

Cablefax Daily™

Monday — July 2, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 29 / No. 126

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Making Room: Comic-Con Absences Allow for Underdogs to Rise to the Top

As nerds and superfans alike gear up for **San Diego Comic-Con**, most would be expecting to see the series with the most noteworthy cult followings having the biggest showings. In some ways, that's still true. **BBC America** is holding its usual "Doctor Who" panel, marking the first SDCC appearance for new Doctor *Jodie Whittaker*. **AMC's** "The Walking Dead" will hold its last panel with star *Andrew Lincoln* before he leaves in its ninth season. Although some of these old favorites have come to hold a consistent presence at the conference, the 2018 show floor will have some noticeable absences. **HBO** was one of the first to say it would not be at SDCC, marking the first time "Game of Thrones" would not be at the convention in some way since its launch. "Due to production schedules and air dates for Game of Thrones and Westworld, these series will not be presented at San Diego Comic-Con this summer," HBO said in a statement. "HBO has a longstanding relationship with SDCC and we are very grateful for the fans' enthusiastic response over the years." The absence of those vying for the Iron Throne leaves an opening in the conference's coveted Hall H for underdog series and nontraditional players. While **The CW's** "Riverdale" has come to Comic-Con twice before, this year will mark its first time having a panel in Hall H. **Hulu** is said to be preparing to make a major splash at the convention by debuting "Castle Rock," the *Stephen King*-based and *JJ Abrams*-produced series. Series writer *Marc Bernardin* tweeted in May a trailer from the upcoming series, saying "My Comic-Con is gonna be the best kind of bananas..." The original is set to premiere on July 25, just one week after the fan convention. **Amazon** told *Deadline* the specifics behind its plans for the convention and its "Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan" series, noting that it would have one giant panel for all of its programming news while also world premiering some footage. It's also building a VR operative experience (called the Jack Ryan Experience) for the con, giving participants the chance to join in an effort to get Ryan out of an escape room. One of the most surprising newcomers to SDCC is **Sky**, which has never crossed the pond for the convention. It will hold a panel for Sky One's "A Discovery Of Witches" with stars *Teresa Palmer*, *Matthew Goode*, *Alex Kingston*, *Owen Teale*, ep *Deb Harkness* and ep *Jane Tranter*, a major move for Sky considering the intense battle currently being waged by **Disney** and **Comcast** for the British telecom company. And while it seems a bit silly to ever call **Netflix** an underdog or outside player, **Marvel Studios** skipping out on Hall H for the first time since 2015 allows the streamer to capitalize on and heavily leverage its superhero

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properties like “Iron Fist” along with its fan favorite originals such as “Stranger Things.”

Comcast Outage: Comcast suffered an outage that extended across most of the country Friday. The company said on Twitter that one of its large backbone network partners had a fiber cut, adding that it believed other providers were impacted. Reports on social media indicated that **Verizon** and **AT&T** may have been impacted as well. At 4:45pm ET Friday, a Comcast spokesperson said the company had identified two unrelated fiber cuts to network backbone providers. Calls to **Zayo Group** and **CenturyLink** (which purchased **Level 3** last year) weren’t returned by deadline. “Our engineers worked to address the issue immediately and services are now being restored to business and residential internet, video and voice customers. We again apologize to anyone who was impacted,” Comcast said.

California Privacy: With lawmakers grappling with how to better protect consumers’ privacy, a lot of attention is being paid to just-passed legislation in California that grants consumers the right to know what’s being collected about them, why and whom they are sharing it with. *Robert Cattanach*, a partner at the international law firm **Dorsey & Whitney**, sees it as emulating the EU’s GDPR. “Congress will feel pressure from both pro-privacy advocates to endorse the rights created by California, and businesses to try to bring uniformity to what is increasingly a dynamically evolving policy area,” said Cattanach, who has previously worked as a trial attorney for DOJ. “The bottom line is that this leverages on the concepts contained in GDPR and is certain to be picked up as the standard by other states.” **The Internet Association**, whose members include **Amazon** and **Facebook**, cautioned against using the bill as a standard for new laws. Data collection is a complex subject, IA said, decrying a lack of public discussion for the bill. “The circumstances of this bill are specific to California. It is critical going forward that policymakers work to correct the inevitable, negative policy and compliance ramifications this last-minute deal will create for California’s consumers and businesses alike,” the group said.

On the Farm (Bill): The Senate passed its \$428bn farm bill Thursday on an 86-to-11 vote. Now is the likely difficult task of reconciling it with the House version, which had no Democratic support and imposes new work requirements on able-bodied food stamp recipients. **NCTA** praised the Senate’s passage, noting the legislation has reforms to the RUS broadband loan program that will focus it more on unserved areas vs overbuilding existing networks. “We encourage the House and Senate to come together and produce a combined Farm Bill that includes these important reforms,” the group said.

Remembering Les Read: Whether it was through his work as **The Cable Center’s** ambassador, his many years with the **Cable Television Pioneers**, or his decades at **HBO** and **TelePrompTer**, there’s a good chance that most everyone in the industry encountered *Les Read* at some point. Or at least heard his booming voice, which narrated *The Cable Center’s* Hall of Fame and the *Cable Pioneers* dinners for years. Read passed away Thursday evening in Long Island

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FEATURED KEYNOTE:
Dr. Lois Frankel

at the age of 82, with news quickly spreading among industry friends on social media. Read had experienced a cardiac condition earlier in the month, according to *Jim Faircloth*, exec dir of Cable TV Pioneers—an organization Read led for more than two decades. “You cannot even think of the Cable Pioneers without thinking of Les. Les’ rich baritone has been silenced, but for our memories and the recordings that will always be treasured. There will never be another like Les,” Faircloth said, sending heartfelt condolences to Read’s wife, *Anne*, and his entire family. Read’s industry resume includes helping build TelePrompTer from 23 cable systems to 120. In 1974, he joined HBO in affiliate relations, rising to vp until his retirement in December 2001—though many just called him “Mr HBO.” His amazing voice also was used by the programmer for on-air promotions. “Les spent his 27 years at the company proudly devoted to making it a success. With a charm and sweetness never to be seen again, he was one of HBO’s greatest ambassadors. We will miss that huge smile and big heart,” HBO said. In 2002, The Cable Center appointed Read as its ambassador, with the Pioneers naming him exec director emeritus when he stepped down in 2016. “Throughout his career—and even after he retired—Les Read was an ambassador who drew attention to everything that is good about our industry,” said SCTE-ISBE pres/CEO *Mark Dzuban*. Info on services is pending, and we’ll share details when we have them.

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The murder of journalists is an assault on our foundational freedoms, the truth and all citizens of our democracy. As we mourn the loss of at least 5 people, we encourage you to take a moment to consider a world [#WithoutNews](#) and those who work to bring it to you every day.

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In January 1975, “Popular Electronics” featured the Altair 8800 on its cover. When my friend [@PaulGAllen](#) showed me that issue, I knew it would change our lives forever: b-gat.es/2tzuCOq

Up Ahead

- July 11-13:** [NECTA Convention](#), Newport, RI
- July 12:** 2018 [Emmy Nominations](#) Announced
- July 18:** [WICT Tech It Out](#), Philly
- July 20:** [Cablefax Most Influential Minorities](#) nomination deadline
- July 19-22:** [San Diego Comic-Con](#)
- July 27:** Disney and 21st Century Fox hold joint shareholder meeting on Disney’s \$71.3bln offer for Fox assets

Research

- 93% of P18+ watch ad-supported TV during the summer.
- Households tune into ad-supported TV an average of 25 days per summer month, similar to the rest of the year.
- The ad-supported multi-screen TV P18+ audience is 12 times larger than Facebook and 8 times larger than Facebook.
- 77% of streamers use TV network websites/apps during the summer.

(Source: VAB)

Quotable

“The New T-Mobile will have the speed and capacity to substitute in many areas for in-home broadband, including areas that currently have few or no options for reliable in-home broadband, finally creating real competition in these areas. As a result, the new technology will enable the combined company to increase broadband coverage into more rural areas, along with improved signal quality and increased network capacity in places where neither company can profitably do so on its own.”

- **Sprint executive chmn Marcelo Claude’s testimony before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee**

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