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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Next Big Thing: Diversity Week Attendees Told to Act on AI

Diversity Week dove down the AI rabbit hole Tuesday with both **The WICT Network** and **NAMIC** hosting sessions on the topic during their respective conferences, and attendance was high as members of both organizations searched for guidance on how to move forward with the technology responsibly.

Why has 2023 turned into such an inflection point for artificial intelligence in the U.S.? During NAMIC's panel, Parth Thaker, **Comcast** Strategic Development Head of AI and Emerging Technology Strategy, said his company has been investing in AI for more than 15 years, leading to innovations like the Xfinity Voice Remote. But four pieces have come together now to allow for an AI boom—access to vast quantities of training data, cheaper compute, more broadly available APIs (application programming interfaces) and broader access to capital.

"It's really been kind of these four dimensions that have unlocked this particular moment for generative AI," he said.

While most of the session's attendees said they had tried ChatGPT, **Afiniti** Chief Customer Officer *Orlando Hampton* acknowledged that one of the strongest emotions around AI right now is fear, primarily fear that AI is going to lead to the elimination of jobs.

"It is not a robot and it's not an AI that's going to take your job. It is another human augmented by AI that is going to take your job," he said. "This is not something that you can sit on

the side on and say 'hey, I'll just let other people run with this' because that is what you're going to see."

Some of that fear comes from a lack of and gap in information to the public around AI, according to **STEM Atlanta Women** President/CEO *Maxine Cain*. "We need to understand that AI is here to stay. It's not leaving. The train has left the station," she said. "We have to learn how to embrace it, not only for our personal lives, our families and our businesses, but also just to scale those businesses."

For programmers and others creating content, **Accenture** Managing Director/Head of Data and AI for Media and Entertainment *Sonia Gupta* believes the greatest external challenge when it comes to generative AI is in the copyright space, particularly in light of open source AI tools that are actively searching for content to take and use without permission. "Copyright and owning your content, protecting the rights of your writers, of your artists, is paramount," she said during the WICT Network panel. "How do we protect that body and make it not available or ensure that there is some sort of licensing, copyright or traceability back to what is rightfully ours and what we own as an organization?"

Stakeholders are keeping a close eye on Congress as it debates adopting a national framework for AI modeled after the risk management recommendations already laid out by the **National Institute of Standards and Technology**. But at The WICT Network session, **AWS** Senior Practice Manager for Responsible AI, Emerging Technologies and Intelligence

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Platforms *Diya Wynn* reminded everyone that one piece of legislation will not address the many questions of AI. It will simply provide the floor from which to operate on.

“What we also require from individuals, both deployers and developers... they need to enact and establish the right kinds of standard, governance and process,” she said. “We as individual consumers need to be demanding of our legislators and others that they actually are thinking about it, supporting the right kinds of bills that are actually going to protect our rights and our data.”

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MAX SETS LIVE SPORTS LAUNCH

We have an official debut date for live sports on **Max**. The **Bleacher Report Sports Add-On** tier will be unveiled in the U.S. on Oct. 5. It'll have simulcasts of all live sports under the **Warner Bros. Discovery** umbrella, including March Madness, U.S. soccer matches, **NBA**, **NHL** and **MLB** as well as live video content from Bleacher Report. It'll be available for subscribers at no additional cost for now, but once the promotional period ends on Feb. 29 (yes, 2024 is a leap year), it'll be available as an add-on to all packages for \$9.99/month. The first event to air on the tier will come Oct. 7 with an NL Division Series contest.

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DOJ SUPPORTS DISH EXTENSION FOR T-MOBILE AIRWAVES

The **Department of Justice** filed in support of **DISH's** request for more time to purchase **T-Mobile's** 800 MHz licenses, though it reduced the extension to seven months from the 10 months requested by DISH. That would give DISH until April 1, 2024. It's ultimately up to the District Court for the DC Circuit to decide on the request, but **New Street Research** believes it's highly likely the court will take its cue from the DOJ. Assuming it does, DISH will have seven months to come up with the funds for the deal. T-Mobile, which had opposed the extension, can start lining up alternative bids in the meantime. DISH was given the option to purchase the airwaves as part of the T-Mobile-Sprint merger, which T-Mobile was required to divest certain assets to DISH to bolster the creation of a nationwide competitor.

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RATINGS

ESPN made it two weeks in a row at the top of the primetime and total-day ratings. The sports net had 2.75 million viewers P2+ in prime for the week, down from last week's 3.11 million despite the return of **Charter** customers. **Fox News** and **MS-**

NBC followed with 1.75 million and 1.26 million, respectively, while **HGTV** (850,000) and **USA** (773,000) rounded out the prime top five. **ESPN** squeaked by **Fox News** in total day with 1.12 million vs 1.11 million. **MSNBC** wasn't too far behind at 805,000. **HGTV** took fourth at 437,000 and **CNN** came fifth at 433,000. – The hype behind Colorado and *Deion Sanders* helped **ESPN** record its fifth most-watched game on record Saturday night. Colorado's overtime win over Colorado State had 9.3 million viewers, peaking at 11.1 million in the 11-11:15pm window. That's the network's most-watched late prime game on record and was the most-streamed regular-season college football game of all time. – The **Formula 1** Singapore Grand Prix on **ESPN** and its F1 Kids alternate telecast on **ESPN** combined to average 1.2 million viewers. It's the largest live U.S. audience on record for the race, peaking at 1.35 million viewers between 9:45-9:59am. The main telecast accounted for 1.18 million viewers while the alternate checked in with 23,000. Through 15 races, this year's F1 season is averaging 1.2 million viewers across **ESPN**, **ESPN2** and **ABC**—down 1% from the overall average in 2022.

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SPORTSTECH ACCELERATOR CLASS NABS 25 DEALS

Comcast NBCUniversal revealed the 10 companies that are part of the SportsTech Accelerator's third class have gotten 25 pilots, partnerships and commercial deals over the course of the program. The companies have worked with leaders at Comcast, NBCU, **Sky**, **Boomtown** and **NBC Sports** as well as organizations like the **Premier League**, **NASCAR** and **WWE**. This year's class includes **Aircast**, a company that provides near-zero latency multi-view video, audio and data; **EINBLIQ.IO**, an insights and automation platform that allows media companies to operate energy-efficient and economic streaming services and **Recut**, which lets users create personalized video content at scale. Founders of the startups will showcase their products at *Sports Business Journal's* DRIVE conference that's currently taking place in St. Louis through Thursday.

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NAMIC NOTEBOOK

NAMIC's 37th Annual Conference kicked off Tuesday afternoon with a bang as leaders acknowledged the balance of celebrating how far the industry has come in the DEI space and shedding a spotlight on where progress has yet to be made. “We are proud to share the achievements of our engagement from education, mentoring and leadership development initiatives which have resulted in tangible progress and fostering diversity, and we

are committed to building on the successes and continuing to lead the industry and leveraging strategic opportunities and resources to nurture a diverse talent pool,” **NAMIC** President/CEO *A. Shuanise Washington* said. That message of ongoing action was present throughout the opening general session, including in a speech from author and former chief HR executive *Steve Pemberton*. He told attendees that this is not a time of retreat, but one of stepping forward and that requires everyone recognizing the commonalities that exist in all of us. **Warner Bros. Discovery** Chief Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer *Asif Sadiq* believes the best way to drive change in these areas comes with integrating DEI values into strategic goals and ensuring there is access to opportunity. “Many times when we talk about diversity, we do a lot of what I refer to as random acts of diversity—feel good moments,” Sadiq said. “I love those good moments. They do not drive change. What drives change is long-term sustainable commitment.”

AI EXPERTS WANTED

Sen *Mark Warner* (D-VA) is urging President *Biden* to launch an initiative focused on boosting the federal AI workforce. “A dedicated group of individuals focused solely on AI can help the federal government think through the opportunities to harness AI technologies to meet federal objectives while also working collaboratively with agencies to guard against AI-generated risks within their purview,” the Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence wrote in a letter to Biden.

ESPN REUPS PATRIOT LEAGUE DEAL

ESPN and the **Patriot League** agreed to a multi-year extension that’ll keep **ESPN+** as the exclusive holder of the league’s live and archived events. **ESPN+** will stream more than 750 events each year, including football, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s and women’s lacrosse, baseball, softball, volleyball and other Olympic sports.

ADIMPACT, TELEVISAUNIVISION EXTEND PARTNERSHIP

TelevisaUnivision is extending its partnership with the advertising intelligence company **AdImpact** for another two years. The two companies are in their eighth year working together. **TelevisaUnivision** uses **AdImpact**’s tools for political ad spend and competitive tracking purposes, which lets TU access all political races and advertisers across 58 of its affiliate markets. The renewed agreement entails **AdImpact** further integrating its software to help **TelevisaUnivision** better identify lead opportunities in additional individual markets.

CARRIAGE

The **ESPN** app is now available on **Vizio** smart TVs. The app

comes with **ESPN**’s live sports offerings as well as its on-demand library and content. **Vizio** viewers can also get in on the **Disney Bundle Trio**, which provides access to **Disney+**, **Hulu** and **ESPN+** starting at \$12.99/month.

DOING GOOD

Charter awarded \$1.1 million to 46 nonprofit organizations in its **Spectrum Digital Education** grant program, bringing the company’s total contribution to over \$9 million. 21 of the recipients are newcomers to the program, including **Compudopt** in the Dallas area, **Black Connect** in Wesley Chapel, Florida, and **Serving Older Adults** of Southeast Wisconsin in Milwaukee. – **Nickelodeon**’s “Worldwide Day of Play” campaign is back for another edition on Sept. 30. The network is partnering with the **Association of Children’s Museums** to set up activations around the globe. Participating museums can feature customized **Nickelodeon** activities that highlight the importance of active recreation. So far, museums and organizations have been planned across the U.S., U.K. and Hong Kong. **Nickelodeon** will roll out messages on its linear, social and digital platforms encouraging kids and families to participate.

PROGRAMMING

Ahead of the second anniversary of “**Dan Abrams Live**” on Sept. 27, **NewsNation** inked a multi-year deal with *Dan Abrams* to keep him as the host of the primetime program. – The countdown is on for **Hallmark Channel**’s “Countdown to Christmas” and **Hallmark Movies & Mysteries**’ “Miracles of Christmas” events. The two networks will combine for 40 original movie premieres starting Oct. 20. **Hallmark Channel** will have new movies every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8pm, while **HMM** will air new films every Thursday at 8pm. Movie debuts on **Hallmark Channel** include “Checkin’ It Twice” on Oct. 20 at 8pm, “A Merry Scottish Christmas” on Nov. 18 at 8pm and “Our Christmas Mural” on Nov. 26 at 6pm, while **HMM** will have “Mystery on Mistletoe Lane” on Nov. 9 and “Miracle in Bethlehem, PA” on Dec. 21—both at 8pm. – “The Warrant: Breaker’s Law” will premiere on **INSP** on Oct. 1 at 8pm. – The documentary “Last Stop Larimah” will debut Oct. 8 at 9pm on **HBO** and be available to stream on **Max**. – Australian comedy “Colin From Accounts” is coming to **Paramount+** in the U.S. on Nov. 9. The first two episodes of **Season 1** will be initially available before two new episodes drop weekly on Thursdays through Nov. 30. – **HBO** canceled “Winning Time” after two seasons. – **AMC Networks** renewed “Dark Winds” for a third season. A target premiere date is set for early 2025. – **Netflix** paid \$20 million for the U.S. and remaining international rights for *Richard Linklater*’s “Hit Man.” The film, starring *Glen Powell*, debuted at Venice and Toronto International Film Festival. No word yet from **Netflix** on when it will release the film about an undercover police officer posing as a hit man.