

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly two-thirds of Gen Z adults (64%) have seriously considered quitting social media—more than any other generation—and 44% have deleted a social media app from their phone, according to a new Murmuration survey. They are at or near the top of every generation in reporting that offline behaviors have grown in importance over the last year: visiting local businesses, libraries and farmers' markets (40%), attending community events (36%), volunteering (30%) and writing by hand (29%).

'SPECTRUM DAY' HITS FORMER COX MARKETS

It's truly official now. Former **Cox** markets around the country celebrated "Spectrum Day" on Wednesday. The day marked the rollout of Spectrum branding, products, pricing and packaging in Las Vegas, New Orleans, Norfolk, Oklahoma City, Orange County, Phoenix, Providence, San Diego and many other Cox markets. In total, **Charter** welcomed more than 11 million homes and businesses across 45 states to its footprint.

Cox customers now have access to the full portfolio of Spectrum internet, mobile and TV packages, including the Spectrum One bundle that packs internet, Advanced WiFi and mobile for one price. With its current momentum in mobile, it's no surprise that Spectrum Day is putting an extra emphasis on wireless offers. New and existing internet customers who don't already have **Cox Mobile** service can get a year of **Spectrum Mobile**, plus up to \$2,500 for five lines toward device financing when they switch two or more lines. Charter also introduced its \$1,000 Savings Guarantee for the first year for customers who bundle internet with two mobile lines, as well as its Seamless Connectivity experience that offloads nearly 90% of mobile traffic to the Spectrum WiFi network. And Spectrum's no data cap policy will be music to the ears of customers who faced those limits under Cox internet plans.

Charter celebrated the big day with the launch of a fresh ad campaign saying "Hi!"

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to new customers, featuring Spectrum-sponsored **NASCAR** driver *Carson Hocevar* and Twitch streamer *SypherPK*, whom your kids may know best from Fortnite. The spots highlight all the different online experiences powered by Spectrum, including online gaming, video streaming and texting. Zooming in more locally, Spectrum is also lighting up the giant Exosphere in Las Vegas for the next seven days. The activation was described to **CFX** as a light display artfully representing connections on a network. That should catch the eye of Cox customers driving down the Strip this week!

While the Spectrum brand began adorning retail stores, trucks and technician uniforms today, Charter hit the ground running on the transition in late August. The operator introduced Cox internet customers to its free mobile line for a year promotion just after the \$34.5 billion merger closed. CEO *Chris Winfrey* [said](#) at an investor conference last week the promotion is already delivering a “sales uplift,” with the expectation that the full rollout of Spectrum services will have an even bigger impact, especially considering the millions of additional homes and businesses Charter can go sell to after integrating Cox’s footprint.

On that note, Charter’s push to hire more than 1,000 salespeople in former Cox markets is now underway. A quick scroll through LinkedIn reveals that several job listings have gone live in San Diego, Las Vegas, Oklahoma City and other locations in the past week, including for roles within **Spectrum Business**.

That aligns with comments Winfrey made at an investor conference last week. “If you think about it, for small business, Spectrum is much higher penetrated than Cox, so that’s a real opportunity in the Cox footprint. It’s driven predominantly based on our pricing and packaging, which will go into the market starting next week,” he said, adding that Cox has the overall leg up on B2B services, creating new opportunity for the combined company, particularly in hospitality. “I’m really excited about what the B2B team combined between former Cox markets and Spectrum can do,” Winfrey said.

While the operator bolsters its sales org in Cox markets, it also reiterated its commitment to return Cox’s customer service to the U.S. in the next 18 months, honoring a pledge it made to the **FCC** during the deal’s regulatory approval process. Customers in former Cox markets will be able to benefit from Spectrum’s 24/7 customer service, same-day technician dispatch when requested before 5pm and bill credits for outages longer than two hours “in the future,” according to the Spectrum Day announcement.

BROADCASTERS PITCH NEXTGEN TV TO CONSUMERS

Broadcasters have asked the **FCC** to set a date-certain to sunset ATSC 1.0 to speed the transition to ATSC 3.0 or NextGen TV. Now they’re turning to consumers, with **Sinclair** and **Nexstar** teaming on the “GoNextGenTV” campaign that debuts Thursday in 13 of their markets. In addition to TV spots, they’ve launched [GoNextGenTV.com](#), which highlights NextGen TV’s sharper images and sound—just in time for football season. The educational campaign, which builds on an education initiative developed and tested by Sinclair this summer in Columbus, Ohio, also explains that the tech standard doesn’t need a subscription—though consumers will need to invest in a NextGen TV tuner or

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compatible TV. The **Consumer Technology Association** has been critical of any sort of government-mandated transition to ATSC 3.0, claiming consumers haven't been that interested in NextGen TV-enabled products. CTA research shows that NextGen TV sales from 2020, the first year these products became available, through 2025 total 18.6 million units. CTA forecasts sales of five million NextGen TVs this year. Sales of NextGen TV converter boxes or gateways total 313,000 units through 2025, and CTA expects an additional 121,000 units to sell this year. "Despite the availability of NextGenTV-enabled products available for purchase in the marketplace, adoption and awareness has been slower than **NAB** would prefer because consumers prioritize other features," CTA told the **FCC** this summer. "If ATSC 3.0 is mandated, the more than 80% of households that do not use over-the-air television will bear the added costs associated with the tuner mandate without any benefit."

COMMERCE APPROVES COMMS, AI BILLS

It was smooth sailing for 16 bills aimed at strengthening communications networks and technological development, with the **House Commerce** committee reporting the full slate to the House Wednesday. The committee approved most unanimously, including the PLAN for Broadband Act that would have **NTIA** develop a government-wide strategy for closing the digital divide, the Satellite and Telecommunications (SAT) Streamlining Act, which is aimed at modernizing the **FCC's** satellite licensing framework and the AI for Secure Networks Act that studies the role AI can play in the security of communications infrastructure. One bill members didn't agree on was the Open Source AI Leadership Act, which passed 26-21. The bill, from Rep. *Gabe Evans* (R-CO), aims to strengthen America's leadership in open-source artificial intelligence as the U.S. competes with China for dominance. "I think that what's happened in the last few weeks, with the potential end of humanity and the catastrophic consequences that some of the leaders in the AI community say we're potentially facing, we as Democrats and we as a Committee have to take action on AI safety. AI safety is a lot more important right now than advancing AI and expanding AI," said Ranking Member *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ).

MEET GFIBER

Ahead of a planned merger with **Astound Broadband** later this year, and just months after officially shortening its name from Google Fiber to GFiber, the ISP is rebranding to **gFiber**. The [brand refresh](#) also includes an updated logo, new typography and a softer color palette of teal, fuchsia, gold and orange. The operator began rolling out the updated branding across its markets Wednesday. "We're excited to share our new look, but our core values stay the same: uncompromising standards for speed and reliability, phenomenal customer experience, and continuous innovation," gFiber CEO *Dinni Jain* said of the new look.

USTELECOM SHEDS LIGHT ON BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

There's a lot of money being invested in broadband, but there's certainly enough usage to justify the \$92.6 billion broadband providers invested in U.S. communications infrastructure during 2025. That's according to **USTelecom's** latest [Broadband CapEx Report](#), and it's a 3.4% increase compared to 2024 and the third-largest annual total since 2002, bringing the cumulative total to nearly \$2.3 trillion since 1996 (when the Telecom Act was signed into law). Average monthly usage climbed to 767.4 Gigs per subscriber, a 9.9% increase YOY, though USTelecom points out that upstream usage increased by 21.7% in 2025 alone—more than twice the growth rate of overall usage. No surprise that AI is behind that surge, in addition to video sharing and cloud synchronization.

CAVS, DAZN PUT GAMES OTA

One of the media industry storylines this summer has been **DAZN's** push into the RSN biz, and now it's starting to put together additional deals to expand distribution. On Tuesday, the **NBA's** Cleveland Cavaliers, **Gray Media** and **DAZN** struck a partnership to air 15 regular-season games OTA this upcoming season. Games will air locally on Gray stations WOIO (**CBS**) and WUAB (**MyNetwork**), as well as throughout Ohio on **Rock Entertainment Sports Network**. Plus, Gray plans to have stations in other markets be part of the 15-game package, including Cincinnati and Lima, Ohio, and Parkersburg, West Virginia. It's also looking for third-party broadcasters to air

games in parts of the Cavs' territory where Gray doesn't own or operate a station. The games will be made available to stream for free on DAZN.

SPONSORS PREP FOR BRAVO FAN FEST ACTIVATIONS

The second **Bravo** Fan Fest is headed to Charleston, South Carolina, on Oct. 24, and a few brands are hoping to tap into the level of engagement the network sees with some of its shows. This year's Fan Fest includes five brand partners: Colgate, Planet Fitness, State Farm, Wayfair and Wendy's, in addition to a pair of social media sponsors Ally Bank and Genesis. Each partner is set to run "fan-forward activations" at the event, while also promoting it via social media pages. Bravo Fan Fest first came onto the scene in 2024, running a semiannual cadence alongside the tentpole BravoCon, which will have its next festival in Fall 2027.

FIBER FRENZY

Kinetic expanded its fiber network in the greater Sugar Land and Fort Bend County, Texas, area by nearly 25% in the last year, adding more than 7,600 new fiber locations to reach 40,000 homes passed. – **Comcast** connected over 1,000 homes and businesses in Beaufort and Edisto, South Carolina, to the Xfinity network. The projects extended the operator's network across the state's Lowcountry.

RATINGS

College football helped **ESPN** claim the top spot in the weekly primetime cable ratings (Sept. 7-13). The sports net posted 2.12 million viewers P2+, beating out **Fox News** at 1.78 million and **MS Now** with 689,000. **HGTV** and **CNN** trailed behind at 573,000 and 490,000, respectively. Fox News held its usual No. 1 spot in the total-day category with 1.12 million viewers, though ESPN wasn't too far behind with 980,000. MS Now (489,000), CNN (349,000) and HGTV (314,000) rounded out the total-day top five. -- The men's and women's U.S. Open Championships took place this weekend. The women's bout between *Aryna Sabalenka* and *Elena Rybakina* on Saturday drew 2.7 million viewers on ESPN, up 13% YOY. Then on Sunday, *Alexander Zverev* and *Ben Shelton* garnered 3.2 million viewers on **ABC**, the most since ESPN obtained the tournament's rights back in 2009. Overall, the two-week U.S. Open averaged 1.2 million viewers.

PROGRAMMING

Apple TV renewed its spy thriller "Slow Horses" for an eighth season ahead of the Season 6 premiere on Sept. 16. Season 8 will adapt the *Mike Herron* novel "Clown Town." -- The Shriners Children's East-West Bowl, an all-star game that takes place after the conclusion of each college football season, struck a deal with **Scripps Sports** to air the next edition on **Ion** come Feb. 4 at 8pm. The game will take place at **AT&T** Stadium in Dallas thanks to a multiyear venue partnership that's good through 2031. -- **HBO** gave a 15-episode order for the one-hour drama "How to Survive Without Me." Cast members include *Ray Romano*, *Kaley Cuoco* and *Joshua Jackson*, and per the logline, the show centers on a family recovering from the death of their matriarch, Beverly—though Beverly "found a way to keep running the show from the beyond." No word on the release date. -- Speaking of HBO, *Kate Berlant* will make her comedy special debut next month in "Kate Berlant: Parmesan." It'll premiere Oct. 16 at 10pm on HBO, available to stream on **HBO Max**. -- The first two episodes of **Fox Nation's** new original dating series "Chris Harrison's The Vow" will drop Nov. 11. New episodes will be released weekly on Wednesdays through Dec. 9.

ON THE CIRCUIT

The Kaitz Event is calling on stakeholders to help bolster the silent auction that's taking place in a few weeks. It's looking for folks to donate items and experiences "that will excite our guests and inspire generous bidding," such as luxury vacations, VIP experiences at concerts or sporting events, technology or other types of exclusive merchandise. Each winning bid will go toward the **NCTA Education Foundation's** scholarship and grant funding. Visit [here](https://www.kaitzevent.com) to find out more details. The Kaitz Event will take place Oct. 7 at Guastavino's in NYC.



THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MINUTE...

COMMENTARY BY STEVE EFFROS | STEVE@EFFROS.COM

Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of CFX.

DONKEYS REDUX

Commentary by Steve Effros

I've never done this in a column before. I'm simply going to quote from one I wrote some time ago:

"...circumstances in the telecommunications policy sphere periodically spur me to quote one of my grandmother's favorite sayings: 'Even a donkey doesn't trip over the same stone twice!'"

This was said to me every time I did something stupid for the second, third or more times. It becomes relevant in our business all too frequently when we simply don't learn from past mistakes...

The issue, at its most basic, is whether the tech industry should work with the government or fight any suggestion that AI should be regulated, saying guidelines should be left to the companies themselves. By 'tech industry' I'm referring broadly to all the companies delving (sometimes head-first) into the exploding creation and use of artificial intelligence."

That was written in April 2023. The hot topic today of what to do about potentially uncontrolled advancement of AI models is not new. It's been around for quite a while. But now there's been a significant change of position. The companies urgently want the government to get involved; the government wants to avoid "killing" what it (or at least President Trump) considers to be a "golden goose."

The essay published last weekend by Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei is something everyone concerned about where we are heading with the potential of artificial intelligence should read. He is as excited as the rest of us about the incredible implications for a whole host of topics from health-care to work efficiency. But he's also extremely concerned about the prospects of losing control of this extremely powerful tech and the existential danger that it might pose.

Yes, there are issues about other countries (it's not just China, folks!) and bad actors "winning" some theoretical race developing AI. But most experts suggest that the developmental difference in speed and power among all of those

doing the frontier work is counted in months, not years. We're dealing with a technology that even those developing it acknowledge they don't totally know how it works or where it's going.

And yes, there's an argument about regulatory capture. The idea that the big companies at the head of the pack today may want the government to now set regulations that would impede any smaller competitors from catching up. We've had that argument many times before. The cable industry years ago chose to fight regulation instead of helping develop reasonable rules. The result was retransmission consent. We lost, the broadcasters won. The current lack of social media restraints is another example.

It's not theoretical anymore. Experimental advanced AI programs "escaped" from their "sandbox"—meant to keep them off the internet—cooperated with each other and hid what they were doing. Little damage was done, but the companies didn't even know it had happened. That's why they're now almost uniformly calling for third-party review, transparency and a slowdown in the development of things like recursive self-improvement—AI teaching itself to get better without human involvement. Yes, that's happening today. It shouldn't be. But no company trusts its competitors to slow down, so none will. It's like Thelma and Louise, driving full speed toward the edge of the cliff.

The current administration takes a different view. They want American AI to develop as fast as possible. They want data centers built now, everywhere. They want to keep the stock market humming and the golden goose to generate all the money needed to pay off the now-bloated deficit. AI is considered the magic fix, regardless of the risk.

The problem is we may reach the edge of the cliff long before all that money theoretically shows up. Note that most of the major companies doing all this work are a long way from actually making significant profits, except in the stock market! I won't enumerate all the ways a swarm of uncontrolled AI agents could cause havoc. And yes, it's going to be hard to get our government and our companies, let alone all the rest of the world, to work together. But we're all going to trip over a major stone if we don't quickly try.