

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Wireless Week: MWCA Will Bring the Hype, but 5G's a Long Road

With **Mobile World Congress Americas** taking place this week in LA, expect the noise around 5G to get even louder. Cable's taking primarily a wait-and-see approach to 5G, though the industry is active in trials and backhaul support. Most agree there's a lot more work needed in the 5G space. "I don't see anything about 5G that ever makes it comparable to DOCSIS 3.1 or DOCSIS 3.1 Full Duplex or any of the capabilities that we have through a fixed line service," **Charter CFO Chris Winfrey** said at a recent investor conference. "But that doesn't mean there couldn't be some edge use cases where it's easier to have a wireless drop than it is to have a physical drop. If 5G ends up being a real, I think we'll have it—either in a retail capacity to address certain limited use cases where a wireless drop is better than a fixed line drop." Despite the buzz, 5G is just not ready, **Mike Mancini**, **Comcast's** director of sales engineering for Xfinity Communities, told **Cablefax**. "You're just starting to see chipsets becoming available. At the end of next year, maybe you'll start to see something that could be tested, that could be used more in a production environment. But even today as you talk about the capabilities of 20 gig, even the first set of chips support 5, and that's only in a download direction," Mancini said. "It's a little nascent as a technology, but it is developing. Between now and the next five years, you'll start to see it deployed and then the MSOs, we'll get a better chance of evaluating it and how it's viable. And more importantly, how does it fit already into an architecture and a discipline that we've already developed..." While wireless will continue to make headlines, don't underestimate the power of cable's wired infrastructure. "We have the networks built out already, either to the customer's house or very near. As short as you can make the wireless segment is advantageous," explained **SCTE-ISBE CTO Chris Bastian**. "If you offer wireless off that node that's close to the house, that is a shorter length, you can go to a higher bandwidth. But having that wired drop takes away all that uncertainty you may have with weather effects, wireless signal penetrating through building materials. A wired drop is more reliable and dependable." That brings us to Full Duplex DOCSIS, which allows upstream and downstream to use the same spectrum simultaneously using existing hybrid fiber/coax networks. Last month, **CableLabs** and subsidiary **Kyrio** hosted a Full Duplex DOCSIS 3.1 interop event to provide vendors with a chance to test pre-production and development versions of hardware devices and software applications. SCTE has never worked closer with CableLabs than it is now on Full Duplex, Bastian said. "Once CableLabs has said the

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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, smiling and holding a mobile phone to her ear. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is a mix of red and grey. The CSG logo is in the top right corner.

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technology has matured enough, we work closely with them on the training for the technology. We sponsored the white papers that are at **Expo** based on the new technology, and we run the standards working groups to get those specs that CableLabs has developed to get them turned into international standards,” he said. Comcast’s Mancini predicted Full Duplex trials in 2Q or 3Q next year, with 4Q likely to see deployment. “There’s a really good chance [Full Duplex] will be able to support those symmetric speeds needed for small cells, the small 5G cells. You need a very dense number of cells to support 5G and you couldn’t physically run fiber out to each one of those. It wouldn’t be economically feasible,” he said.

Short on Time: The **FCC** pressed pause on its voluntary 180-day transaction shot clock for **T-Mobile** and **Sprint’s** combo, saying the companies submitted a substantially revised network engineering model on Sept 5 that will require more time to review. “The newly-provided network engineering model is significantly larger and more complex than the engineering submissions already in the record. It appears to incorporate new logic, methodologies, facts, and assumptions, on a subject central to the Applications—the transaction’s claimed network benefits,” said a letter from FCC Wireless Bureau chief *Donald Stockdale* and T-Mobile/Sprint transition task force director *David Lawrence*. The duo also cited an Aug 29 ex parte meeting in which T-Mobile’s *Mike Sievert* and *Peter Ewens* described T-Mobile’s reliance on a business model called “Build 9,” which the FCC and third parties did not have access to until Sept 5. T-Mobile also recently stated that it is looking to submit further economic modeling in support of the applications.

Charter’s NY State: The **NY PSC** has granted **Charter** a second 30-day extension for filing its plan to exit the state. In July, the PSC took back its approval of the Charter-**Time Warner Cable** merger and ordered the MSO to file within 60 days a plan to depart the state. The two have been in a dispute over whether Charter has met buildout requirements that were conditions of the merger. Last month, the PSC granted an extension for filing the plan, moving the deadline to Oct 9. On Monday, it granted the new extension citing “productive engagement and dialogue” by Charter as well as the decision to pull ads that the PSC thought were misleading. Charter was also given an additional 30 days to file a rehearing petition for the PSC’s revocation and compliance orders.

Weekly Ratings: The return of college football helped **ESPN** push **Fox News** out of the No 1 spot in prime for cable nets among P2+ last week. ESPN averaged 2.56mln viewers in prime last week, ahead of runner-up Fox News’ 2.32mln. The net’s coverage of Virginia Tech-FL State was the most-watched cable show of the week (5.65mln), with the Clemson-Texas A&M game taking second place (4.49mln). Other rating highlights last week include Wednesday’s **MSNBC** “Rachel Maddow Show” topping Fox News’ “Hannity” as the most-watched news program for the week (3.67mln vs 3.63mln). Don’t cry for Fox. It was still the most-watched network in total day—a title it’s held for 35 consecutive weeks—and

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nabbed 11 of the top 25 telecasts overall in total viewers.

More Numbers: The series premiere of **ID's** "Twisted Sisters" surpassed ratings expectations and averaged nearly 1.5mln viewers P2+ for the premiere on Labor Day. The *Khloe Kardashian*-produced show reached a combined 3.5mln unique P2+ viewers including the encore airing in late night. The ep is now the No 1 primetime telecast on ID for 3Q18 to-date in W25-54. -- **ESPN's** presentation of the US Open was its strongest showing since its first year of exclusivity in 2015, being seen by an average of 1.036mln total viewers (+9% YOY). The most-watched telecast this year was the Women's Championship on Sept 8 with an average of 3.101mln viewers, ranking it as third all-time and the most-watched Women's Championship in ESPN's four years of exclusivity.

Hurricane Season: Preparations were being made Tuesday as mandatory evacuations were issued in coastal NC, SC and VA for Hurricane Florence. The **FCC** issued procedures for providing emergency communications in areas affected by Florence as well as Olivia, Isaac and Typhoon Mangkhut. As the storm approaches, **The Weather Channel** launched the first of a series of videos produced in partnership with **Sesame Workshop** to help teach children (and adults) how to stay safe. The first featured lovable Elmo and meteorologist *Stephanie Abrams* talking about how to prepare. **Comcast** opened more than 127K Xfinity WiFi Hotspots Tuesday in Charleston, S.C.; Savannah and Augusta, GA.; Maryland, Virginia, DC, and parts of Delaware and West so customers, non-customers and emergency personnel can stay connected for free. **Charter** isn't just getting generators and other prep in place in the Carolinas. Its Spectrum News team has hit Nags Head, NC, to provide coverage of Florence for the week.

Weighing CBS: When it comes to **CBS Corp's** separation and settlement agreement with *Les Moonves*, **Moody's** believes the move is credit negative for the company. Moody's is primarily concerned that the many allegations of misconduct against Moonves and other similar alleged activity in the company's news division raise concerns about that kind of behavior being tolerated, the board's inability to engage in independent oversight and the culture within the company. On the other hand, Moody's positively viewed CBS entry into a settlement agreement with **National Amusements** and the *Redstone* family. The agreement includes the addition of new independent board members, a requirement that a two-thirds majority of those board members must approve a merger with **Viacom**. "The large number of new board members will hopefully result in active hands-on governance to remediate the aforementioned weaknesses and lapses," Moody's wrote.

Back to School: **Evercore's** 8th annual Teen & College Age Back-to-School Survey found that a shift to mobile and media streaming devices continues among teenagers, but cord cutting propensity is still low relative to video watching habits. Approximately 30% of 13-23-year-olds said that their household is not likely to replace traditional cable and satellite, compared to approximately 40% the year before. The majority of teens (70%) still watch video most frequently on a PC/laptop or a mobile device, but media streaming devices saw a jump to nearly 20% from approximately 15%. In terms of online video sites, **Netflix** lost share from around 50% to 37%, but still remains the top pick. The biggest share gainers over the last year were **Hulu** and **Amazon Prime**.

Major Fishing: In an effort to grow visibility, **Major League Fishing** announced a significant expansion beginning next year. MLF will continue its Cup events and World Championship, airing on **Outdoor Channel** and **CBS** respectively, but it will also now have its own new Bass Pro Tour competitions and championship. MLF has been Outdoor Channel's top-rated show in first quarters for three years in a row, according to **Nielsen** ratings. The expansion comes along with support from partners **Outdoor Sportsman Group** and **Bass Pro Shops**.

Programming: Starting Monday, *Jim Sciutto* will join *Poppy Harlow* as co-anchor of "CNN Newsroom," weekdays at 9am on **CNN**. -- **Hearst Television** launched a series for **Facebook Watch** to highlight local reporting through 26 TV markets in the US. "Dispatches from the Middle" was produced for and funded by Facebook as part of an investment the platform is making in high quality and timely news content. -- **Lifetime** set premiere dates for two "Married at First Sight" spin-off series. "Married at First Sight: Honeymoon Island" premieres Oct 23 at 10pm, and "Married at First Sight: Happily Ever After" will begin airing on Oct 30 at 10pm.

People: **American Public Television** tapped *Shawn Halford* as its vp, exchange content and digital services starting in October. He will take over for *Chris Funkhouser* who is retiring. Halford currently serves as senior director for programming and scheduling at **PBS**. -- Four new members joined the **NCTC** board of directors in late July: **Shentel** svp, cable, *Tom Whitaker*; **EPB Chattanooga** vp *Katie Espeseth*; **Allo Communications** pres *Brad Moline*; and **All West Communications** pres *Matt Weller*. NCTC board members commit to a three-year team, working in partnership with other NCTC leaders to support member companies.

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