

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Algorithm Nation: AI's Potential in Broadband Dominates Hill Talks

Lawmakers across state, local and federal governments are trying their best to wrap their arms around the burgeoning issue of artificial intelligence, and Tuesday's **House Communications** subcommittee hearing on how it relates to communications networks did little to make the situation seem more manageable.

The questions posed by committee members touched everything from digital watermarks to the creation of art using generative AI, but the majority of the probes centered on how AI could be used to support broadband deployment and network operations in the U.S. *Courtney Lang*, VP of Policy, Trust, Data and Technology for **The Information Technology Industry Council**, noted that one of the most interesting use cases for AI she has seen is around improving the accuracy and precision of broadband availability maps.

"We have some broadband maps now, but AI can be used to help enhance those and, in certain cases, it can actually see from the data particular buildings that perhaps are without broadband access even within a community. That can help to more quickly and effectively extend broadband and internet service to those populations," she said.

That was music to the ears of the members who have long pushed the **FCC** to improve its processes around building its broadband maps and similar resources. But *Nicol Turner Lee*, **Brookings Institution** Senior Fellow in Governance Studies and Center for Technology Innovation Director, cautioned them from believing AI is a magic wand that can patch every hole in a map. If there is one

thing to remember when it comes to artificial intelligence, it is that it is only as smart as the data from which it learns.

"We also still have to be careful that we may not have enough data when you think about rural communities with the scarcity of data that exists, the extent to which the AI will be effective in giving us a true portrayal of assets there will be something that we'll have to go back and interrogate," she said. "As we go into using AI in critical government functions and in areas where the value of data matters, we also have to check and make sure the function of that data or the historical condition of that data is not going to be one that will put us back as opposed to forward because we know less about the communities that we're trying to serve."

When questioned about how AI can keep networks running in the case of equipment malfunctions, overwhelming demands on capacity and the like, **Viavi Solutions** CTO *Sameh Yamany* discussed his company's digital twin technology. It creates a virtual model of a provider's network and simulates an event's impact on it over and over, and the AI systems take the learnings from that and enable real-time adjustments to manage those surges.

The security of the nation's networks has been a huge focus in recent years with rises in ransomware attacks and federal dollars being directed towards ripping out and replacing equipment from untrusted manufacturers. **Palo Alto Networks** VP, Global Head of Operations, Unit 42 *Sam Rubin* said his company is able to leverage AI to detect 1.5 million unique attacks each day. Beyond that, continuous discovery and analysis has opened the door for threat detection to block 8.6 billion at-



Cablefax

MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

DECEMBER 6, 2023

Have You Heard The News?

Emmy Award winning journalist, **Alicia Quarles**, is the 2023 Keynote Speaker for The Most Powerful Women Luncheon.

Where: The Edison Ballroom • 240 W 47th St, New York, NY

When: Wednesday, December 6, 2023

[REGISTER TO ATTEND](#)



tacks total each day. Not only have these sorts of protections become necessary given the growing threat of cyberattacks, but AI has also allowed corporations to drive down the costs surrounding areas like network security.

“Really, this comes down to the ability to consolidate around fewer platforms which still give you the capability from a coverage standpoint to protect your network and keep your information safe and the ability to simplify and to aggregate data and security information down,” he said. “You can have your teams focused on that and be more efficient in their protection of our organizations.”

Many of the legislators felt the need to do something at the federal level to act when it comes to not just AI, but also issues of digital privacy and the larger topic of algorithms. But how to do so in a way that is nimble and flexible isn't easy. Lang suggested starting points that would see government officials working hand-in-hand with industry to together discover what the best-fitting solution could be.

“I would highlight policy prototyping, which is kind of a collaborative approach where industry stakeholders and other stakeholders are brought in to test particular regulatory policy proposals to see how they work, whether they're fit for purpose, whether they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. And then if not, it can be addressed before it becomes law,” she said.

CHARTER PAYING \$25M FOR UNAUTHORIZED STOCK BUYBACKS

The **Securities and Exchange Commission** said it has settled charges against **Charter** for violating internal accounting controls requirements when it engaged in stock buybacks not authorized by its board. The operator did not admit or deny the SEC order's findings, but agreed to pay a \$25 million civil penalty and to cease and desist from further violations. “Charter has concluded this matter and is pleased to avoid the expense and distraction of a dispute with the SEC, and Charter fully cooperated in the SEC's inquiry,” the company said in a statement. “Charter's share repurchase plans were well documented and were fully disclosed as well as properly accounted for in Charter's financial statements. The order does not require Charter to cease repurchasing its stock, and we remain committed to a share buyback program and our previously stated leverage targets.” The SEC's order found that from 2017 to 2021 Charter had nine separate trading plans that included “accordion” provisions, which company personnel described as giving Charter flexibility, that allowed Charter to change the total dollar amounts available to buy back stock and to change the timing of buybacks after the plans took effect. According to the SEC's order, because Charter's trading plans did not meet the conditions of Rule 10b5-1, the company's buybacks did not comport with the board's authorizations.

GOVERNORS URGE CONGRESS TO FIGHT FOR ACP'S SURVIVAL

The group of supporters standing behind the Affordable Connectivity Program continues to grow. A group of 26 governors sent a letter to Congressional leaders this week urging them to work collaboratively with the *Biden* Administration to ensure the broadband subsidy program receives additional funding. They point to the bipartisan support for affordable high-speed internet for all as a reason to support the program deep into the future as well as the nearly 20 million households enrolled in it. “Closing our nation's digital divide transcends politics. Whether you live in a rural area, a suburb, or a city, every American needs access to high-speed internet,” the governors wrote. “Preserving the ACP will allow us to build upon the progress we've made in expanding connectivity rather than falling behind in a mission we cannot afford to lose.”

COMCAST MULTI-GIG IN ATLANTA

Residents in select Atlanta neighborhoods were connected to symmetrical, multi-gig speeds thanks to **Comcast's** DOCSIS 4.0 rollout that began last month. It's available to new and existing customers through the X-Class Internet offering, which comes with speed tiers including 300 Mbps, 500 Mbps, 1 Gbps and 2 Gbps in addition to low latency capabilities. Comcast initially began onboarding customers to its DOCSIS 4.0 network in select neighborhoods in Colorado Springs and plans to add areas of Philadelphia as well before the end of 2023.

VIAMEDIA LAUNCHES PARROT ADS

Viamedia is rolling out a new managed service called the Parrot Ad Decisioning Systems (ADS), which lets MVPDs implement regionally targeted ads on linear streams to match local ads running simultaneously on traditional cable TV platforms. The service is meant to combat the industry's transition from hardware-based video distribution to an addressable or dynamic format. Ad buyers previously had to utilize two separate orders and systems to reach the same audience. Parrot ADS provides a unified platform for media buyers to purchase ad inventory regardless of distribution method, also packing enhancements like accelerated time-to-market and reduced technological risks.

INTRODUCING THE 2024 CABLE HALL OF FAME CLASS

The **Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center** unveiled the six new members of the Cable Hall of Fame. They are **Fox Business Net-**

work anchor *Liz Claman*; **NBCUniversal** Vice Chairman *Bonnie Hammer*; **JC2 Ventures** Partner *Yvette Kanouff*; **Liberty Media** and **Liberty Global** board member *Larry Romrell*; **Comcast Cable** President/Special Counsel to CEO *Steve White*; and **YAS Foundation** Founder/board member and *Rouzbeh Yassini-Fard*. The inductees will be honored at the 27th Cable Hall of Fame celebration held at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in NYC on April 18.

.....

FIBER FRENZY

The **Fiber Utility Network** (FUN) coalition is looking to increase its marketability and awareness, and it's doing so by launching its Doing Business As brand name: **Alabama Fiber Network**. The launch follows Alabama Gov. *Kay Ivey*'s "Be Linked Alabama" initiative that seeks to continue efforts to expand access to high-speed internet in the state. In 2021, Ivey approved using \$276 million of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to go toward high-speed internet expansion. Ivey has worked with FUN since September 2022, having allocated over \$82 million to fund middle-mile broadband network. – **Ritter Communications'** RightFiber broadband is expanding to Pine Bluff and White Hall, Arkansas. The project began following a \$2.4 million infrastructure investment from the company. Eligible customers can receive internet speeds of up to 5 Gbps as well as TV and phone plans. – Construction is underway for **Bluepeak's** FTTH expansion to Denison, Texas, following a multi-million investment. Once complete, Bluepeak will offer residents and businesses symmetrical speeds from 1 Gbps for \$50/month, with homes getting as high as 5 Gbps for and businesses 10 Gbps or more. – Residents and businesses in initial construction areas across Lakeville, Minnesota, now have access to **Metronet's** fiber optic service. Home plans include speeds of up to 2 Gbps, while businesses can get up to 10 Gbps. – **GoNetspeed's** expansion journey continues as it launches its service in Rockland, Maine. The company's \$2.1 million investment will add over 3,100 homes and businesses to its footprint. Customers can get speeds ranging from 300 Mbps to 1 Gbps.

.....

RATINGS

ESPN took back the primetime crown in the cable networks ratings race, averaging 2.1 million viewers P2+ for the week. **Fox News** followed with 1.88 million as two other networks—**MSNBC** and **Hallmark Channel**—breached 1 million viewers with 1.35 million and 1.13 million, respectively. **HGTV** came fifth with 780,000 viewers. Fox News held strong in total day with 1.26 million. MSNBC wasn't too far behind at 904,000 as was ESPN at 823,000. Hallmark Channel (654,000) and **CNN** (532,000) took spots No. 4 and 5. – Another week, another episode of "College GameDay" on **ESPN**. This past Saturday's show garnered 2.26 million viewers, up 5% from 2022's Week 11 episode. The final hour reached 2.9 million viewers. Leading the week's slate of games on the network was Georgia's win over Ole Miss, which checked in as ESPN's fourth-best audience this season with 4.8 million viewers.

– **TLC** made it 19 straight weeks being the top cable network without sports among W25-54 and W18-49. The milestone was aided by "90 Day Fiancé: The Other Way" getting a 1.16 L3 rating among W25-54 for its Nov. 6 episode. "The Family Chantel," which followed 90 Day Fiancé: The Other Way, had a 1.11 L3 rating in the W25-54 category. Those two helped TLC also be the No. 1 cable network without sports on Nov. 6 for P25-54, W25-54 and W18-49. – The Season 2 finale of "Loki" accumulated 11.2 million global views on **Disney+** in its first three days. Every episode of the second season eclipsed 11 million views during their premiere weeks.

.....

INTERACTIVE CASE COMPETITION

Don't forget to [register](#) for Thursday's live Interactive Case Competition event! The topic for the fall competition is broadband equity, with top MBA student teams presenting innovative strategies to promote broadband adoption. The competition, hosted by Craig Leddy, features more than 30 business school graduates from Pace University, New York University, Drexel University and the University of Miami presenting ways to promote digital access and inclusion. The program was created in 2011 and since has featured over 400 students from 25 graduate schools in North America. Students will present their plans at the virtual event and will be judged by a panel consisting of **PBS** Chairman *Larry Irving*, **Horowitz Associates** President *Howard Horowitz* and **ATX Networks** President/CEO *Dan Whalen*.

.....

PROGRAMMING

Fox Nation's Patriot Awards will take place Thursday at 8pm. The ceremony honors military veterans, first responders and inspirational figures. An encore presentation will air on **Fox News** on Nov. 23 at 8pm. – Wrexham fans, rejoice. **FX** ordered "Welcome to Wrexham" for a third season that'll debut in the spring. The Season 2 finale makes its premiere tonight at 10pm, available to stream on **Hulu** in the U.S., **Star+** in Latin America and **Disney+** in all other territories. – The highly anticipated **Formula 1** Heineken Silver Las Vegas Grand Prix is set for Sunday at 1am. Coverage begins with "Grand Prix Sunday" at 11:30pm on Saturday across **ESPN**, **ESPN+** and **ESPN Deportes**. **ABC News'** "Good Morning America" will air segments from Las Vegas on Friday, and **ESPN2** will have highlights from the event's opening ceremony at 12:30am on Thursday. ESPN will also broadcast qualifying and all three practice sessions in the build up to the race.

.....

PEOPLE

Former **FCC** Chairman *Ajit Pai* is joining America's Public Television Stations' board of trustees effective Feb. 26. He'll serve a three-year term as an at-large member. Pai chaired the FCC from 2017-21 and is currently a partner at the global investment firm Searchlight Capital Partners.