

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Explore More: BET Looks to Reach Advanced Audiences

It's no secret that **Nielsen** has been under scrutiny by many programmers for undercounted ratings during the pandemic, but some say the problems pre-date COVID. For years, there's been a deficiency in measurement, specifically in regards to African American consumers, according to **BET** President of Media Sales *Louis Carr*.

"There have been so many excuses over the years that we're excited to have more people enter the environment to really try to measure the impact that African American consumers and African Americans [are] having on the overall media landscape," he said during a **VAB** webinar Wednesday. "Whether we're talking about linear or whether we're talking about digital and social, we've got to get it right. Because as you know, African American consumers overconsume in media, period. So it's not just affecting Black media. It's affecting all media outlets."

BET has sought ways to identify value points for its advertising partners while also helping it gain insight into what viewers are craving. The company partnered with the media measurement and optimization company **VideoAmp** to conduct a case study on how a more representative method can be used on tentpole events like the BET Awards, which garnered [3.2 million viewers](#) P2+ across 10 **Paramount** networks. With this, they wanted to explore the multi-dimensional metrics that fit the diverse audience that BET has.

VideoAmp uses set-top box, smart TV and ACR data from 39 million households and 63 million devices to gather information on the linear side of things. For digital and streaming, its data set comes from first- and third-party data sources, log-level ad server files and other behaviors observed by its partners. It's just one of the many measurement firms trying to unseat the Nielsen giant, which even the **FCC** is [pondering its reliance on](#).

With BET, VideoAmp focused on two advanced audiences. The first was African Americans 18+ who are "influencers around social responsibilities." This was labeled as "BET Change Makers." The second audience "BET Cultural Innovators" focused on the same demographic, but for those "who consider themselves to be trendsetters for all cultures." According to VideoAmp SVP, Marketing *Esther Maguire*, these terms are used across the industry to describe audiences, but for BET they take a deeper meaning. Carr mentioned the network's Content for Change initiative as an example of how BET motivates its audience to better their communities.

The 2022 BET Awards saw 39% growth YOY when it came to advanced audience viewership. VideoAmp found that advanced audience viewing was over double what the average audience is for BET in prime. The program reached 500,000 people who fall under the "change makers" and "cultural innovators" categories, allowing BET to evaluate how the awards reached high-value audiences.

"We're finally seeing discussions among different industry

## Guide to Your Online Cablefax Daily Issues

The screenshot shows the Cablefax Daily website for Wednesday, September 15, 2021. The interface includes a navigation bar with 'THE DAILY', 'AWARDS & EVENTS', 'THE MAGAZINE', 'SPECIAL REPORTS', 'THE LISTS', and 'JOBS'. A 'Featured in this Issue' section lists various companies and organizations. A main article titled 'Still Assisting: Charter Looks to Aid Community Centers, Job Training' is highlighted. Callouts A through E point to specific features: A (Subscriber Login), B (Featured in this Issue), C (Issue headlines on the left nav bar), D (PDF version access), and E (Full Archives).

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players about this importance of identifying, connecting with and accurately measuring that diverse audience,” Maguire said. “We did identification measurement of advanced audience segments specific to the target viewers for both network and advertiser, and it was really exciting to leverage second-by-second data to understand key moments during the event.”

That data was critical for a show that was constantly moving, meaning advertisers and networks could even see the effectiveness of specific moments. That real-time data is what ad agencies and networks are looking for as they explore other options outside of Nielsen, such as **NBCUniversal** testing **iSpot.tv** during the 2022 Winter Olympics or **Comcast’s** advertising division **Effectv** using **Comscore’s** local TV measurement solution as a form of currency.

The increased insight networks and ad firms are looking for depends on connecting with audiences that were once hard to reach. Now with numerous solutions available, more data can be used for companies to better utilize money and evolve on a second-by-second basis.

“When you look at the number of shows that are being launched around African American storytelling or African American stars, you’ve got to get it right whether it’s on our network or another,” Carr said.

#### NBCU CONTENT CHIEF CHANGE-UP

It’s the end of an era at **NBCUniversal** with *Mac Budill* stepping down as Content Distribution President on Nov. 15 after 10 years. He’ll be succeeded by *Matt Schnaars*, who has served as SVP, Content Distribution since 2013. Budill said he made the decision to leave and will continue with the company through the end of the year and then will take time to focus on family (he’s married to **EPIX** Co-GM *Courtney Menzel*), personal interests, community service and think about what’s next. “After 31 years in the content acquisition/distribution space—a period in which I concluded hundreds of deals but also missed the majority of holidays—it seems like the right time to make a real change in my personal and professional arc,” Budill wrote in an internal memo. “Importantly, I am able to make this personal decision knowing that we have an outstanding team in place within Content Distribution. Now seems like the perfect time to transition out—and open up greater opportunities to a team who have proven themselves as more than deserving.” In his own memo, NBCU Content Chairman *Matt Bond* praised Budill as an incredible partner, while lauding Schnaars’ work over the years with key distribution partners, including **Google**, **Apple**,  **DirecTV**, **Verizon** and **Roku**.

#### DISH, GSN STRIKE NEW DEAL

On Sept. 6 **DISH** removed **Game Show Network** from DISH TV and **Sling** after a renewed carriage agreement couldn’t be

## The WHO and the WHY

CFX’s spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



**SARAH HIRD**  
SVP, CORPORATE & CONSUMER COMMUNICATIONS

BRITBOX

3 THINGS TO KNOW

- Sarah will head up global communications for the U.K. SVOD BritBox International, where she’ll also work with international platform partners to deliver British content to the service’s over 2.5 million subscribers. She’ll also oversee the company’s team of in-house and agency partners across all regions. Sarah will report to CEO Reemah Sakaan.
- She joins from DAZN Group, where she led consumer, corporate and trade communications activity for DAZN’s streaming service. Before then she guided the launch of Disney+ to international markets as Director of Communications for Walt Disney EMEA. That was part of a 17-year career with the company, which also entailed Sarah being the lead on Star Wars franchise communications.
- Sarah also assists with communications activity on the Oscars show as a talent relations volunteer for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.

made. On Wednesday, the three-week hiatus came to an end as the two sides agreed to a multi-year deal to restore the channel on both platforms. “We’re pleased to have reached a multi-year agreement that benefits all parties, especially our customers,” said *Brian Neylon*, EVP and Group President, DISH TV, said. “I want to thank our customers for their patience and understanding as we worked through the negotiations.”

#### STATES LEVELING UP MAPPING AHEAD OF FCC MAPS

States are preparing for the opportunity to challenge the **FCC’s** revamped broadband availability maps, and sometimes that means creating their own maps that track internet service within their borders. At a **Fiber Broadband Association** webinar Wednesday, *Ray Zeisz*, the Senior Director of the Technology Infrastructure Lab at North Carolina State’s Friday Institute, said his group was hired by the state’s broadband infrastructure office to develop a survey tool and speed test for data gathering. “We felt like a lot of the ready-made tests were geared towards the more technically astute who were testing various router configurations or WiFi configurations,” he said. “What we were looking for was street-level data from real people... we wanted to make sure we reach the people that don’t have any internet.” His team then built a

data dictionary for stakeholders, and service providers could use it to find clusters where they may want to go after grant money. Georgia started down the path to mapping the entire state in 2018, identifying all locations that had broadband of 25/3. *Eric McRae*, the Associate Director of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, detailed a process that began with a commercial set of locations. Those were scrubbed for duplicates, validated and provided to ISPs who in return offered a list of all of the addresses they served. Those data points were taken all together to generate a working map. “The way we generate the map is if 80% of the locations in a given census block have access to broadband, 25/3 or greater, that census block is considered served. Anything less than that is considered unserved,” McRae said. “This past year, we’ve started making requests for different speed tiers and we’re going to start asking for technologies as well.” Both Zeisz and McRae are confident their tools could be submitted by their state broadband offices to the FCC or **NTIA** for challenges to the maps and through the BEAD program, and they’re encouraging all states that don’t have these resources to start developing something similar. Without it, it’s likely some states won’t get their fair share of funding.

#### CTIA IDENTIFIES THREE SPECTRUM BANDS FOR 5G

The U.S. is on a hunt for greenfield spectrum for commercial use, and a new **Accenture** study has identified three bands that could be prime targets. The study, commissioned by **CTIA**, laid out three blocks with the strongest potential to support 5G services: 350 MHz in the 3.1-4.5GHz band, 400 MHz in the 4.4-4.94 GHz band and 400 MHz in the 7.125-8.4 GHz band. The lower 3 GHz band promises a wide range of reliable coverage and is adjacent to the freshly-auctioned 3.45 GHz band, opening the door for spectrum licensees to acquire wider contiguous bands. The middle of the 4 GHz band has higher capacity while the 7 to 8.4 GHz range is a substantial block of high frequency contiguous spectrum that would be prime for serving densely populated areas.

#### EPIX, STARZPLAY EMBRACE THE PLUS SIGN

**EPIX** is getting a new name in 2023, becoming **MGM+** on January 15. The name shift will come to both the brand’s linear channel and streaming service, but the content on both will stay very much the same, with a focus on scripted originals. The rebrand will arrive on the same day as the Season 3 premiere of “Godfather of Harlem.” The second season was EPIX’s best performing of all time with the finale emerging as the brand’s best performing finale to date. **STARZPLAY**, **STARZ**’s premium international streaming branch, will also go through a plus transformation, but much sooner. It will rebrand as **Lionsgate+** in 35 countries on Thursday along with a new brand look and graphics package rolling out across the entire company. The new color palette and design elements will roll out in the U.S. for **STARZ** before being rolled out around the world. **Lionsgate**

also filed an 8-K Wednesday reiterating that it is still on the path to separating its **STARZ** and studio businesses and is in negotiations with strategic and financial partners on both sides of the company.

#### AMC NETWORKS, KNOWN PARTNER FOR PLANNING

**AMC Networks** has tapped **Known** as its global media agency of record. *Len Fogge*, Known’s President of Marketing, and his team will be responsible for full funnel media strategy, planning and buying across all media channels. The goals for Known will be driving viewership, engagement and subscriptions for AMC Networks’ family of networks and streaming services through data-driven campaigns.

#### AT&T WANTS TO EVEN OUT THE SCORE

**AT&T** is teaming up with **SeeHer** to establish a scorecard to quantify gender representation in programming and other projects. The [scorecard](#) offers measurement tools for brands, sports leagues and media companies to quantify and benchmark their gender equity initiatives. Those that use the scorecard will also be encouraged to share their entries with SeeHer to aid in the creation of industry-wide benchmarks.

#### HURRICANE IAN

As Hurricane Ian made landfall Wednesday afternoon, **DirecTV** launched an emergency weather channel called **Severe Weather Channel**. It’ll update customers on the storm’s development with local news coverage from **Nielsen** DMAs that are in the hurricane’s path, as well as coverage from **The Weather Channel**, **CNN** and **AccuWeather**. Customers can access SWC on channel 361-2. – Tampa Bay’s **Spectrum** [Bay News 9](#) and Orlando’s [Spectrum News 13](#) opened their website paywalls and the Spectrum News app. Both will remain open through the duration of the storm and its aftermath. – Spanish-language broadcast net **HITN** has activated its mental and health orientation chat to answer questions and help alleviate distress due to storm. Medical and psychology staff from [VidaySalud.com](#) are available to help people affected by Hurricane Ian, free of charge, Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm ET via chat.

#### CARRIAGE

**Fox Weather** is now being carried on **Verizon Fios** and on the free video streaming service **Amazon Freevee**. On Fios, Fox Weather will be available to all TV subscribers on channels 113 (SD) and 613 (HD). On Freevee, viewers will be able to access it through the Fox Weather FAST channel on the app or within the Live TV tab on **Amazon Prime Video**.

#### HONORS

**NAMIC** is awarding “Nightline” co-anchor *Juju Chang* the 2022 Mickey Leland Humanitarian Achievement Award. The award recognizes individuals and companies for their commitments to advancing the concerns of people of color, and Chang has dedicated her career to telling stories around racial equity, gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ issues. She’ll be honored during the Annual Awards Luncheon on Oct. 12 that is part of the 36th Annual NAMIC Conference.



## Think about that for a minute...

### Business Plans

Commentary by Steve Effros

In the past several columns I've tried to at least clarify the language being used to describe the various businesses we are in. Now comes the fun part. Where are these businesses going? Are we forging new ground or simply reinventing the wheel?

When it comes to creating and delivering information and entertainment to consumers, the core business I'm focusing on, a clear trend emerges: the entertainment and/or information cost is higher than consumers are willing to pay. There has to be at least a "dual-revenue stream" to make the business work. Think about it: the theaters need to sell popcorn, where the actual profit margin for them seems to reside. Printed newspapers couldn't be sustained on subscription revenue alone, they needed advertising and particularly the classified ads. Both have been decimated by new technology. Broadcast television worked fine so long as it was a protected government cartel in designated markets. When cable service came along, that forced the need for a second revenue stream: retransmission consent.

Cable did fine as a service until there was satellite and then internet competition, then a second revenue stream derived from the same infrastructure, broadband delivery, became a focus. See the trend? And now we have "streaming video," which has generated a slew of new entrants; Netflix, Amazon, Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount, Comcast and the like.

Note, of course, that some of those "new entrants" are actually some of the oldest players in the industry, such as Paramount which originally started out as a movie production and theater-based business, one of the largest in Hollywood. By the 1940s the combination of production, theater and television station ownership resulted in antitrust actions that went to the Supreme Court. Paramount was forced to split off the theater (delivery) part of their business. There have been lots of twists and turns since then, but the Paramount name is back in the news with... you guessed it, a combination of production and distribution!

The point here is that it would appear standalone video production/distribution has a very hard time sustaining itself without additional dual stream or subsidized revenue. We can see that

today with all the major streamers starting to reorient their business plans because a pure subscription model doesn't pay the bill. Lo and behold; subscription plus advertising! That's especially true because their content creation bill keeps getting higher. I'll go into why in a later column, but it's a great example of where added competition results in higher prices for consumers, not lower.

I should add that the same need for multiple revenue streams seems to be true on the delivery side as well. Broadband cable/fiber delivery would never have developed the way it has without "cable service" paying the bill for building it. The cable service tab got too high for consumers who now have alternatives like satellite and "streaming," so the broadband bill subsidizes the ability to continue improving the network. Will the lower "cable service" subscription revenue force "broadband" prices up? You bet! Yet another column.

And now there are several new dimensions to consider. Data accumulation has become a huge business assisting targeted advertising. So some companies seem satisfied with "losing" money on the production of content in order to attract users so their data can be "mined." Thus, we see a company like Amazon get into the content "streaming" business, but they may not worry as much about the cost of content or the apparent price of their consumer-facing service so long as they can quietly accumulate the valuable data on those consumers.

To give you some idea of how this could seriously change the game, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that Amazon's annual revenue is double the combined total of WB-Discovery, Disney and Comcast combined! To be continued.



*Steve*

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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