

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Uncharted: FCC Explores Challenges, Opportunities with AI

It seems with every new generation comes the introduction of a transformative shift in technology. It was once the introduction of the internet before the mass adoption of smart phone devices. Now, the world is witnessing the rapid ascent of AI and the facets of life it can be used, but as seen with prior technological innovations: there are always challenges amid the opportunities.

The **FCC** and **National Science Foundation** co-hosted a workshop on those subjects Thursday, applying it specifically to spectrum management, communications networks as well as how AI can alleviate consumer issues like robocalls and digital discrimination. On hand was FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel*, who mentioned in her opening remarks that while the majority of the chatter about AI tends to be negative, she falls on the optimistic side. That positive mindset became official when she revealed a Proposal of Inquiry to have the FCC look into ways it can use tools like AI to better understand areas like the actual usage of non-federal spectrum bands. The Commission is slated to vote on the proposal at its Aug. 3 open meeting.

“My optimism comes from where I sit because every day, I see communications networks power our world,” she said. “The day is not all that far off when we will be able to use this technology to help self-configure, self-optimize and self-heal facilities. It provides a level of insight and precision that can increase network

trust, and help turn communication scarcity into abundance.”

It's no surprise Rosenworcel brought up how AI can help prevent robocalls, but spectrum efficiency was a primary focus. She noted how wireless devices could use AI to manage transmissions on their own and dictate the best use of spectrum in multiple environments, while also providing better insight into network usage. Rosenworcel also sees the benefits relating to weather events impacting communications systems, alluding back to how software can proactively identify problems and apply solutions all on its own.

Lisa Guess, SVP, Solutions Engineering for **Ericsson/Cradlepoint**, thinks AI can also pitch in the FCC's effort for pursuing 100% broadband, but **Public Knowledge** SVP *Harold Feld* predicts there would be some pushback. He said there are “potential sources that are intrinsically suspicious of the FCC and how it collects data,” which shifts the focus on what authority the agency has and the data it has to work with.

Even beyond the broadband maps, AI could measure how successful the FCC's initiatives are in closing the digital divide. “The additional point AI could be useful for is to come up with methods of automating the process of evaluating broadband access,” said *Ness Shroff*, the Director of NSF's AI Institute. “Where is it being used? How successful are the programs? AI could be used to automate that process to check these programs and their successes.”

One of the ways to make AI more intelligent and powerful is

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by allowing the technology to consume more data. However, with more data comes more responsibility, and Shroff thinks there's still a lot more that needs to be done for a massive amount of data to be appropriately procured.

"There's a tremendous potential for using AI to guarantee security, making sure that the specifications of the protocols don't have loopholes in it, etc. But I think I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention that AI introduces its own security challenges," Shroff said. "I think that's something that we need to be very careful about. Because with AI comes the opportunity to use data, and with the opportunity to use data comes the opportunity that the data can be corrupted, can be poisoned. It's very, very easy to show that AI algorithms that use even a small amount of intelligently poisoned data can perform far poorer than traditional algorithms."

Specific to generative AI—which can produce types of content like imagery, audio, videos and more—Shroff called for the FCC to jump ahead of establishing protocols. The technology has been used to create what's called "deep fakes," which can take a person and their voice to create a fake monologue. For example, [a deep fake was released in February](#) with what seemed to be President Biden invoking the Selective Service Act to draft and send soldiers to Ukraine.

As if the timing from the FCC's fellow government entity couldn't be better, a *Washington Post* report revealed the **FTC** has [begun investigating OpenAI](#), the creator of ChatGPT. The investigation is centered on possible violations of consumer protection laws as the FTC seeks records on how OpenAI handles personal data, its ability to provide inaccurate information and its risks of harm to consumers.

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DISNEY CEO SAYS LINEAR EROSION WORSE THAN HE IMAGINED

Disney CEO *Bob Iger* told [CNBC](#) that the disruptive forces in the traditional television business are even greater than the pessimistic view he had during his 11-month retirement. He agreed to stay on as CEO for an additional two years that would take his contract through the end of 2026. *David Faber* of *CNBC's "Squawk Box"* asked Iger if Disney would look to sell nets like **FX**, **Nat Geo** and even **ABC**, and it sounds like it's at least a possibility, though the CEO said he'll leave it to Faber to speculate. "We're just getting at that work. But we have to be open minded and objective about the future of those businesses," he said. "They may not be core to Disney. There's clearly creativity and content that they create that is core to Disney, but the distribution model, the business model that forms the underpinning of that business, and that has delivered great profits over the years is definitely

broken. And we have to call it like it is and that's part of the transformative work we're doing." **ESPN** is a different beast, but it's also been impacted by the erosion of the linear business. "We have a great brand. We've had a great business, and we want to stay in that business," Iger said. "That said we're going to be open minded there too. Not necessarily about spinning ESPN off, but about looking for strategic partners that could either help us with distribution or content, but we want to stay in the sports business." He wouldn't get into specifics, saying everything is on the table, including someone taking an ownership stake. There's an inevitability that ESPN will go direct-to-consumer. "We haven't said when, but we do know that it will happen," Iger said. "I think I'm much more certain about when but not prepared to say when that is. I won't say whether it's sooner or not. But I'm enthusiastic about it. I think sports stands tall in a sea of tremendous choice, and is in many respects an advertisers dream and consumers dream."

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ACP ON FCC AUGUST AGENDA

The **FCC** will vote at its August open meeting on expanding the Affordable Connectivity Program benefit to up to \$75 a month in qualifying high-cost areas. "When creating the ACP, Congress recognized that building out to rural areas requires support for

Cablefax Executive Round Up

Ahead of the Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, how do you plan to combat the time-zone difference for U.S. viewers?



Daniela Jeffries

VP, Programming and Scheduling

FOX Sports

"The U.S. is obviously, for us, going to be the biggest draw. But it also gives you more of an opportunity to do some of that storytelling around some of the rest of the tournament and kind of push the storylines and direct traffic—because there's so much more traffic with all of these funny start times."



Eli Velazquez

EVP, Sports

Telemundo

"For the broader audiences that we look to attract, we've really decided to double down on additional content, additional extended highlights that we can show during the course of the day across all of our network programs—ways to create a stickiness throughout the day. Whether that be on linear or on our nonlinear platforms by way of the FAST channel, ultimately those audiences will either want to be part of the live experience or they'll want to engage socially with the content when they are able to consume it and engage with it through our DTC platform on Peacock for those who want to see the games on demand."

both network deployments and for affordability, and directed the Commission to offer an enhanced benefit for qualifying high-cost areas,” said FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel*. So far, more than 19 million households have signed up for ACP, which currently provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

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INDY PROGRAMMING NPRM REAX

Reactions are coming in regarding **FCC** Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel*'s decision to circulate a Notice of Proposed Rule-making that would initiate a proceeding to understand the challenges related to distribution of independent programming. “It’s very encouraging to see this proposal and we thank FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* for making this a priority. Diversity of voices has always been the cornerstone of Fuse Media’s brand mission and we look forward to participating in the proceeding,” **Fuse Media** Chairman and CEO *Miguel Roggero* told **CFX**. Fuse has taken an active lead on issues regarding independent and diverse programming, petitioning the FCC last year to establish a new, annual report on the diversity of content vendors used by regulatees in broadcast, cable, broadband and satellite. They want it to include all content vendors, whether they provide programming for online streaming platforms owned or affiliated with the regulatees or to traditional FCC-regulated services such as broadcast and cable. The NPRM on circulation would also look at independent programming carriage on streaming platforms. **Strong Women Alliance** CEO *Ellen Schned* has spent the past two years on the FCC’s Counsel on Equity, Diversity & Communications [CEDC] advisory committee and has represented multiple independent networks over the years, including **Ovation** and **RideTV**. “I applaud the FCC and Chairwoman *Rosenworcel* for undertaking this rulemaking. With the media giants getting bigger, in streaming, studios, broadcasting and vertically integrating, it’s more important than ever to ensure diversity of voices is able to prevail, through indies, minorities and women’s networks,” she told **CFX**. One of her CEDC working group’s recommendations was for the FCC to review retransmission consent rules to see if they’re fulfilling Congressional intent. “To paraphrase **ACA Connects** Chair *Patty Boyers*, who testified at the CEDC’s FCC symposium, ‘if not for being forced to carry and pay so much for retrans broadcast channels, we would have the ability to launch more minority and indie networks.’” If the FCC votes to approve this NPRM, expect plenty more comments on the issue.

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ACC SIGNS DEAL WITH CW

It’s been a little under a month since **Diamond Sports** [cut its agreement](#) with **Raycom Sports Network** to broadcast select ACC athletic events and ancillary programming, but Raycom is sticking with the conference. The ACC announced a deal with **The CW Network** for it to have exclusive broadcast rights to 50 football and basketball games each season through 2026-

27. Raycom will produce all games for the network. The CW will televise 13 football games, 28 men’s basketball games and 12 women’s hoops games.

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PROGRAMMING

Discovery Channel gave a mid-season pickup to “Naked and Afraid: Last One Standing.” The series, the net’s highest-rated series of 2023 to date, has reached 15.7 million total viewers and averaged a 0.98 L+# rating among 25-54s since its May 7 debut. The finale airs Sunday at 8pm. – Three-part series “The Heiress and the Heist” premieres as a full-season binge on **Sundance Now** and **AMC+** on July 27. It tells the story of *Rose Dugdale*, the English heiress who abandoned her life of privilege to join the IRA. – We’re not sure how many sister wives *Kody Brown* has left, but the series is returning to **TLC** on Aug. 20. The only wife secure in her marriage right now on “Sister Wives” is *Robyn*, but her dreams of a happy polygamist family is falling apart. – The **Max** original “Metal Monsters: The Righteous Redeemer” will premiere July 30.

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DOING GOOD

Mediacom announced the winners of its annual Entrepreneur of Tomorrow Award, which is presented to graduating seniors from 15 different high schools in Orange County, NY. Students were selected for the award based on a combination of work ethic, academic performance, and personal accomplishments, including community service. Mediacom has presented Entrepreneur of Tomorrow Awards to nearly 150 Orange County high school graduates since the program was launched in 2014.

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PEOPLE

Warner Bros. Television Group President, Unscripted Television *Mike Darnell* is on to his next endeavor after spending 10 years with the company. It’s not yet official where he’s headed, but he did mention “a couple of new ventures have come my way” in an internal memo. Darnell also said that by staying “it would have meant more changes for both my personal deal and to the general structure of the division.” He joined Warner Bros. in 2013 and by his second year had more than doubled the studio’s unscripted output. Darnell is also credited with expanding the group into the digital space, games and documentaries. If you include his 18-year tenure at **Fox**, Darnell’s portfolio of shows boasts the likes of “American Idol,” “Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?,” the “Bachelor” franchise, “The Voice,” “Family Guy” and “Futurama.” “I had hoped we would continue to work together, but I understand Mike’s decision to leave,” Chairman/CEO *Channing Dungey* said in the memo. “If there’s such a thing as a genius in this business, Mike definitely qualifies.” – **Casa Systems** appointed *Michael Glickman* as its President/CEO, effective Aug. 1. He’ll focus on leveraging the company’s cable, cloud and access device technologies and solutions to drive growth globally. Glickman has spent more than 35 years in the networking, technology and telecom industries.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Did the Emmys Get it Right?

Perhaps the most fun aspect of the Emmys each year are the complaints over what shows weren't selected. Wednesday's nomination reveal included several worthy candidates, but there were a few shows the **Cablefax** team felt were overlooked. Perhaps most glaring was the omission of **AppleTV+**'s "The Afterparty" from Best Comedy Series. The category has some worthy contenders, including beloved **HBO** series "Barry" and **Amazon Freevee** dark horse "Jury Duty," which is a faux documentary on jury duty with everyone in it an actor except Juror #6, *Ronald Gladden* ("This is probably the craziest sentence I've ever said. I'm a part of a TV show that's nominated for an Emmy because I answered a Craigslist ad," Gladden wrote on Instagram). We're happy for all the nominees, but *Christopher Miller's* wickedly funny and creative whodunnit deserved a spot with them, in large part due to Afterparty tackling a different television/movie genre in each episode. At least we can drown our sorrow in a brand-new season of Afterparty, which dropped yesterday. Another huge miss in the Best Comedy category, in our humble opinion, was not including **Peacock's** "Poker Face." While *Natasha Lyonne* is deservedly up for the lead actress in a comedy, it's another snub for a series that feels so different than its peers. And speaking of out-of-the-box series... nothing for Peacock's "Mrs. Davis"? Oh, the travesty... We're also disappointed HBO's "Somebody, Somewhere" was nowhere on the nomination list (again, what was going on with Best Comedy nominations?) and that its stars *Bridget Everett* and *Jeff Hiller* didn't get a nod. Comedy wasn't the only Emmy category that missed the mark. We thought *Sydney Sweeney* was a shoe-in for her performance in HBO's "Reality," in which she had the task of relying only on the transcripts for dialogue in her portrayal of *Reality Winner*, who was arrested in 2018 for leaking to the media an intelligence report about Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election. Alas, there's always next year (assuming the strike is over)...

REVIEWS

"Justified: City Primeval," season premiere, 10pm, Tuesday, **FX** (streaming on **Hulu**, Wednesday). In several ways, it's old-home week for "Justified" fans. First, this spinoff brings back U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens (*Timothy Olyphant*), who departed in 2015, when Justified ended with an excellent finale. It's also a return to episodic TV for *Elmer Leonard*, as this follow-on series is based on a pair of his novels, though neither includes *Marshal Givens*. And last, *Vivian Olyphant*, Timothy's IRL daughter, plays Givens' teen here. Spoiler: she's pretty good in the role. She's in good company. Like FX's surprise hit, "The Bear," Primeval's delights spread well beyond its lead character. The ensemble includes gems like *Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor* as a feisty Detroit attorney, *Keith David* as a judge with dubious ethics and *Norbert Leo Butz* as an overconfident Detroit detective. While Raylan remains a crafty lawman, he's out of his element in a way. Instead of rural Kentucky, Givens is upholding justice, sort of, in Detroit and parts of Florida. Moreover, beware, Justified fans: Primeval preserves elements of the original, yet there's plenty of excellent new material. – "Hijack," **Apple TV+**. True, it's another series involving an aircraft hijacking. Yet few succeed like this entry from Apple TV+. Like the FX entries above, a fine ensemble surrounds a star, here *Idris Elba*. Better, the storytelling consistently raises stakes. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(07/03/23-07/09/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.385	1202
USA	0.355	1108
HALL	0.263	820
MSNBC	0.262	819
INSP	0.253	791
HGTV	0.234	729
DISC	0.193	602
FOOD	0.177	552
TLC	0.172	537
TBSC	0.170	531
CNN	0.169	527
HIST	0.168	523
ID	0.155	483
TVLAND	0.150	469
PRMNT	0.145	452
ESPN	0.143	445
TNT	0.128	400
FX	0.126	393
WETV	0.117	365
AMC	0.117	365
BET	0.116	361
FS1	0.114	356
HMM	0.113	352
LIFE	0.107	334
A&E	0.106	330
REELZ	0.106	330
BRAVO	0.104	325
OXY	0.101	314
GSN	0.096	299
NATGEO	0.084	261
NAN	0.083	259
TUDN	0.082	258
COM	0.082	256
NICK	0.082	255
APL	0.079	248

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.

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