

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Going Digital: Cable, CE and Broadcasters Ponder Transition at CES

As the Feb 17, 2009, deadline for TV broadcasters to switch from analog to digital looms, **NCTA** pres *Kyle McSarrow* called broadcasters' concern about operators down-converting their HD signals a "non-issue" at a **CES** panel Tues. "If people start playing games with picture quality, they're going to lose in the marketplace," he said. "The consumer is the one who should make these decisions. The govt shouldn't get involved." As might be expected, **MSTV** pres *David Donovan* had a decidedly different take. "What's at issue here is to make sure that all the bits devoted to the HD signal are actually going to the consumer's home," he said. In terms of the planned joint effort between the cable, CE and broadcast industries to educate the public about the transition, McSarrow admitted that it's hard to work out the details because the industries involved compete on so many fronts. "At some point all of us are going to be grabbing for market share," he said. "I can't give you details right now because we're talking about what we want to do." And one sleeper issue that doesn't get as much press attention: What to do with all those hundreds of millions of analog TVs that will make their way to landfills over the next few years as consumers upgrade to digital sets. Both Donovan and **LG Electronics** vp *John Taylor* said they worry about lack of federal rules for disposal of the sets, which can be an environmental hazard. Otherwise, "we're going to end up with a patchwork of 50 different regulations" in different states, Taylor said.

Comcast on the March: Roberts Outlines New Plan

Watch out, ILECs! **Comcast** holds big plans for the commercial voice market and will spend \$250mln this year (and \$3bln over 5 years) going after small-medium businesses, said chmn/CEO *Brian Roberts* Tues at the **Citigroup** conference. Roberts estimates 5mln such businesses are currently within Comcast's footprint, and he expects to enlist 25% of them over the next 5 years while achieving a 25%+ rate of return. The MSO plans to hire 500 employees this year, primarily in sales, to service the nascent market. Comcast currently owns 250K commercial HSD subs, but none receive voice services. Potential commercial growth, consistent VOD success and expansive upside in digital voice have all conspired to leave Roberts anticipating a scorching '07. "The company is on fire, and I am excited and energized. There has never been a more exciting time [for Comcast]," he said. Roberts estimates 4.8mln RGU adds in '06, an 85% increase over '05, and posits that within 4 years 50% of Comcast's subs will receive services other than video. Meanwhile, on demand views grew 29% Y-over-Y in Dec to 180mln. Roberts is also "very excited about the revenue potential" of day-and-date initiatives with movie studios. **CableFAX** was the first to report on the MSO's day-and-date VOD trial now underway in Pittsburgh and Denver (**Cfax**, 12/7).

New Chief: **FCC** chmn *Kevin Martin* has named *Monica Shah Desai* as the new chief of the Media Bureau. She replaces *Donna Gregg*, who is going to serve as sr policy adviser to the ambassador, US Rep. to the World Radio-communication Conference. Desai was among Martin's first appointments when he got the chairmanship, having

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served as chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau since Apr '05. Seen as a Martin loyalist, she served as an interim legal adviser to Martin when he was a commissioner, working on spectrum and intl issues.

It's Baaaack: It didn't take Sens *Byron Dorgan* (D-ND) and *Olympia Snowe* (R-ME) long to reintroduce their net neutrality legislation. How much momentum it picks up remains to be seen, though the net neutrality champions were quick to get on board. The bill ensures that broadband service providers don't discriminate against Internet content, applications or services by offering preferential treatment. "The reintroduction of this legislation and the FCC's imposition of net neutrality conditions as part of the **AT&T-BellSouth** merger, are significant victories in the fight to ensure nondiscrimination on the Internet," Snowe said. The legislation was introduced last year as an amendment to the Sen Commerce Telecom bill, but was defeated on a 11-11 tie vote. Co-sponsors of the bill include *John Kerry* (D-MA), *Barbara Boxer* (D-CA), *Tom Harkin* (D-IA), *Patrick Leahy* (D-VT), *Hillary Clinton* (D-NY) and *Barack Obama* (D-IL). Meanwhile, the **Federal Trade Commission** is expediting a report on net neutrality that it plans to release this spring, FTC chair *Deborah Platt Majoras* said at **CES**. The report will follow a public hearing the commission will hold Feb 13-14 in DC as the content community and operators remain largely divided over whether the government should enact regulation. While the usual suspects offered their usual arguments for and against intervention, Platt Majoras cautioned that trying for quick-fix regulation was "not looking at both sides of the coin." She said, "It's not fair to assume that all regulations passed would take care of the situation smoothly."

Slingshot: **Sling Media** and **CBS** used **CES** to announce a beta test of a tech that will let consumers "Clip+Sling." Slingbox owners will be able to clip and share content directly from live or recorded TV through a simple app. They can even clip and share content with consumers who aren't Slingbox users. The trial will begin in 2Q, with the new functionality to be incorporated into SlingPlayer by 2Q.

Apple's Bite: **Apple** unveiled its new TV set-top at Tues' Macworld conference. Consumers can wirelessly transfer video and music stored on their PCs to the set-top, which connects to the TV like a DVD player. Apple TV hits stores next month with a \$299 price tag. It's 40GB hard drive can store up to 50 hours of video or 9K songs. The company also announced that it has sold more than 50mln TV eps through iTunes. And Apple finally showed off its iPhone, a hybrid iPod, cell phone and Internet browser. It debuts in June at \$499 for a 4GB and \$599 for a 8GB phone.

Deals: **Knology** signed an agreement to acquire **PrairieWave Comm**, serving 57K residential and 7K business customers in SD, MN and IA, for \$255mln. PWC's sub base represents 156K RGUs (46K video, 70K voice, 40K HSD), and 45% of its residential subs get a triple-play bundle. **Credit Suisse** financially advised Knology while PWC was advised by **Daniels & Assoc**. The deal is expected to close in 2Q.

CES Notebook: **Dell** unveiled the "Home Media Suite," which can play back and record HD cable programming and stream it wirelessly to other parts of the home. The bundle includes an XPS 410 desktop, **Windows Vista** when available, digital TV tuner, 27-inch flat panel monitor, speakers, Dell All in One 966 printer, and an 802.11 dual band router and power line bridge. -- **CableLabs** certified an OCAP-enabled digital TV made by **LG Electronics**. The 42-inch plasma is being demo'd this week at **CES** and received a '07 CES Innovations Award. -- **Disney** chief *Bob Iger* demonstrated at **CES** Mon night some new features from the revamped Disney.com (*Cfax*, 01/03), part of an initiative to

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galvanize the Mouse's TV, film, music and gaming properties in 1 place. "This will be the digital doorway into Disney, both a destination and portal into a vibrant entertainment experience," Iger said. Video clips of TV series will always be available on the site's homepage and rewards-based games allow kids to build status within their own online community. The site's look can be personalized and "Disney XD" offers users to engage simultaneously in activities such as viewing shows, playing games and chatting online. -- **Sharp** announced plans to embed broadband over powerline capabilities in some flat screen televisions, the better to facilitate sending IPTV signals through a home without the use of new wiring or broadband radio technology such as WiFi, reports sister pub *TelecomWeb*.

MCCC-Sinclair: **Sinclair** still hasn't decided whether it will enter into binding arbitration with **Mediacom** to resolve their retrans spat. Gen counsel *Barry Faber* said the broadcaster is taking a while to consider arbitration, which was a recommendation by the **FCC's** Media Bureau. "It's very unusual for a business to give up the decision-making process to an unrelated 3rd party," he said during a conference call Tues. If Sinclair did agree to it, it's very possible the parameters it would require would be different from Mediacom's, Faber added. Sinclair pulled about 22 of its stations from about 700K Mediacom subs at 12:01am Sat. "The parties do not appear to be moving any closer to getting a deal done. The current situation is one that may continue for a long time," Faber said. He criticized Mediacom's claim that Sinclair doesn't care about the citizens of Iowa and the MSO's attempts to have the state legislature intervene. "It's a desperate gambit to somehow obtain legislative help for a problem they can't solve on their own," he said.

Beta: 42% of ad execs are planning to increase ad spending on **ESPN** over the next year, the best percentage in basic cable, followed by **Comedy Central** (34%), **TNT** (30%) and sibling net **ESPN2** (30%), according to a new Beta study. The sports media behemoth (72%) also led cable with the greatest percentage of ad execs who rated its online ad opportunities at least a 4 on a 5-point scale. **MTV** (68%), **The Weather Channel** (67%) and **CNN** (65%) ensued. **Discovery Nets** (81%) paced Comedy Central (78%) and **Spike** (76%) in earning the greatest percentage of 4+ ratings for upfront presentations, and its 85% was 2nd to ESPN's 90% in 4+ ratings for net brand image.

TCA Notebook: Like an athlete stretching before a competition, the start of winter **TCA** seemed leisurely and low key. Yet a small volley of questions about *Nancy Grace's* fitness to be entrusted with the **CNN** brand got the blood flowing. Critics were deferential when it came to unveiling plans honoring *Larry King's* 50 years in broadcasting in April. And the King of Talk made news, revealing *Oprah*, *Bill Clinton* and perhaps *Angelina Jolie* will be his guests during that "King-Size Week." On Fri that week, *Katie Couric* will host and interview King. Other festivities include a *Bill Maher*-hosted roast of King. Is the 73-yr-old ready to retire? "As *Milton Berle* said, 'retire to what?'" King quipped. -- You know TCA is slow when **The Weather Channel** generates excitement, but its offerings seemed strong. "Epic Conditions" (Mar 4) combines weather with sports like big wave surfing and powder skiing and the photography from famed ski filmer *Warren Miller* looked excellent. Celebrating Weather's 25 years will be "100 Biggest Weather Moments," hosted by *Harry Connick Jr.* Although Katrina, the Tsunami and Global Warming will be on the list, lighter moments—like the climate's influence on Stradivarius' violins—will be included, as will many celebs. – The eternal question at TCA is "what show looked good?" The answer, so far, is **History Channel's** "Cities of the Underworld," where an intrepid host (*Eric Geller*) ventures underneath modern cities. Among his favorites: Istanbul and Paris, but even NY and Boston contain interesting oddities. – **Hallmark's** panel was so funny that *Henry Schleiff* had to compete for laughs, but he got 'em, with a video that included Henry being cut in for Billy Crystal in the Meg Ryan deli orgasm scene from "When Harry Met Sally." Schleiff boasted of acquiring "Phantom of the Opera," which he called Hallmark's version of "Nip/Tuck." Told that a Hallmark panel from an earlier TCA featured older actors than Tuesday's session, *Ken Howard* said, "that's impossible; it must have been a wake." -- SA (For more from TCA, visit *Seth's blog* at www.cable360.net).

CableFAX databriefs



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

TCA Announcements: CNN HD will be launched, probably this year. -- **A&E** will build on "The Sopranos" with "Kings of South Beach," an original film that mixes "Donnie Brasco" and "Scarface." In addition, it's decided to begin a scripted series and will pick from 6 in development, including one from *Steven Bochco*. -- **Hallmark** unveiled a public affairs campaign for family friendly viewing called "Watch With Me" and in March will start "a predictable" schedule of primetime films, chief *Henry Schleiff* said.

Tech Emmys: **DirecTV** founder *Eddy Hartenstein* took home the "Lifetime Achievement Award in Tech & Engineering" at Mon's Tech & Engineering Emmy Awards in Las Vegas. Others receiving nods from the **Natl Acad of TV Arts & Sciences** included **Turner, Time Warner Cable's Start Over, CNN, HBO, The Weather Channel, The N, HSN, RealNetworks** and **BIAP Systems**.

People: **Discovery Nets** appointed former **TV Guide Channel** gm *Tom Cosgrove* svp, programming, **Discovery, Discovery Times, The Science Channel** and **Military Channel**. *Jeff Goldberg* was named vp, programming and scheduling for the same nets. -- **WICT** promoted *Parthavi Das* to svp, strategy & initiatives. -- *Mike Pons* was elevated to vp, corporate strategy & development for **Weather Channel**. -- **Pace** appointed *Stuart Hall* CFO and a board member, effective in Apr.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/09 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/09 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	42.53	1.51	AVID TECH:	37.17	(0.38)
DIRECTV:	24.14	(0.26)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.80	0.00
DISNEY:	34.43	(0.07)	BROADCOM:	34.16	1.31
ECHOSTAR:	39.43	0.48	C-COR:	11.81	0.06
GE:	37.55	0.00	CISCO:	28.47	(0.16)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	25.65	0.46	COMMSCOPE:	29.73	(0.4)
ION MEDIA:	0.54	(0.01)	CONCURRENT:	1.86	0.05
NEWS CORP:	22.82	0.41	CONVERGYS:	24.90	0.35
TRIBUNE:	30.75	(0.08)	CSG SYSTEMS:	26.24	0.15
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	29.31	0.26	GEMSTAR TVG:	3.75	(0.15)
CHARTER:	3.31	(0.02)	GOOGLE:	485.50	1.92
COMCAST:	42.74	0.27	HARMONIC:	7.17	(0.02)
COMCAST SPCL:	42.16	0.36	JDSU:	16.81	(0.51)
GCI:	15.76	0.11	LEVEL 3:	6.03	(0.05)
KNOLOGY:	11.23	0.68	LUCENT:	2.55	(0.02)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	100.07	1.11	MICROSOFT:	29.96	0.03
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	29.54	0.20	MOTOROLA:	18.26	(0.34)
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	22.16	0.45	NDS:	45.78	(1.24)
MEDIACOM:	7.86	0.03	NORTEL:	25.25	0.07
NTL:	24.85	0.16	OPENTV:	2.47	(0.13)
ROGERS COMM:	29.87	(0.31)	PHILIPS:	37.09	0.63
SHAW COMM:	32.59	0.01	RENTRAK:	14.86	(0.36)
TIME WARNER:	22.25	(0.12)	SEACHANGE:	10.53	(0.09)
WASH POST:	762.00	1.01	SONY:	46.41	1.60
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	30.91	(0.14)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	17.45	(2.19)
CROWN:	3.99	(0.01)	THOMAS & BETTS:	46.46	0.03
DISCOVERY:	16.51	(0.11)	TIVO:	5.80	0.19
EW SCRIPPS:	49.99	0.07	TOLLGRADE:	10.38	(0.03)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	27.28	(0.76)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	19.51	(0.2)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	37.51	0.11	VONAGE:	6.44	(0.15)
LODGENET:	25.63	(0.27)	VYYO:	4.33	0.02
NEW FRONTIER:	10.08	0.04	WEBB SYS:	0.04	0.00
OUTDOOR:	12.42	(0.04)	WORLDGATE:	1.41	0.04
PLAYBOY:	11.44	0.02	YAHOO:	27.58	(0.34)
UNIVISION:	35.68	0.04	TELCOS		
VALUEVISION:	12.71	0.21	AT&T:	33.95	0.14
VIACOM:	42.07	(0.13)	BELLSOUTH:	47.11	0.00
WWE:	16.09	(0.1)	QWEST:	8.39	0.09
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.06	0.02	VERIZON:	36.96	0.15
ADC:	14.72	(0.25)	MARKET INDICES		
ADDVANTAGE:	2.80	(0.01)	DOW:	12416.60	(6.89)
AMDOCS:	38.60	(0.01)	NASDAQ:	2443.83	5.63
AMPHENOL:	62.06	(1.3)			
ARRIS GROUP:	12.73	(0.07)			

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ELIGIBILITY

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CATEGORIES

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- ❷ Documentaries
- ❸ Specials
- ❹ An episode(s) of a recurring series that highlights public affairs issues.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Does the entry raise awareness of an issue and/or improve the public's understanding of an important public affairs issue?
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- Does the program or PSA make its argument in a clear and thought-provoking manner?

REQUIREMENTS

- Please submit 3 copies of each entry on VHS or DVD
- Each entry must be accompanied by a press kit or a short statement explaining the entry (show date, plot synopsis etc.)
- A \$75 entry fee per nomination via company or personal check or money order must accompany each entry. In the case of a series of PSAs, 1 check for \$75 per series will be required. Under difficult circumstances late payment of fees will be permitted. Make checks payable to: CableWorld Magazine.
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