivity: AMC Global Media CEO Kristin Dolan, Charter Communications President and CEO Chris Winfrey, SCTE President and CEO Maria Popo, AMC Global Media CTO Stephanie Mitchko and Spectrum's Rich DiGeronimo will comment on convergence and the customer experience.
- Network and technology leaders: Google Cloud's Matt Anderson will join featured leaders including Comcast's Elad Nafshi, CableLabs' Mark Bridges and Spectrum's Justin Colwell to explore the technologies shaping next-generation networks.
- Shared industry challenges: T-Mobile's Lori Ames, AT&T's Alisha Remek and Verizon's Leo Perreault will address common threats facing the industry. This will include a discussion of STRIKE, an executive coalition led by SCTE, NCTA, Comcast and Spectrum focused on protecting networks and responding to intentional damage.

### Making the Most of TechExpo

Come to Atlanta with a network challenge, a customer-experience goal or a question about where your next investment should go. Use the sessions to explore technologies, the Bootcamps to build practical skills and conversations with peers and industry leaders to test your thinking.

Convergence is about creating an experience customers can rely on and a network that gives operators room to grow. TechExpo26 is where we can work together to make both happen.

Attendees and press can register here: <https://techexpo.scte.org/>