

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Moving On: Zaslav Slams Nielsen, is Hopeful on WarnerMedia Merger

Discovery president/CEO *David Zaslav* doubled down on his criticism of **Nielsen** during the programmer's Q21 earnings call Tuesday, describing the measurement firm's recent challenges related to data accuracy as massively disappointing.

"We have lost money. Everyone's lost money. You're dealing with a very antiquated delivery system. We've all learned how to get along with it, we do it by augmenting it with our own data. But recently, they've just been wrong," he said. "We're competing with the likes of Google and Facebook where they have the best data, the cleanest data, and you compare that with this antiquated system. We continue to work on it and I don't have a lot of hope for Nielsen."

Zaslav added that his team is aggressively working to build its own data to offer to advertisers in place of Nielsen's measurements. Those efforts are ongoing across **discovery+**, the Discovery Go apps and the company's linear networks.

Discovery recorded revenues of \$3.06 billion, a 21% increase YOY, and that's largely due to a 12% boost in ad revenues. The advertising revenues were largely due to higher pricing, higher inventory and the monetization of new content offerings. The programmer now has 18 million paying streaming subscribers across its direct-to-consumer services, Zaslav has high hopes for discovery+'s growth, particularly ahead of his company's pending merger with **WarnerMedia**.

Zaslav said he has yet to hear any pushback against the deal

from a regulatory perspective. He only received positive signs from those in Washington during a visit to DC last week. The approval is still on track for mid-2022, but Zaslav is hoping that could mean the merger is complete sooner rather than later.

"This becomes a very strong company for consumers, a more compelling streaming business. And so right now, it feels to us that on every level we've seen green lights... having said that, we're not in control of the timing. **Disney** was able to get their deal done in six months," he said. "It could be significantly sooner, it could be a little later. We're just not in charge of the timing... we're still hoping that we could really get lucky and it'll happen a lot sooner."

He also gave his own take on the consolidation trend across the industry, saying the amount of interest in content companies only validates the value of Discovery's assets. "The toughest thing to do is to put together a great library, a menu of IP," Zaslav said. "Over the next couple of years, more and more people are going to look and raise their hand. There will be more consolidation, more IP libraries sold, because you need a lot of content to be successful."

MAINE PEG CHANNEL LAW MAINTAINED

The **1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** rejected **NCTA's** attempt to overturn a Maine law requiring cable operators to place PEG channels in their basic cable tier and on lower channels in the vicinity of broadcast stations. The law also requires operators to include channels in program guides and to extend cable service to areas that have a population



CONGRATULATIONS to all the honorees!

It's a Cablefax 100 like never before.

During these unprecedented times, we asked the industry's power hitters to reflect on how the pandemic has changed the business and their own personal perspectives.

**Read their thoughts in our annual 100 digital issue.
Browse and share individual profiles.**

www.cablefax100.com

density of at least 15 residences per linear strand mile. NCTA argued at the district court level that the PEG channel requirements run contrary to federal law in the Cable Act. That argument was rejected, and NCTA appealed the decision. “This is great news not only for residents of Maine, but also for people around the country. States have the authority to enact consumer protection laws and have stepped up to promote privacy, broadband affordability, and net neutrality, among other things,” **Public Knowledge** legal director *John Bergmayer* said. “While the facts of each case differ, this case should give state lawmakers some assurance that industry lawsuits are often grasping at straws.” NCTA did not have a statement at our deadline.

COX, VIACOMCBS SIGN DISTRIBUTION DEAL

Cox Communications and **ViacomCBS** signed multi-year distribution deals for the programmer’s entertainment, news and sports networks. The deal will also give Cox subscribers expanded access to ViacomCBS’s streaming services, including **Paramount+** and **Pluto TV**. ViacomCBS struck a similar agreement with **Charter** last month. Financial terms of the agreements were not disclosed.

ALLEN CLOSES ON 10 GRAY STATIONS

Allen Media Group has completed its \$380 million cash acquisition of 10 local television stations in seven markets divested from **Gray Television**. The purchase comes one week after the **DOJ** required that Gray divest the stations as a condition of Gray’s proposed \$925 million acquisition of **Quincy** in light of competitive harm concerns. The 10 stations joining the AMG station portfolio include **KVOA**

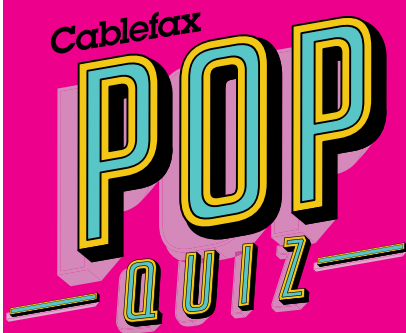
(Tucson, Arizona); **WKOW** (Madison, Wisconsin); **WSIL/KPOB** (Paducah, Kentucky-Harrisburg, Illinois); **KWWL** (Cedar Rapids, Iowa); **WXOW/WQOW** (La Crosse-Eau Claire, Wisconsin); **WAOW/WMOW** (Wausau-Rhineland, Wisconsin); and **WREX** (Rockford, Illinois). With this buy, Allen Media Group now owns 25 broadcast stations in 19 markets across the nation.

FANDANGO UNITING STREAMERS

NBCU-owned digital entertainment network **Fandango** is uniting its movie and TV streaming services, **Vudu** and **FandangoNOW** to become a combined entertainment platform under the Vudu name. Fandango acquired Vudu from **Walmart** in early 2020 and the updated Vudu will replace FandangoNOW as the official movie and TV store on TV streaming platform **Roku**. FandangoNOW users can transfer their accounts and collections to Vudu and access to their libraries will be provided through Vudu from then on. The Movie Store and TV Store on Roku devices will automatically update to the new Vudu.

RATINGS

Fox News Channel topped primetime and total day ratings again last week with 1.986 million total viewers in primetime and 1.129 million in total day. **USA Network**, **MSNBC** and **HGTV** took second, third and fourth place in both categories, as well. USA delivered 1.702 million total viewers in primetime and 778,000 in total day while MSNBC delivered 1.127 in primetime and 751,000 in total day. HGTV took 975,000 total viewers in primetime and 577,000 in total day. **TLC** (894,000) closed the top five



One winner will be selected each week for a Starbucks gift card

Last week’s answer: The Disney Channel launched on April 18, 1983 as a premium channel.

Kudos to last week’s winner: Bob Gold, Bob Gold & Associates

[CLICK HERE TO ANSWER](#)

What was the theme song for HBO’s “The Sopranos”?

in primetime while **CNN** (558,000) rounded out the top five in total day ratings. – **Spectrum Networks** averaged more than 2.8 million daily viewing households for a 4% month-over-month increase in July across all linear and digital platforms in its nine-state reach. The increases can be attributed to coverage of extreme weather events from the networks. Spectrum Bay News 9 in Tampa Bay saw a 3.05 full day rating on July 6, nearly four times higher than its previous 30-day average, amidst its Hurricane Elsa coverage. As the storm moved into Orlando, Spectrum News 13 saw a 67% increase on the same day compared to the previous 30-day average. More than 70,000 Florida residents flocked to the Spectrum News app on July 6 and the weather radar on the app saw an average of 5.9 visits per day throughout the week of July 5-9.

CRUNCHYROLL PASSES 5 MILLION SUBS

Crunchyroll has officially surpassed the five million subscriber mark, just six months after it shattered the four million subscriber mark. The company offers its anime content library to viewers in more than 200 countries and territories and boasts 120 million registered users. Following the subscription milestone, the brand announced it is developing animated space opera “Dark Star Squadron” with *Zoe Saldana*’s **Cinestar Pictures**.

HBO MAX OFFERS FREE EPISODES IN-APP

HBO Max is providing potential new subscribers in the U.S. with the opportunity to watch select episodes of some of its most popular programming in-app before purchasing a subscription. The free lineup will initially include 13 episodes of **HBO** and HBO Max originals including “Euphoria,” “Game of Thrones” and “The Flight Attendant.” The feature expands on the existing sampling opportunities at HBOMax.com and through the recent launch of HBO Max Snap Mini, allowing Snapchat users to watch free episodes

of the streamer’s content with friends on the Snapchat app.

CARRIAGE

Two streaming apps are bringing their content libraries to **VIZIO SmartCast** in the next month. The first to arrive on the platform will be **BET+**, available to viewers Wednesday. Users can access the service for a free weeklong trial before paying for a subscription at \$9.99 per month. **discovery+** will be available on the platform by September. The pair join services like **Apple TV+**, **Disney+**, **Hulu**, **Netflix**, **Peacock** and **Amazon Prime Video** on the platform. – The **HBO Max** app is now available on **LG** smart TVs in the U.S. The U.S. launch follows the launch of the app on the brand’s smart TVs across select territories in Latin America and the Caribbean in June. – **CuriosityStream** is now available for purchase at Sam’s Club online. HD annual subscriptions are now available on the retailer’s website with member-only pricing.

PROGRAMMING

HGTV greenlit tabletop and event design competition series “Table Wars,” set to debut in November.

PEOPLE

Charter Communications promoted *Jodi Robinson* to evp, digital platforms and *Jake Perlman* to evp, software development & IT. As part of Robinson’s new role, employee-facing experiences that support customer service representatives and field technicians on the ground as well as customer online ordering and video engineering will move under her supervision. Perlman’s new role will see him bring together the previously separate software development, infrastructure and deployment processes with the IT and software engineering organizations under one umbrella. Both will report to chief product and technology officer *Rich DiGeronimo*. Robinson and Perlman joined the operator in 2014 and 2016, respectively.

    @WICTHQ

WICT helps
women and the
industry lead
with more.

▲ Connect to the most powerful network of women
in cable, media and technology at www.wictnow.org.

- ▲ More **diversity**
- ▲ More **equity**
- ▲ More **inclusion**
- ▲ **More profitability**

#LeadWithMore



Women in Cable
Telecommunications