

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## On Target: Addressable Could Be Ad Market's Panacea

Yesterday it was **Warner Bros. Discovery** CEO *David Zaslav* who called out the weakness of the current advertising market, saying it's more anemic than it was during COVID. Today, it was media veteran *Evan Shapiro* echoing that sentiment, though others remain positive the market can withstand a depression in the midst of economic uncertainty.

"Unfortunately, [Zaslav's] pretty accurate. We are heading into a pretty rough sledding ahead for all segments of the media economy, probably many of the segments of the economy at large," said Shapiro, who has run **IFC, Sundance Channel, Pivot** and **Seeso** over the years. He made the remarks during a Wednesday keynote at an event hosted by **Go Addressable**—an industry initiative led by distributors, including **Charter, DirecTV, DISH Media**, to accelerate the growth of addressable TV advertising.

While he agreed with Zaslav's overarching theme, Shapiro highlighted ways the overall advertising industry can prepare for tough times, such as embracing an accelerated rate of change and disruption. For example, **Meta** was worth \$1 trillion over a year ago but now checks in at less than \$300 billion. While still a hefty amount, it signifies how quickly an environment can change—for better or worse.

Shapiro's view didn't represent everyone at the second annual Go Addressable event, however. Various panel discussions throughout the day showed a sense of optimism that address-

able and audience targeting will help weather the storm if the U.S. enters a recession. One executive who remains confident is DirecTV Chief Advertising Sales Officer *Amy Leifer*, who told **CFX** that the MVPD feels good about where it sits in the advertising ecosystem because of its trust in audience targeting.

"Marketers need to make sure that their investments are delivering measurable outcomes, and that is at the core of what addressable advertising does," Leifer said. "We know in times of uncertainty, for those advertisers that spend through it, they can actually outpace their competitors. So when we have a product like addressable that can help measure those outcomes, it puts us in a really good position."

Addressable advertising allows brands to connect with consumers across multiple platforms like social media, OTT and CTV platforms, opening the door to segment audience groups to target what the viewer is looking for and deliver more impactful ads. DirecTV has been a proponent of addressable since 2012 because of its ability to drive incremental reach to certain audience segments. More companies in the ad industry are jumping on board. A report released by Go Addressable and Advertiser Perceptions found 77% of marketers who have used the medium for advertising are satisfied with the measurement solutions available for addressable TV. Of those currently using addressable advertising, 37% plan to increase ad spend in it in 2023.

Addressable is also helping brands reach light TV viewers. *Helen Katz*, SVP Global Data & Partnerships at the multinational ad firm



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**Publicis Media**, said it has seen double-digit incremental reach for campaigns that target light TV buyers, offsetting disproportionate impression delivery compared to heavy viewers.

As companies adopt audience targeting with addressable, it begins with the front-end setup of each campaign such as setting a measurement plan, learning agenda and expectations. But measurement has been tricky since the pandemic—as seen with Nielsen continuing to receive scrutiny. Companies are looking for alternative measurement sources as well as more than one avenue to gain insights, especially when it comes to cross-platform advertising.

“As we get to better measurement sources of truth partners like **VideoAmp, Icebox, Comscore** and **Nielsen One** when it comes out, we can understand [cross-platform activation],” said **Brad Stockton**, SVP, U.S. National Video Innovation at **Dentsu**. “I think that will help us start to pair together and understand where are the holes so we can understand what is deterministic, what is probabilistic.”

Despite seeing rapid growth over the past few years in addressable, there are still steps to take to continue moving forward. Leifer said it’s good that partnerships across Go Addressable consortium members are working together, but things like streamlining currency and getting everyone on the same page will help with short- and long-term growth.

“We have to continue to work with various vendors to make sure that we’re delivering for our agencies,” Leifer said. “It is complex, and a lot of these measurement vendors have their own solutions, and the industry doesn’t have a single currency. And maybe that’s okay, but I think as an industry, we really need to line on the right things to measure”

#### VA, NC PREPARED FOR BEAD CHALLENGES

Virginia and North Carolina started work on closing the digital divide long before BEAD was first mentioned on Capitol Hill, and now they’re ready to share their knowledge with other states that are trying to navigate the process of receiving federal funding. After already connecting more than 400,000 Virginians to broadband, **Virginia Office of Broadband** Director **Tamarah Holmes** is planning on utilizing BEAD program funds to address adoption and affordability. In some areas like Albemarle County, local broadband affordability offices have already been set up to provide additional subsidies on top of those provided by the **FCC’s** Affordable Connectivity Program. “Virginia is going from the fifth most expensive state per megabit per second to being the third least expensive... which is a game changer for our community,” she said during **USTelecom’s** Broadband Investment Forum Wednesday. In North Carolina, Deputy Secretary for Broadband and Digital Equity **Nate Denny** has used previous grant programs to establish a clear vetting and risk management process for broadband providers to ensure that they can commit to and

## The WHO and the WHY

CFX’s spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



MARYBETH  
**Strobel**  
EVP, ADVERTISING SALES  
WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

#### 3 THINGS TO KNOW

- After 25 years with the Warner Bros. Discovery organization, Karen Grinthal is retiring, leading to the promotion of Marybeth from her previous role of SVP Advertising Sales for WBD Sports. She’ll report to Chief U.S. Advertising Sales Officer Jon Steinlauf. In her new role, Marybeth will oversee the national sales bundle that includes Food Network, TLC, OWN, Cooking Channel, TBS Entertainment, Cartoon Network and WB Syndication. She’ll also help enhance revenue and convergent sales opportunities across the brands she manages, as well as guide the linear and digital teams in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit and Atlanta.
- Like her predecessor, Marybeth has been in various leadership roles within the organization for over two decades. In the past, she’s helped lead ad sales for networks including Turner Sports and CNN, and before then held positions at ad agencies like Televest, Wells BDDP and Barry Blau.
- Beyond WBD, she currently co-chairs the nominating committee for She Runs It, an organization dedicated to paving the way for more women leaders. She also is active in the company’s ERGs “Women of Sports,” “Turner Sports People Advisory Council” and more.

complete buildouts funded by federal or state grants. “We have to collect financial solvency information and have cash-on-hand match at the front of the project. We also work on a reimbursement basis, so we’ve got a clawback provision,” Denny said. “They’ve got to do the work and show the receipts before they’re getting any public funding at all.” In terms of measuring the digital divide in North Carolina, he’s been working with public safety officials and other state agencies to get an updated address file that will give him a better idea of baseline data. “We’re also exploring a building footprint study that will help us do a better job of estimating costs, especially as we get past those major fiber deployments, when we start looking at things like line extensions, figuring out what technology works where,” Denny said. Holmes has already received access to the FCC’s broadband location fabric, the backbone for the Commission’s updated maps, and submitted an initial challenge on Oct. 31 that included locations that were missing from the fabric. Another iteration has already been sent, and Virginia is planning on submitting another challenge tied to other missing addresses. The state has its own

broadband map that launched this year, and updates continue to roll out as Holmes receives more data from service providers. There are some limitations on how the broadband office can use that data due to rules crafted by the General Assembly around the map's creation, and that could limit how Virginia can use it to challenge FCC data. "The good thing is we have a great rapport with all of our providers... to make our grant programs successful. We had to build those partnerships and relationships, and that actually translates very well into data collection," Holmes said. "We'll be able to use [data from those providers] with the challenge process for the FCC map."

#### PARAMOUNT AD SALES STRUCK BY LAYOFFS

The economic downturn has hit media companies hard, and **Paramount Global** is reportedly undergoing a round of layoffs. Sources [told Deadline](#) Wednesday marked the start of a cut that is expected to affect less than 100 workers across the company's ad sales group, **CBS Studios** and **Paramount Television Studios**. **Comcast** and **Disney** are among those that warned the investment community of impending cost-cutting measures, including potential layoffs, during recent quarterly earnings calls.

#### MLS SEASON PASS ARRIVES IN FEBRUARY

**Apple** and **Major League Soccer's** subscription service now has a launch date. MLS Season Pass will arrive on Feb. 1, giving soccer fans access to every MLS regular season match, playoffs and the Leagues Cup with no blackouts. Matches will be viewable on the Apple TV app on Apple devices, smart TVs, streaming devices, set-top boxes and gaming consoles as well as on the web. MLS Season Pass will be available for \$14.99/month during the season or \$99/season. **Apple TV+** subscribers will get a discount with pricing at \$12.99/match or \$79/season.

#### NBCU UNVEILS ONE23 DATE

**NBCUniversal** will hold the third iteration of its annual development conference on Feb. 16. The gathering, which was originally created in 2020 to introduce the advertising community to its One Platform, will include dedicated tracks this time around as well as more ways for clients and partners to interact. "Only a short seven months ago, we showcased how we brought One Platform to market with the help of our universe of advertising and technology partners," NBCU President/Chief Business Officer, Global Advertising and Partnerships *Krishan Bhatia* said during a press conference Wednesday. "One23 will focus on how our clients and our partners are building on this platform to realize the future of advertising today." The company also announced the creation of a Currency Council during the event. It has recruited more than a dozen ad partners like **T-Mobile** and **General Motors** who will transact with NBCU using new currencies and work to build a framework designed to speed up the adoption of new currencies ahead of the next upfronts.

#### BIG TECH BILLS GET PUBLIC INTEREST PUSH

More than 40 public interest groups joined together Wednesday in a letter urging Congressional leadership to act on legislation tied to Big Tech. The letter to Senate Majority Leader *Chuck Schumer* (D-NY), Minority Leader *Mitch McConnell* (R-KY),

Speaker *Nancy Pelosi* (D-CA) and Leader *Kevin McCarthy* (R-CA) focused primarily on the American Innovation and Choice Online Act, a bill that would block large online platforms from giving preferential treatment to their own products and services, and the Open App Markets Act, designed to increase competition among the app community. "Making Big Tech platforms subject to the rigors of competitive pressure forces them to innovate and aggressively combat negative user experiences, lest they lose users to a newly emboldened rival," the letter read. "These bills are designed to work synergistically and together can combat many of Big Tech's worst abuses."

#### NETFLIX EMBRACES DEVICE MANAGEMENT

**Netflix** introduced a feature Tuesday that makes it easier for users to manage access to their accounts. The new feature, dubbed Managing Access and Devices, account owners will be able to view recent devices that have streamed from their account and log them out. It is available now to members on the web, iOS and Android.

#### AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC** has committed another nearly \$84 million in a new funding round to the Emergency Connectivity Program. This allotment will support applications from all three application windows and benefit more than 180 schools, 20 libraries and five consortia. To date, the Commission has committed more than \$6.3 billion through the program to projects since its launch last year.

#### CARRIAGE

**Xumo** is sending its holiday regards, rolling out a holiday hub of 18 FAST channels featuring seasonal movies, Xumo originals and a curated movie marathon from **Hallmark Movies & More**. Films include "Christmas Wedding Runaway," "A Very Corgi Christmas" and "The Miracle Worker," and the Hallmark Movies & More marathon will run Friday-Sunday.

#### DOING GOOD

**HBO Documentary Films** and The Gotham Film and Media Institute unveiled the inaugural cohort and mentors for their initiative to provide resources to storytellers who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and/or those with disabilities. Called the "Documentary Development Initiative," selected filmmakers will receive \$50,000 in grants for research and creative development at an early stage. Certain participants will receive one-on-one mentors, of which are names like documentary filmmaker *Matt Wolf*, film and TV video editor *Sam Pollard* and more.

#### PROGRAMMING

"The Walking Dead Live: The Finale Event" airs on **AMC** Sunday at 8:30pm ET and via the **AMC+** linear feed. A half-hour red carpet event and pre-show will lead into the conclusion of the series, which debuted on the network on Oct. 31, 2010. – The second season of **Showtime's** "Your Honor" will premiere on demand and on streaming on Jan. 13 before making its linear debut on Jan. 15 at 9pm. – A six-episode docuseries is coming to **Food Network** and **discovery+**. "Chef Dynasty: House of Fang" will follow *Kathy Fang* as she creates Chinese fusion dishes that go against the grain at the restaurant her and her father *Peter Fang* co-own. It'll premiere Dec. 27.

Think about that for a minute...

Ether

Commentary by Steve Effros

It's fascinating to me to think about how words are used and how they can actually mean so many different things depending on what you're referring to. The term "ether" popped into my mind recently as I considered what's going on with Elon Musk and Twitter.

His forced purchase of the company and now his almost incomprehensible gyrations in trying to manage the beast while firing half the staff could lead one to believe that his thinking is way out in the "ether," using the old definition of the thin spaces past the clouds and the moon; "spaced out," in other words. Or you could use the medical definition of "... a pleasant-smelling colorless volatile liquid that is highly flammable; it is used as an anesthetic," to conclude that his mental faculties had to be drugged to be doing what now appears a possibility: the demise of Twitter as one of the dominant social network platforms.

Do I think Twitter will be going away? I don't really know. What I'm sure of, however, is that unlike the businesses and industries we were used to in the past, the "tech" business, especially when it comes to potentially ephemeral things like social networks, are far more vulnerable to abandonment and collapse than most others.

A network "edge" platform, after all, is just a mechanism for individuals to interact with each other. Granted, in the case of something like Facebook, TikTok or Twitter, we're talking about millions, or indeed billions of interactions. The money made by these platforms comes from the data they collect on the users and the advertising that is fueled by that data. But it's ridiculously easy for the network users to go elsewhere and continue their activities. There's no "glue" other than the fact that there are other folks employing the same network.

Now in the case of something like the old Bell Telephone system, the "network" included a massive infrastructure of wires, switches and "CPE" (customer premises equipment - i.e. telephones) that were neither interchangeable with other networks nor were there any other networks to use. That's not the case with the social networks of today. If a substantial number of folks

decided, publicly, to switch from one network to another, as is now being suggested with a switch from Twitter to something like Mastodon, a significant change in the construct of the network could happen in a relatively short period of time. Twitter could float away into the ether!

Of course nothing is quite that simple. The supporting servers, network connections and the like would have to be ramped up in a major way, and that would take some time and money, but it would certainly be possible and a whole lot faster than some might imagine. Look at how relatively fast Zoom moved from being a minor conferencing application to a major influence in our lives once Covid hit. Is Elon Musk a new network's Covid?

I raise all this not because I necessarily care about Twitter. I've intentionally always stayed away from that platform because I thought it would unnecessarily drain time and energy for no good reason. I still think that. But what's going on right now is an excellent indication of not only how dangerous a social network platform can be without careful curation of what is posted, and the impact of its size, but also, potentially, how ethereal (there's that word again, defined as "airy and insubstantial") that platform may become.

The irony here is that Musk may be doing exactly what I've been suggesting may be the eventual policy solution to the issues raised by these massive networks. As I've noted, content moderation or regulation may not work and current antitrust law seems inapplicable. So maybe breaking them up is the only answer. If Twitter goes "poof" into the ether, we'll find out.



Steve

T:202-630-2099  
steve@effros.com

(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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