

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

In the Loop: Brands Jump on Meta's Threads Platform

With **Meta** surprising social media managers by rolling out **Twitter** rival **Threads** Wednesday evening—a half-day early, brands didn't waste any time adding another handle to their toolbox. In fact, **C-SPAN** was one of the earliest brand adopters, posting shortly after the platform went live to ask followers what lawmakers should be working on.

"C-SPAN is always considering its place on new and evolving platforms. We're eager to reach new audiences—and we jumped onto Threads as soon as possible. While we're still unraveling the new app, it seems pretty clear there's space on there for C-SPAN to continue to foster conversations about politics and policy—something we've been doing for more than 40 years. It's a great opportunity to continue that mission on a new platform, with new voices contributing to the discussion," **Sean Doody**, C-SPAN Digital/Social Media Producer, told **CFX**.

With the site feeling similar to an early version of Twitter (there are [threats](#) of a lawsuit), the learning curve isn't steep. Those initial hours on Threads Wednesday felt a bit like a land grab or the onslaught of commenters rushing to type "first" on a newly posted YouTube video. Some brands found a way to make the most of their entry on the new platform.

"We've been working closely with our partners at Meta to prepare for the Threads launch. By this morning, we had launched 29 Threads accounts across the **MTV Entertainment Studios** portfolio. Early returns are promising, as we've gained a com-

bined 1 million followers across those accounts," **Tyler Hissey**, SVP, Digital/Social Franchise, **Paramount Media Networks & MTV Entertainment Studios**, told **CFX**. "Heavy hitters out of the gate include The Daily Show (311K followers) and MTV (293K followers)...Our north star is to build robust online fandoms, and we're bullish on the potential of Threads to become another place to foster community around our brands and IP."

MTV made its debut on Threads with a tip to its early days. "Alright, time to pretend we're airing music videos. Quote with your requests," it wrote and then began playing clips, kicking it off with "Video Killed the Radio Star," natch. One thing that differentiates Threads from Twitter is that there are way more videos and graphic images.

Amazon hyped that you can buy actual thread on its site (and Prime Day is coming!), while **Hallmark Channel** reminded followers that it's Christmas in July all month long on the network. "Given the swift, positive response to the platform, we moved quickly to secure our presence and look forward to seeing the ways in which it will allow users to interact with our brand in new, innovative ways," Hallmark Media CMO **Lara Richardson** told us.

Some brands were quick to claim their Thread handles, but silent. By Thursday afternoon, most of the **Bally Sports** RSNs had a username on the platform, but the only one we saw with a post was **Bally Sports South**, which shared a laughing video of Braves second baseman **Ozzie Albies** alongside the words: "Reading our screen time reports after adding yet another social media platform."

"We want our content to be seen by as many people as pos-



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sible, so when Meta launched Threads, we saw that as another way to reach viewers in the Southeast,” said *Zach Dillard*, Director, Digital Content/Social Media at Bally Sports South. “The app is brand new, so we are still learning about it and coming up with a strategy of how to best use it, but we are excited to launch the account in the early stages to expand our audience.”

Programmers definitely were more active on the new platform than distributors. A few operators, including **Cox Communications** and **Altice USA’s Optimum**, have activated accounts but hadn’t posted anything by our deadline. Even some of the programmers who have posted are taking it slow. **INSP** played to its fanbase with a video montage of cowboys tipping their hats accompanied by the words “every good pair of workin’ jeans is first stitched by a thread.” For now, the brand is getting the lay of the land.

“Clearly, social media is a moving target with 24/7 expectations. At INSP, we employ unique strategies for every social media platform as our audience uses each one differently. So our content has to be specific and unique to each. Threads is the new ‘wild west!’ As we learn more and determine how users will interact with it, we’ll set strategy and adjust accordingly,” *Hayes Tauber*, INSP’s EVP, Marketing (and **FAXIES** Marketing Executive of the Year) said. “For right now, INSP and **Cowboy Way Channel** are tipping our hats and saying howdy. Like any true cowboy, we’re riding tall in the saddle and always up for a new adventure!”

Many users found out about the launch of Threads as posts began appearing on Twitter, with some frustrated by changes and pain points since *Elon Musk* bought the platform claiming they are abandoning the TweetDeck for good. Former **NBCU** Advertising exec turned Twitter CEO *Linda Yaccarino* made her case for her employer in a tweet Thursday afternoon. “On Twitter, everyone’s voice matters. Whether you’re here to watch history unfold, discover REAL TIME information all over the world, share your opinions or learn about others—on Twitter YOU can be real,” she wrote. “YOU built the Twitter community. And that’s irreplaceable. This is your public square. We’re often imitated—but the Twitter community can never be duplicated.”

Time will tell. By Thursday morning, it had attracted more than 30 million sign-ups, with 10 million coming in its first seven hours, according to posts by *Mark Zuckerberg*. If your brand hasn’t hopped on yet, it might be time to thread the needle...

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ANOTHER FCC COMPLAINT AGAINST NEXSTAR

Having lost **Nexstar** stations on June 30, **Hawaiian Telcom** filed an **FCC** complaint late Wednesday accusing the broadcaster of violating retransmission consent rules in the Communications Act by failing to negotiate in good faith. “We believe

this complaint is completely without merit and we will continue to work with Hawaiian Telcom to restore our services in short order,” Nexstar said in a statement. Hawaiian Telcom is arguing that neither party believed negotiations were at an impasse so the contract’s terms and conditions should have remained in effect. It claims the broadcaster was slow to engage in meaningful negotiations and didn’t get really serious until a few days before the June 30 contract expiration. “Hawaiian Telcom twice requested a one-week extension to allow the parties time to continue negotiations taking into consideration the weekend and upcoming July 4th holiday, which Nexstar unexpectedly denied. With approximately five minutes left before expiration, Nexstar offered a one-hour extension during which Hawaiian Telcom made another proposal. Unfortunately, Nexstar did not respond until a few minutes before that extension expired, forcing Hawaiian Telcom to take down the signals rather than risk continued delivery in violation of both the Communications Act and United States copyright law,” the altafiber subsidiary told

Cablefax Executive Round Up

How can the industry take customer service to the next level in the coming years?



Laura Dechant

Head of Support

Philo

“AI is going to allow us to monitor all customer interactions, not just a sampling, and we’ll be able to bubble up and review poor experiences that might not have been flagged otherwise. Customer satisfaction scores will become secondary to sentiment scores, and agents equipped with AI copilots will be able to deliver faster, smarter support while still providing the human touch.”



Mark Trudeau

CEO/Founder

OpenVault

“With customer service closely tied to network health, prescriptive, proactive and automated software solutions are needed to ensure that subscribers are receiving the best possible quality of experience. Deploying proactive network maintenance (PNM) and automated profile management applications (PMA) will be a major differentiator for DOCSIS broadband providers.”



Jeff Vogt

EVP/GM

Actifai

“For the first time ever, AI has made personalization ‘at scale’ possible by providing a comprehensive understanding of customers in real time—who they are, their interests, needs, behaviors, experiences—and using that information to make better decisions in customer engagements. Used practically, AI helps determine what services to offer prospects, what to say in retention/support conversations, or when to make an upgrade recommendation. Providers embracing AI for CX will be the industry’s leaders.”

the FCC. It said Nexstar reached out shortly after the expiration with the offer of another one-hour extension, but it was too late as the channels were dark. “Nexstar’s failure to honor the terms and conditions of the expired retransmission consent agreement while negotiations were ongoing constitutes bad faith negotiating...” said Hawaiian Telcom. The blackout involves KHON-TV (Fox, CW, GRIT and Rewind TV), KHII (MyNetwork TV) and their satellite stations (KHAWTV, KGMV, KGMD-TV and KAIL-TV). Meanwhile, Nexstar stations remain dark on **DirecTV**, which lost the channels on July 2. It has filed a complaint at the FCC claiming the broadcaster is illegally using sharing agreements with **Mission Broadcasting** and **White Knight Broadcasting**, whose stations have been off its lineups since October.

SENATE COMMERCE SCHEDULED TO VOTE ON FCC NOMINEES

That long-awaited net neutrality proceeding could be opened at the **FCC** soon. **Senate Commerce** plans to hold an executive session Wednesday to consider *Anna Gomez*’s nomination to fill the empty Democratic seat at the agency. The 10am ET session also includes the consideration of the renominations of Commissioners *Geoffrey Starks* and *Brendan Carr* along with Inspector General nominee *Fara Damelin*.

COMCAST EXTENDS CSG DEAL

Comcast tacked on an extra year to its subscriber management system agreement with **CSG**. The deal—originally signed back in December 2019—will now run through December 31, 2025. CSG will continue to provide processing and other related solutions as well as print and mail services for residential customer accounts. According to an **SEC** filing, CSG [generated](#) approximately 18% of its total revenue from Comcast.

COX COMPLETES UPN PURCHASE

Cox Communications closed its acquisition of **Unite Private Networks** (UPN) Thursday, which means it now operates broadband fiber networks in more than 30 states. UPN and Cox-owned **Segra** will form a new standalone fiber company to accelerate growth in the company’s commercial fiber solutions, with *Kevin Hart* leading the combined company as CEO and *Jason Adkins* serving as president. Cox became the majority owner of UPN in 2016 in partnership with **Ridgemont Equity Partners** and the UPN management team. It announced plans in May to acquire the remaining interest.

NEVINS LANDS NEW GIG

Former **Paramount** vet *David Nevins* is back in the media mix, taking the role of CEO at **North Road Company**, a global studio founded by previous **News Corp.** President/CEO *Peter Chernin*. Nevins will guide North Road’s portfolio of scripted

and unscripted content and documentaries and will also lead the charge on acquisitions. Included in North Road’s properties is Chernin Entertainment, which is the studio responsible for films like “Ford v Ferrari” and “Hidden Figures” and the Netflix series “Love is Blind.” Nevins stepped down from his position as Chairman/CEO of Paramount Premium Group and Chief Creative Officer of **Paramount+** in October, also having led **Showtime Networks** since 2010. He was responsible for several series like “Billions,” “Yellowjackets,” “The Chi,” “Twin Peaks,” “Dexter: New Blood” and “Homeland” while at Showtime.

BREEZELINE FLEET GOES ELECTRIC

Breezeline took a big step in its goal to reduce operational emissions by 65% by 2030, having started to roll out what will become a full fleet of bucket trucks that were retrofitted with electric power. The operator partnered with electric vehicle company ZEVX to help with the process as Breezeline plans to convert its existing fleet and gas-powered internal combustion engine vehicles to electric. Breezeline will place a green icon on each retrofitted truck to indicate it’s 100% electric.

GROUP ASKS FCC TO DENY FOX STATION’S LICENSE RENEWAL

The **Media and Democracy Project** (MAD) has filed an **FCC** petition seeking to deny renewal of **Fox**’s broadcast license for Philadelphia station **WTFX**, alleging that senior management of **Fox Corp.** manipulated its audience by knowingly broadcasting false news about the 2020 election. It symbolically made the filing on the 30-month anniversary of the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection. MAD’s petition is supported by former Fox Broadcasting exec *Preston Padden*, with the filing including email exchanges between the former lobbyist and *Rupert Murdoch*. It quotes a Nov. 6 exchange between the two, with Murdoch writing: “Seems Trump listening to terrible advice from Giuliani versus Trump family wanting to wave white flag! Not sure of this but sounds likely. Melania very level headed. Ivanka too but would never go public.” MAD said that despite this exchange, “and in response to intense backlash from viewers after the election and declining ratings and profits, Fox chose to mislead its audience and broadcast knowingly false statements to win back viewers.”

RATINGS

The Season 4 premiere of **Prime Video**’s “Jack Ryan” reached 1.2 million U.S. households during the L+5D window, according to **Samba TV**. That’s down 7% from 1.3 million U.S. households watching the Season 3 debut during the L+5D frame. Episode 2 of Season 4 reached 946,000 U.S. households in L+5D. Of the 25 largest markets, Seattle over-indexed the most with +92%, followed by Boston with +56% and Detroit with +34%.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Raise a Glass to the Afterparty

Apple TV's "Afterparty" is back for a new season on July 12 with a murder to solve at a wedding—a mystery that opens the door to all the awkwardness that nuptials often bring. The groom (*Zach Woods*) is found dead in the first few minutes of episode 1 and it seems like his bride (*Poppy Liu*) is the main suspect. Or is she? One of the things that makes this series by *Christopher Miller* so enjoyable is that each episode takes you down a new rabbit hole and features a different POV of one of the suspects—with each ep told in a different genre. Season 1 featured romcom, action, thriller and even animation. We won't reveal Season 2's lineup because guessing the genre switches is almost as much fun as figuring out the whodunnit. "A real highlight of this season is that none of these genres were repeated. I didn't know that going in before I read the scripts. I was like, 'Oh, you've got to repeat so and so' and Chris [Miller] was like, 'no, we're not going to do that,'" *Ken Jeong*, who plays the bride's father and purveyor of Taiwanese shaved ice (don't compare it to Hawaiian shaved ice), told **CFX**. That would seem to make it hard to come up with new genres to explore for a potential Season 3, but *John Cho*, who plays the bride's enigmatic uncle, had no trouble rattling off ideas: "Superhero movie. B karate flick. We can do a sports movie. Those are really fun to do. And a monster movie." While the main stars of Season 1 are back (*Sam Richardson*, *Tiffany Haddish* and *Zoe Chao*), the rest of the ensemble cast is new and includes *Elizabeth Perkins*, *Jack Whitehall*, *Anna Konkle* and *Paul Walter Hauser*. "An ensemble cast is what drew me to it. I mean, it's so rare that you get to have 10 actors all in the same room together playing and improvising," said Perkins. Jeong said he also jumped at the opportunity. "Season 1 was my favorite show last year. It's very rare when an actor gets to be part of his favorite show, so there was that surrealness that I was feeling that first day," he said. "And also just the fact that it's this incredible cast and—pun intended—like this murderer's row of actors in this ensemble." — *Amy Maclean*

REVIEWS

"Love & Death," streaming, **Max**. Critics have an innate dislike of remakes, railing against multiple versions of a story. We'll go against that tendency. Although **Hulu's** 2022 version of this true story was terrific, **Max's** re-telling is too. The basics: in 1980, Texas housewife *Candy Montgomery* hacked her lover's wife, *Betty Gore*, 41 times with an axe. Contrasts and similarities between the two productions abound. In both versions, the Candy role and the actors who play her dominate. **Hulu's** starred *Jessica Biel* as a mysterious, frumpy Candy. As such, she was nearly unrecognizable. Indeed, *Elizabeth Olsen's* Candy is the center of attention, in part because she's arguably the prettiest woman in town and owns the church choir's best voice. The camera loves Olsen, but she's also a skilled actor. Her portrait of a southern charmer should earn Olsen Emmy consideration. In creator *David E. Kelley's* version of the Montgomery saga, Betty (*Lily Rabe*) is an afterthought. In **Hulu's**, Betty was a major role, which *Melanie Lynskey*, who plays an enigma as well as anyone, devoured. As a former "L.A. Law" hand, Kelley's courtroom writing is masterful. Accordingly, Candy's trial is particularly well done. Credit also to *Tom Pelphrey* as attorney *Don Crowder*. Almost lost in the outstanding ensemble is *Jesse Plemons*, wonderful as Candy's shy lover. — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(06/26/23-07/02/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.446	1391
MSNBC	0.367	1145
HGTV	0.249	776
INSP	0.247	771
ESPN	0.205	639
HALL	0.204	637
USA	0.198	618
HIST	0.196	613
TLC	0.192	600
FOOD	0.183	570
CNN	0.181	564
DISC	0.178	555
TBSC	0.168	524
PRMNT	0.155	482
ID	0.148	463
HMM	0.143	447
TVLAND	0.143	445
FX	0.137	428
A&E	0.119	372
BRAVO	0.115	360
BET	0.115	359
WETV	0.113	351
TUDN	0.106	331
LIFE	0.103	321
GSN	0.102	320
TNT	0.100	314
OXY	0.095	297
NATGEO	0.089	279
FS1	0.084	262
COM	0.083	259
AMC	0.079	248
FETV	0.078	244
NWSMX	0.078	243
SYFY	0.074	230
TRAVEL	0.069	217

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