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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Cybersecurity: Harmonization, Collaboration Key to Protecting Networks

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is coming to a close, but not without plenty to ponder on how to protect networks, customers and the nation. The **FCC** closed out this 20th Cybersecurity Awareness Month with a day-long Alerting Security Roundtable Monday focused on enhancing the cybersecurity of the Emergency Alert System for TV and radio and the Wireless Emergency Alert System for mobile phones.

“Last year, there were over 6200 alerts and over 950 IP-based EAS alerts issued across the United States. There are only 365 days in a year. That means multiple alerts go out every single day. These alerts cover a wide range of topics—from child abduction, known as Amber Alerts which led to the recovery of 16 children last year, to weather alerts, like severe thunderstorm, hurricane and storm surges to wildfire alerts and so many other emergency situations,” said FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* at the event’s kickoff. “Last week, these alerts proved vital in Maine, urging residents to stay home and stay safe in what was one of far too many shooting incidents in this country just this year. All of this means that maintaining the security and operational readiness of the EAS system is essential.”

The FCC proposed rules last October that would apply certain cyber risk management planning and cyber risk incident reporting requirements to cable operators, broadcasters and others that relay these alerts. Alerts have come under fire over the years, with EAS equipment accessed in 2013 to perpetrate a zombie attack hoax

that impacted several TV stations across the country. In 2020, hackers compromised EAS alerts in Washington to transmit false warnings of a radiological hazard that affected some 3,000 homes.

“I do believe emergency alert systems are high-value targets for adversaries... [who want to] disrupt our ability to deploy, to cause society panic. The easiest way to do that would be to broadcast something or prevent something from being broadcast that could mobilize emergency services or other assets during times of crisis,” *Kenneth Chew*, the **FBI** Unit Chief for its Cyber Division, said during Monday’s FCC roundtable.

The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)** is finishing its rules for cyber incident reporting requirements for critical infrastructure companies, a job it was tasked to complete by Congress. CISA’s *Todd Klessman* is the team lead for the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act. Within that statute, there’s a requirement to seek ways to minimize duplication of reporting requirements. Klessman noted that a federal report last month identified 45 different federal cyber incident reporting requirements administered by 22 federal agencies as well as various proposals. He assured companies at the FCC workshop that work is underway to try and minimize the burden.

“Everywhere we can reduce complexity on the reporting is going to benefit us all,” *Mike Kelley*, VP, Chief Information Security Officer, **The E.W. Scripps Company**, said. “I understand maybe different purposes for giving reports, but I do love this idea of essential reporting for coordinating the dissemination of information. I think it will make it much easier for us all to

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respond much faster to threats that are out there.”

Verizon Associate General Counsel *Christopher Oatway* agreed that harmonization is key. “We are not opposed to reporting obligations, but harmonization on how it is reported, what the triggers are, and something about the format in which it is reported would be very helpful,” he said. “We are at a point now where there are a lot of partnerships in the regulatory world jumping into cybersecurity regulation. I think we have some real opportunities as this stage to start thinking hard about making sure that as we move into that world of increased certifications and reporting that we have harmonization top of mind.”

One of the themes to emerge from Monday’s session is that small businesses face just as many risks as larger counterparts. “When we were starting out a few years ago, we would hear from these entities that, ‘We are so small. We are not a target. We do not need to do the same work as these larger tier one suppliers,’” **NTIA** telecom policy specialist *Kathryn Basinsky* said. “Unfortunately, I don’t hear that as frequently because they are being targeted—either they themselves have experienced an attack or they have seen their competitors and colleagues experience an attack and stay on top of the news and they have started to see the wave of bankruptcies and fallout from ransomware among other cyberattacks.”

Backing that up is a new report released Friday by **Comcast Business** that found small businesses were under frequent threat from cyber-attacks from July 2022 to June 2023, with daily malware activity roughly doubling year-over-year and peaks in both holiday seasons.

Cybersecurity took the main stage at **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo** earlier this month, with cybersecurity leaders from **Charter**, **Comcast** and **Cox** discussing how the industry collaborates to protect their networks. “We do things like work with **NCTA** to help advise on some performance goals. We work with **Cable-Labs** to help develop standards that we use across the whole industry,” said Cox CISO *Kim Keever* during the general session. “The security team after this meeting is going to spend the rest of the afternoon talking together and sharing best practices. It’s probably the most collaborative industry I’ve ever been in.”

COMMSCOPE SPOOKS INVESTORS WITH PRELIMINARY RESULTS

CommScope shares cratered Monday after the company released preliminary 3Q23 reporting results that show lower-than-expected consolidated net sales of \$1.6 billion. Shares closed down nearly 40% to \$1.48 at Monday’s close. CommScope blamed low order rates driven by customers continuing to hold higher than required inventories, uncertain macroeconomic environment and slower service provider network cap ex spending. It put 3Q core net sales

at \$1.35 billion, a figure that excludes the Home Networks segment being sold to **Vantiva**. CommScope adjusted EBITDA guideposts down, projecting full year 2023 Core adjusted EBITDA to be in the range of \$1 to \$1.05 billion. “We believe this softer demand environment will continue as we move into the first half of 2024, impacting both revenue and profitability. However, we are encouraged that our work towards efficiencies and cost actions positions us well when the demand for our products returns,” President/CEO *Chuck Treadway* said in a statement. “Furthermore, we feel we are well-positioned to benefit from major government programs and technology cycles that will enable us to reach our long-term goals, including wireless, government broadband investments and enterprise solutions.” The 3Q23 net loss attributable to common stockholders is expected to be approximately \$829 million, which includes non-cash asset impairments related to the Home and ANS segments of approximately \$895 million. Non-GAAP adjusted EBITDA is expected to be approximately \$249 million and Core non-GAAP adjusted EBITDA is expected to be approximately \$246 million. CommScope is set to report full financials on Nov 9.

BIDEN SIGNS AI ORDER

All eyes have been on leaders in Washington to put up guard rails amid the rapid ascent of artificial intelligence, and President *Biden* took a big step Monday after issuing an executive order to address AI safety and security. The order requires that developers creating any foundation model that poses a serious risk to national security share safety test results and other critical information with the U.S. government. The National Institute of Standards and Technology will establish standards for red-team testing, and the Department of Homeland Security will apply those rules to critical infrastructure sectors in addition to establishing an AI Safety and Security Board. The Department of Commerce will provide guidance for content authentication and watermarking to clearly label what is AI-generated content. On the research front, the order is putting forth AI research across the U.S. via the National AI Research Resource, which provides students and researchers with key AI data and resources. Additionally, the order will see the establishment of an advanced cybersecurity program to develop AI tools that find and fix vulnerabilities in software. The order puts civil rights in its sights by requiring clear guidance to landlords, federal benefits programs and contractors to keep AI algorithms from being used to exacerbate discrimination as well as ensuring fairness throughout the criminal justice system.

FUMBLE FOR SUNDAY TICKET

It took about halfway through the regular season, but **NFL Sunday Ticket on YouTube** and **YouTube TV** had its first hiccup. On Sun-

day, the offering had trouble with buffering and pixelation during the 1pm-kickoff games. YouTube issued a statement nearly an hour after kickoff, stating “If you’re experiencing buffering issues on YouTube our team is aware and working on a fix. YouTube TV or NFL Sunday Ticket may also be impacted. We’ll follow-up here once this has been resolved.” It’s unclear how long the issues persisted or how many of the service’s estimated [1.3 million subscribers](#) were impacted. No word on if any refunds will be issued.

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FTC PAYS OUT VONAGE CUSTOMERS

A year after the **FTC** claimed **Vonage** used dark patterns to make it difficult for customers to cancel service while also failing to accommodate cancellation requests, the FTC is paying nearly \$100 million in refunds to customers who lost money as a result. The FTC originally filed a complaint in November 2022, alleging Vonage “used dark patterns to make it difficult for consumers to cancel and often continued to illegally charge them even after they spoke to an agent directly and requested cancellation.” The proposed court order required Vonage to pay \$100 million in refunds to those impacted, also forcing the company to make its cancellation process simple and transparent and to halt charging customers without consent. Vonage agreed to a settlement, which will see a payout to 389,106 customers. Most recipients will receive a check in the mail, and those without an address on file will receive a payment via PayPal.

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AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC** is authorizing approximately \$18.28 billion in Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model (Enhanced A-CAM) support for 368 rural carriers to expand rural broadband. These companies are committing to deploy at least 100/20 Mbps service to over 700,000 locations and to maintain or improve existing 100/20 Mbps service to approximately 2 million locations in 44 states.

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CARRIAGE

Vizio is adding the **Golf Nation FAST** channel to its lineup on **WatchFree+** as well as on demand. The channel—owned by **NBTV Channels**—comes with a slate of original shows such as “Ambush with David Feherty,” the travel-themed “Three Courses,” “Golf Unseen” and the celebrity matchup program “Versus.”

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FIBER FRENZY

TDS turned on service in Kohler, Wisconsin, marking the launch of all four communities in Sheboygan County. Once all construction is complete, about 25,000 homes and businesses are expected to have access to TDS’ network, which offers speeds up to 8 Gbps in addition to TV and phone services. – The cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, Michigan, is joining forces with **SiFi Networks** to launch the Farmington Area FiberCity project. The

over \$70 million and privately funded initiative is dedicated to bringing affordable and reliable fiber internet to every resident, business and institution in the area. The project—which will be an open access network—will provide speeds up to 10 Gbps. – **GCI** is prepping its fiber service to go live in Deering and Kivalina, Alaska. The company will begin building out fiber to homes and businesses in 2024, which will then bring 2.5 gig speeds and unlimited data at the same pricing and plans as customers in urban areas. The project in Deering and Kivalina is GCI’s sixth concurrent initiative to connect rural Alaskan communities.

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AWARDS

The 2024 Olympic Games may still be a year away, but plenty of awards were handed out at the International **SCTE** Cable-Tec Games. **Cox Communications’ Dosty Hedges** took home the Gold medal and overall winner award for the games, having earned first place in Fiber Splicing and MTDR, second for OTDR and third for Cable Jeopardy. The Silver honor went to **Tom Hawk of Comcast** after nabbing first in Drop Connection and OTDR and second in Drop Connection and Fiber Splicing. Fellow Comcast competitor **Ryan Moss** grabbed the Bronze award, having earned second in Cable Splicing and third in Meter Reading.

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PROGRAMMING

Remember the Cinderella story from this year’s NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament? **YES Network** reached a multi-game broadcast agreement with Fairleigh Dickinson University to air eight FDU games on the YES Network and YES app during the 2023-24 season. The men’s team will have six games on the network while the women’s will have two. It starts with FDU vs Saint Peter’s—the 2022 tournament Cinderella—on Nov. 15. – **Monumental Sports Network** is another RSN joining the college basketball fun, announcing it’ll air nine home men’s and women’s basketball games for George Washington University. Four men’s and five women’s basketball games will air on the flagship channel, starting with GW men’s vs Navy at 7pm on Dec. 5.

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PEOPLE

Rocco Laurenzano has been officially promoted to COO of **Google Fiber** after serving in the role unofficially for an extended period of time. He was previously VP Operations, where he oversaw expansion, build, customer operations and project management and led the company’s expansion to new states. He’ll continue those responsibilities in his new position. Prior to Google Fiber, Laurenzano held leadership roles at **Altice USA**, **Time Warner Cable**, **Charter** and **Insight Communications**. – **Morgan Murphy Media** general counsel **Richard Burns** is retiring at the end of 2023 following 45 years of service. Media attorney **Jonathan Allen** will succeed Burns. Burns was named MMM’s general counsel in 1984 after having helped with various legal projects as an outside counsel prior. Allen has been with the company since 2000.