

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## World Domination: Netflix Finds Success with Content that Plays Globally

Netflix's global strategy is on full display this week with "One Piece," a live-action adaptation of the Japanese manga series by the same name. Just four days after its release, the series has reached 18.5 million views and the Top 10 in 93 countries (its #1 in 46 countries).

"This is a very high bar to me to basically take a storied manga and deliver it in English language, live action. Pretty much all the haters are out looking for reasons to hate you for it. To be able to deliver it and have it be massively popular and successful around the world is amazing to see," Netflix co-CEO Greg Peters said during an investor conference Tuesday.

When it comes to finding that right piece of content that will do well across a worldwide stage, he said a lot of the determinations come down to metrics Netflix is seeing from its own content performance. "We're also looking at what does content performance on other services or other linear look like as a way to basically understand what are places where there's demand that we're not serving effectively, and how do we lean into that," Peters added.

Further making the case for Netflix's international programming lens is UK thriller "Who Is Erin Carter?" It's in its second week on the streamer and came in second in views for the week with 15.8 million. Over the years, Netflix has scored big with international fare such as South Korea's "Squid Game" and German drama "Dark." "We could give you 20 examples of this, and we'll probably have 20 or 40 more coming for the

rest of the year, where we're breaking down those barriers and giving people access to creators and creative storytelling that they never would have seen before," Peters said.

Despite Netflix being in the pole position among streamers, management thinks there is plenty of runway. "One way to look at it is how many hours on the TV are we winning, and even in our most mature markets, we still win less than 10% of the hours on TV," the co-CEO said. "In the structural shift from linear to streaming, even in the most advanced markets that are in that move, the majority of hours, like 60%, still happen even on linear today. So there's a lot of movement still to go, and we think a lot of opportunity for us to win hours."

It's still early innings for Netflix's crackdown on password sharing. Peters said most sharers fell into two camps—the casual sharer (they had a friend's account and it was awkward to have a conversation about no longer using it) and a price-conscious sharer who in some cases may even be pitching in a few dollars with others to share one account. Casual sharers tended to add the service when they were told they could no longer share accounts, while Netflix has worked to come up with different solutions for financial sharers, such as paying to add a member slot for somebody else.

For price-sensitive customers, Netflix also introduced its \$6.99/month ad-supported version in the U.S. last November. That of course begs the question of whether Netflix would prefer customers take the ad version vs. the full subscription. "I think we ultimately want to engineer our way to a place where

## THE KAITZ DINNER

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

40

NEW YORK MARRIOTT MARQUIS

YEARS OF STAYING FOCUSED

Tables,  
Tickets &  
Sponsorships  
Available  
Now!







**Cablefax**

**MOST POWERFUL WOMEN**

**DECEMBER 6, 2023**

# Call for Entries

***Nominations are open for the  
Cablefax Most Powerful Women Awards***

**Late Deadline**

**September 8**

---

Cablefax recognizes the Most Powerful Women based on their influence and power within the industry—as well as their commitment to ensuring other execs receive opportunities to grow and flourish. The Most Powerful Women awards and magazine recognize women across all departments including advertising, communications, corporate culture, sales, content, consultants, distribution, digital, finance, legal, operations and more. Help us celebrate women who are a beacon in a storm.

**NOMINATE TODAY**

[www.CablefaxWomen.com](http://www.CablefaxWomen.com)



we are agnostic—where through a combination of pricing, price setting plan and feature set, where ultimately we're providing a range of options that you know that the user can pick what's right for them, and we feel good about that," Peters said. "I don't want to be in the position where we're steering people... into one place or another because I think that ultimately won't serve the business well, and will hurt us with users."

While the migration of password sharing is a temporary issue, Netflix sees advertising as a multi-decade business that is ripe for innovation. "We want to obviously get beyond the basics and get to the kind of place where we're really unlocking what is the capability of connected TV to provide a differentiated experience for both users and for advertisers," said Peters. "I think that means increasing personalization when it comes to ads... and then also being able to think about more and more how do we provide a differentiated ad experience where the ads start to feel like they're more part of the universe of the primary content that someone is watching. So you can imagine us working with a showrunner on a series and thinking about a secondary brand lead narrative that feels part of that universe. For me, the litmus test of success there is that our non-ad members would want to watch that content as well. I think that would be an amazing place to get to."

## CHARTER SENDS SUBS TO FUBO

As we near Day 6 of **Charter** and **Disney's** stalemate, some customers are getting antsy. And in yet another sign that this blackout isn't like spats of the past, Charter is actually suggesting **Fubo** as an option for disgruntled customers who are missing out on **ESPN**, **SEC Network** and other Disney-owned channels. Usually, it's the programmer linking to alternative video distributor options, but Charter has indicated it's willing to let these video customers go. And obviously, customers would still need an internet subscription to access Fubo. On the website [DisneyESPNFairDeal.com](https://www.DisneyESPNFairDeal.com), Charter writes: "To provide our customers choice when it comes to entertainment, we've partnered with a streaming provider to bring you a special offer" followed by a link to Fubo. In smaller print, Charter says: "Stream with another provider such as **Sling** or **YouTube TV**." Probably not surprisingly, **Hulu + Live TV**, which is majority owned by Disney, isn't listed among the recommendations. There are also reports on Reddit of customers getting emails from Charter that include links recommending Fubo as an alternative to watch games or CSRs recommending Fubo or YouTube TV. There doesn't seem to be a formal refund request process in place, though subscribers who complain are receiving a one-time \$15 discount that applies to the next billing cycle. Disney's [blog](#) and social media channels are pushing **Hulu + Live TV**, which starts

at \$69.99/month with no contract. The blog does also mention other vMVPDs, including **DirectTV Stream**, YouTube TV, **Sling** and **Fubo**. Disney also rattled off some **Nielsen** stats to bolster its argument that Charter subs are losing valuable programming, including: in an average month, 71% of Charter subs tune into Disney's networks or stations and **ESPN** aired 53 of the top 100 telecasts in Charter homes during the past year.

## CHARTER CUSTOMERS HAVE A FRIEND IN PEACOCK

**Comcast-NBCU-owned Peacock** is offering qualified **Charter** video customers a year free of Peacock Premium, a \$5.99/month value. The streamer doesn't have **Disney** content, but maybe a vast library of "Real Housewives" episodes plus Sunday Night Football will help soothe the pain. Charter internet subs are eligible for up to 90 days of Peacock Premium. Charter and **Comcast** are teaming up to launch the streaming platform **JV Xumo** later this year.

## WBD UPDATES GUIDANCE AS STRIKES CONTINUE

With the **WGA** and **SAG-AFTRA** strikes continuing into September, **Warner Bros. Discovery** is shifting some of its full-year guidance numbers. In an **SEC** filing, the company noted that at its 2Q23 earnings call in early August it provided guidance under the assumption that the strikes would be resolved in early September. However, WBD now sees the strikes lasting through the end of the year. "While WBD is hopeful that these strikes will be resolved soon, it cannot predict when the strikes will ultimately end," the company said in its [filing](#). "With both guilds still on strike today, the Company now assumes the financial impact to WBD of these strikes will persist through the end of 2023." WBD now expects adjusted EBITDA to be between \$10.5-\$11 billion for the full year, reflecting an impact of \$300-\$500 million due to the strikes' impacts. It's raising free cash flow expectations to at least \$5 billion and now expects to surpass \$1.7 billion in free cash flow for 3Q23 thanks to the success of "Barbie" and incremental impact from strike-related factors. Lastly, WBD is keeping its net leverage expectation the same at below 4x by the end of the year, and its target gross leverage range will also stay put at 2.5x-3x by the end of 2024.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL RATINGS

It was quite the start of the college football season. Thursday night's bout between Florida and Utah notched 3.2 million viewers on **ESPN**, peaking at 3.8 million in the 8:45-9pm window. That's ESPN's most-watched Thursday opener since 2017 despite the

fact **Disney**-owned networks went dark on **Spectrum** moments before the 8pm kickoff. – The **Big Ten** has arrived at **NBC Sports**. The **Peacock** exclusive East Carolina vs Michigan game Saturday became the most-streamed college football contest in **NBC Sports** history. Later in the evening, Penn State's 38-15 win over West Virginia averaged 3.7 million viewers across **NBC**, **Peacock** and **NBC Sports Digital**. That's the second most-watched Labor Day Saturday primetime program on **NBC** since 2015, behind the 7.2 million viewers Notre Dame and Michigan pulled in 2018.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MIXED VIEWS ON FCC BROADBAND DATA COLLECTION WAIVER

There is some disagreement over whether the **FCC** should grant an extension of a July 2022 limited waiver that relaxed its Broadband Data Collection engineering certification requirements. The BDC info is important because it's what the FCC relies on for the National Broadband Map and **NTIA** used BDC data submissions to calculate the initial BEAD allocations. The **Competitive Carriers Association** and **USTelecom** have asked the FCC to extend the waiver, which allows verification of BDC filings by engineers who are not licensed professional engineers but who are "otherwise-qualified" by virtue of possessing relevant educational credentials and/or work experience. The initial waiver was granted for three BDC filing cycles, with the groups seeking to have it extended for three more filing cycles. If the FCC allows the waiver to sunset, filers will have until March 1, 2024, to prepare for the next filing which must be accompanied by a PE or corporate engineering officer certification. **NCTA** is among those in support of extending the waiver, saying it's worked out just fine thus far for the Broadband Map and **NTIA** Bead allocations. "The accuracy of the data was not compromised due to the lack of PE licenses from the engineers certifying the submissions," **NCTA** said. **ACA Connects**, **CTIA**, **WISPA** and **Rural Electric Cooperatives Providing Broadband** also filed in favor of an extension. However, **The Rural Wireless Association** and **NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association** are urging the FCC to deny the request. "Given the significance of BDC data to the development of a map that is the primary resource for targeting of broadband funding and a fundamental touchstone for informed decision-making with respect to broadband policy, the Commission should not allow providers to submit filings that contain opaque explanations and are subject to lesser levels of review," **NTCA** wrote. The association added that if the FCC does extend the waiver, it should apply relief only to small providers serving fewer than 100,000 locations nationwide.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CARRIAGE

**Nexstar** penned a multi-year renewal for its 29 **Fox** affiliate stations. Financial terms weren't disclosed. **Fox** also renewed the affiliations of 12 stations that have shared services agreements with **Nexstar**—11 of which are owned by **Mission Broadcasting** and one by **White Knight Broadcasting**. The 41 stations reach nearly 22 million TV households. However, the renewal won't

apply to **DirectTV** customers until the [Nexstar-DirectTV blackout](#) reaches a conclusion. – **Allen Media Group's Local Now** is adding **Washington Post Television** to its lineup. The channel launched in May and covers breaking news, frontline reporting and various interviews with news figures. – The **MeTV+** national network is coming to **Frndly TV** subscribers after an agreement with **Weigel Broadcasting**. **Frndly** will become the first national service to carry **MeTV+** once it launches on the platform in October. **Frndly** already carries **MeTV+**'s companion network **MeTV**.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MEDIACOM TAPS NOKIA FOR XGS-PON DEPLOYMENTS

To help extend multi-gig broadband to rural, underserved communities, **Mediacom** selected **Nokia** to build PON networks. **Mediacom** will use **Nokia's XGS-PON** systems and equipment to support the new buildouts, which will be funded partly by state and federal grant projects. **Mediacom** will deploy **Nokia's chassis-based optical line terminals (OLT)** and node-based OLTs. The chassis-based OLTs will be used in small, non-conditioned cabinets, while the node-based solutions will be implemented on strands or utility poles.

\*\*\*\*\*

## OPTIMUM HITS A HOME RUN

**Optimum** is joining forces with Yankees legend and **MLB** Hall of Famer **Derek Jeter** in its latest [brand campaign](#) highlighting **Optimum Complete**. Combined with an appearance from the **Optimum "GOAT,"** the spot highlights **Optimum's** offer that bundles internet and mobile services starting at \$45/month for 300 Mbps internet speeds and a 1 GB mobile plan. Other options—which all come with unlimited data plans—include 500 Mbps for \$75/month, 1 Gbps for \$90/month, 2 Gbps for \$100/month and 5 Gbps for \$125/month.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ON THE CIRCUIT

**Maria Taylor**, host of **NBC's "Football Night in America,"** will open **The WICT Network's** 2023 Leadership Conference with a keynote on September 18 from 9-10am. She'll be joined onstage by **NBCUniversal Entertainment** EVP, Content Acquisitions **Val Boreland**. **Comcast** EVP/CDO and Comcast NBCU Foundation President **Dalila Wilson-Scott** will be on hand to give the keynote's introduction. The Leadership Conference is set for September 18-19 at the New York Marriott Marquis.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PROGRAMMING

The Monday Night Football alternative telecast "Monday Night Football with Peyton and Eli" is returning for a third season on **ESPN2**. It'll start with the Bills-Jets game Monday at 8pm and wrap up its season with a Wildcard playoff game Jan. 15. This season, the "Manningcast" will debut new technology in the form of an interactive touchscreen table that operates as a virtual football field.

# GUEST COLUMNIST

## Building a Skilled Workforce through Broadband Expansion



**Rick Cimerman**

The goal of connecting all Americans to high-speed internet is finally within reach.

There are currently hundreds, if not thousands of broadband expansion projects underway by cable broadband providers across the country, connecting communities and homes for the first time.

These projects rely on a highly trained workforce of skilled professionals with a track record of getting projects done on time and on budget.

When Congress passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, \$42 billion was allocated to connect homes in every corner of our nation. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which recently developed a hyper-accurate map of broadband coverage across the country, nearly 95% of America has access to high-speed internet. However, nearly eight million remain unconnected, largely in America's hardest-to-reach areas.

The federal funding will soon start to flow to each state, and it will be each state's decision on how projects in unconnected areas are funded. This once-in-a generation investment by the government provides an opportunity to finally connect everyone to the internet.

If there ever was ever a moment for states to partner with the expert knowledge of the private sector, this is that moment. Over the last 20 years, cable providers have invested over \$310 billion in broadband infrastructure, with a massive team of professionals building and maintaining these faster, more resilient networks.

These are the networks that have kept the nation con-

nected over the past few years. While effectively managing the all-time high internet usage spikes when many were home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the cable industry also worked around the clock to expand networks to connect even more new homes and businesses. This is the type of dedication and expertise that partnering with the private sector can deliver.

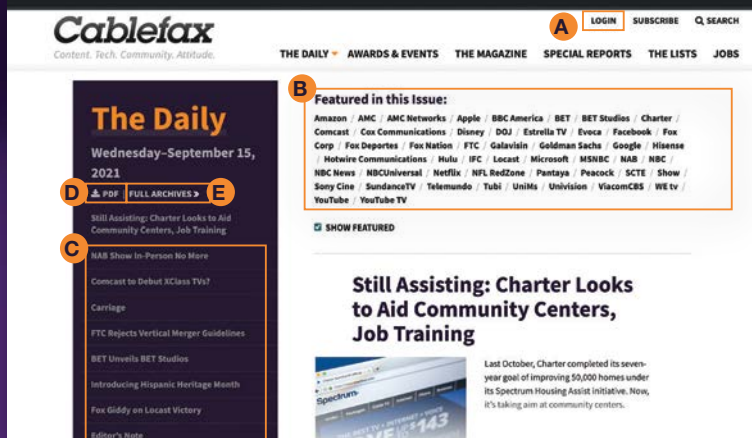
Now, as networks mature and America becomes more accustomed to super-fast internet speeds, cable providers are already forging ahead with the introduction of 10G – internet speeds that are 10 times faster than what's available in most parts of the country. As these speeds become more widely available, the workforce that the cable industry trains today will keep these high-tech, fiber rich networks thriving for generations to come.

But as states plan these new broadband projects, the job needs to be done both accurately and efficiently so all Americans can benefit from super-fast connectivity. States need to maximize the know-how of experienced providers to build and maintain these new networks. It means we need to spend responsibly by focusing on unserved and underserved parts of our country first. And finally, it means we need to have fair competition so that providers with the necessary technical, managerial, and financial capabilities and expertise are not deterred from participating. Only then can we ensure these projects are done on time and on budget.

I'm more optimistic about our nation's digital future than I've ever been, but we won't get done right without the right expertise. Let's train the next generation workforce. Let's work together. Let's get every American connected!

– Rick Cimerman is the Vice President of State Affairs at NCTA – The Internet & Television Association

## Guide to Your Online Cablefax Daily Issues



- A** Subscriber Login: Gain access to every Cablefax Daily story PLUS the archives
- B** Every issue includes a list of companies featured. Easily navigate to the stories by clicking on the company name.
- C** The issue headlines are featured on the left nav bar.
- D** Access the pdf version quickly from the website.
- E** Missed an issue or doing some research? Search Cablefax Daily archives

**Subscriptions Available for Groups and Corporate Site Licenses.**

Contact Ellen Kamhi at [ekamhi@accessintel.com](mailto:ekamhi@accessintel.com) or [www.cablefax.com/subscribe](http://www.cablefax.com/subscribe)