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What the Industry Reads First

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Relevant Rebrand: AT&T Transforms Ad Division to Xandr

AT&T revealed its new advertising and analytics company **Xandr** during its own “Relevance Conference” Tuesday in Santa Barbara, CA. Xandr will include all aspects of the existing ad and analytics businesses, including the advanced TV business, **AdWorks**, **ATT.net**, **AppNexus** and the data and analytics business. AT&T acquired AppNexus in June for a reported \$1.6bln, and it will be pivotal for Xandr. “Xandr is a name that draws inspiration from AT&T’s rich history, including its founder *Alexander Graham Bell*, while imagining how to innovate and solve new challenges for the future of advertising,” CEO *Brian Lesser* said. “Our purpose is to ‘Make Advertising Matter’ and to connect people with the brands and content they care about. Throughout AT&T’s 142-year history, it has innovated with data and technology, making its customers’ lives better. Xandr will bring that spirit of innovation to the advertising industry.” **Altice USA** and **Frontier Communications** both have deals with Xandr to aggregate and sell its national addressable TV advertising inventory. Xandr and **a4**, Altice’s advanced ad business, will collaborate as well. “a4 set out to build an advertising solution that serves the most daunting challenges for advertisers—the need for simplicity, accountability and scaled, authenticated audiences no matter the screen,” a4 pres *Paul Haddad* said in a statement. “And our mission is furthered greatly by partnering with AT&T as we help them bring to market the addressable TV solution that’s been missing in the digital age while continuing to expand our coverage in delivering effective IP-based digital targeting and multiscreen advertising on a national level.” Xandr is built out of four key components of AT&T: customer data, premium programming from **WarnerMedia**, advanced advertising technology and AT&T’s distribution to more than 170mln DTC relationships in an effort to take on current ad leaders. AT&T hopes Xandr can aggregate video inventory from multiple MVPDs in order to make linear TV buying more automated and data-driven. The philosophy is that by combining data with the ad tech, advertisers will be more able to more effectively reach their audiences without wasting money on traditional, non-targeted TV. According to Xandr, **Insight Strategy Group** and **Advertiser Perceptions** conducted surveys to understand dynamics between consumer sentiment and the advertising experience. The first Xandr Relevancy Report found 66% of consumers wish ads were more relevant to their interests and lifestyles, and 57% said ads weren’t relevant to them. However, 64% said that they believe advertising enables independent voices to be heard online,

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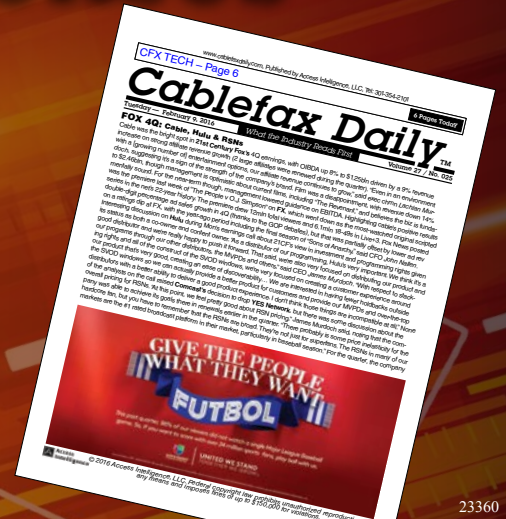
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and 70% enjoy when ads go beyond simply selling a product. The Xandr name beat out two other unknown names the company was considering. During his presentation, Lesser recognized the name might draw some criticism. “We hope you love the name,” Lesser said. “We’ll put enough resources behind Xandr that you’re going to love it eventually.” Names are tough. Just ask Verizon’s digital unit **Oath**.

LFA Regulation: Ahead of Wednesday’s Open Meeting, the **FCC** went ahead and voted 4-0 to adopt an item clarifying local franchising authorities’ regulation of cable ops. The item, a Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, addresses issues raised in July after the US Sixth Circuit vacated two parts of FCC decisions that had limited the ability of LFAs to regulate non-cable services provider over a mixed use cable system. The court, which also nixed LFAs imposing non-monetary assessments on cable ops, remanded the case to the FCC. The Second Further Notice tentatively concludes that in-kind contributions/non-monetary assessments required by LFAs (such as free/discounted cable to local governments) should be treated as franchise fees subject to the statutory 5% fee cap (capital costs for PEG channels are the only in-kind contribution excluded from the fee cap in the FCC proposal). The NPRM also tentatively concludes that in terms of mixed-use networks, LFAs should be prohibited from using their video franchising authority to regulate non-cable services offered over cable systems, such as broadband. “Today’s unanimous FCC action rightly proposes to reinstate its earlier rules establishing clear limits on franchising authorities’ ability to impose undue and unwarranted regulations and fees on cable operators that have the effect of delaying the deployment of broadband and other new services and making those services more expensive for consumers,” **NCTA** said. “We look forward to participating in the rulemaking proceeding.”

Beltway Wednesday: Lots of action happening in DC Wednesday, with **Senate Commerce** holding a hearing in the morning on safeguards for consumer data privacy. Witnesses include **Charter** svp, policy & external affairs **Rachel Welch** and **Google** chief privacy officer **Keith Enright**. In the same vein, **NTIA** is requesting comment on how to set nationwide data privacy rules after the EU and California adopted tougher new requirements. It issued the request because a “growing number of foreign countries, and some US states, have articulated distinct visions for how to address privacy concerns, leading to a nationally and globally fragmented regulatory landscape.” USTelecom applauded the NTIA move, saying the US needs “clear and consistent privacy rules that apply equally to all companies that interact with consumers through the internet.” Meanwhile, over on 12th Street Wednesday, the **FCC** will convene its September Open Meeting, which includes a vote on a 5G infrastructure order that establishes shot clocks for state and local approvals for the deployment of small wireless facilities. Also on the agenda is a report and order to eliminate cable

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operators Form 325 filing requirement and a presentation on CAF Phase II auction results.

Cord Pausers: Research from **Limelight Networks** found that cord cutting may not be as big of a problem as previously thought. Its State of Online Video report found that cable subscribers (62% of respondents) pay more for online video services than non-subs. Worldwide, consumers' top two devices for watching online video are smart TVs (31%) and set-top boxes/DVD players (18%), both of which can be used for traditional video viewing. The researchers believe that people are supplementing cable with streaming, rather than replacing it.

Merger Reviews: Assistant AG *Makan Delrahim* made the case Tuesday for modernizing the merger review process during a speech before the 2018 Global Antitrust Enforcement Symposium. For one, he argues that the review process takes too long to complete. **AT&T** and **Time Warner**, whose union *Delrahim* and team are currently fighting, are likely to agree! *Delrahim* outlined what the Antitrust Division is doing to speed the process along. Those efforts include meeting with parties early. The division will soon publish a model voluntary request letter aimed at getting crucial information during the initial waiting period. Other pledges include increased transparency and reforms to timing agreements. In exchange, the division expects parties to provide documents faster and eliminate "gamesmanship on privilege issues."

Out of This World: Free streaming service **PlutoTV** announced a launch of eight new original channels, including a mix of comedy, drama, thrillers and more. Pluto TV Comedy and Pluto TV Drama both launched Tuesday. The others, which cover genres such as Westerns and romance, will become available in a staggered release. The channels include several movies, such as "Clue" and "Catch & Release." PlutoTV is backed by **USVP, ProSiebenSat.1 Media, Samsung Ventures, Sky** and other investors.

TCA Takeback: On the same day *Bill Cosby* was sentenced to 3-10 years in prison for sexual assault, the **Television Critics Association** announced it was rescinding the comedian's Career Achievement Award. TCA said its members voted "overwhelmingly" to take back the 2002 honor.

Comcast Cares: **Comcast** announced a partnership with **Internet Essentials**, the **Elizabeth Dole Foundation** and the **PsychArmor Institute**. The effort will support the creation of 10 veteran-specific digital skills training videos and materials, which will work to close the digital divide between low-income vets and seniors. The programs will be available online at Comcast-sponsored computer labs in 10 markets. Since 2011, the Internet Essentials program has connected more than 6mIn Americans to the internet.

Streamy Time: **dick clark productions** and **Tubefilter** announced the nominees for the 8th Annual Streamy Awards. *David Dobrik* leads with six noms, followed by *Casey Neistat* and "Escape the Night" with five noms each. **YouTube** has been named the presenting and distribution partner for the awards, taking place on Oct 22 at 9pm.

Ramp Up the Vote: **MTV** is expanding its first-ever midterm election campaign "+1 the Vote" with celebrity PSAs featuring boy band *PRETTYMUCH*, "Jersey Shore's" *Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi*, *Frankie Grande* and more to mark National Voter Registration Day. The campaign first kicked off during the VMAs and will only continue to accelerate approaching Election Day.

NBC Deals: **NBC Sports Group**, Grambling State & Southern University reached an agreement to extend their three-decade partnership for an additional three years. This will keep the annual Bayou Classic on **NBCSN** through 2021. The annual college football matchup is played Thanksgiving weekend at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans. By the end of 2021, NBCSN will have broadcasted the Classic 31 times.

Ratings: **INSP's** "The Cowboy Way" scored its highest rating ever since it debuted on the net in July 2017. The Sept 16 ep averaged an L+3 rating of .374.

Programming: **Netflix** is bringing "Making a Murderer" back with 10 new episodes on Oct 19. It's been nearly three years since the docuseries' debut. The show has been credited with launching a wave of true crime on TV. -- **Pop TV's** original series "Schitt's Creek" returns with a holiday ep Dec 19 at 10pm, followed by the Season 5 premiere on Jan 16.

On the Circuit: More than 600 people have registered for the Distributed Access Architectures seminar on Oct 22 at the SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo. The event will be headlined by execs from **Charter, Comcast, Cox, Shaw** and Denmark's **Stofa**. It's a continuation of last year's discussion of Remote PHY, but it also will include presentations on the role that will be played by Remote MAC PHY and the Flexible MAC Architecture.

People: *A. George (Skip) Battle* announced he will be retiring from **Netflix's** board effective Dec 15. Battle also serves on the boards of **LinkedIn** and **OpenTable**, among others. He previously served with **Anderson Consulting** and also is the former CEO of **Ask.com**.