

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Viva Las Vegas: AI, Mobile, Policy Talk to Shine at CES 2024

Rested from the holiday break? It's time to hop on a plane to Vegas and head to **CES 2024**. This year's edition will include more than 2.5 million net square feet of exhibits, the equivalent of more than 43 football fields, with 4,000 exhibitors expected to be spread across the space. Nearly 1,000 speakers will be on hand as well to power CES's more than 250 conference sessions, and more than 1,200 startups will call Eureka Park home for the show's run.

It's no surprise that the featured topic at this year's show is artificial intelligence. **Qualcomm** will be leading the way with its Wednesday keynote, scheduled for 2pm PT. Qualcomm CEO *Cristiano Amon* and **Fox Business Network's** *Liz Claman* will sit down for a conversation during the session focused on how consumers and businesses will interact with devices in different ways as AI continues to emerge as a larger character in humanity's story.

A key issue at the heart of the Hollywood strikes of last year was the role AI would play in the creation of content and the rights of creatives as AI continues to be adopted by studios and content companies. The utilization of AI tools to create new art will also be a talking point Thursday at 9am PT during the "Crafting Tomorrow: The Synergy of Creativity, AI and Tech."

This year's CES, perhaps more than ever before, will set the tone for how policymakers are viewing issues like artificial intelligence, M&A in media and tech spaces, cybersecurity, inflation and more at the start of an election year. More than

170 international, federal, state and local government officials are expected at this year's show, according to a statement from **CTA CEO Gary Shapiro** on X.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Chair *Alexander Hoehn-Saric*, Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Tech National Security Council *Anne Neuberger* and Treasury Department Assistant Secretary for Investment Security *Paul Rosen* will be on hand for Thursday's "Conversations with U.S. Government Leaders" session at 10:20am PT. For those that have kept track of **NTIA's** investigations into digital equity and artificial intelligence, catch NTIA Administrator *Alan Davidson* as a panelist alongside folks from **Xperi**, **Microsoft**, **Google** and the **FTC** during the "AI 2024" session later in the day at 12:55pm PT.

Senate leaders will take over the show's final day with Senators *Ben Ray Lujan* (D-NM), *Jacky Rosen* (D-NV) and *Cynthia Lummis* (R-WV) discussing advancing technological innovation and federal priorities in the new year during a Friday session that kicks off at 11am PT. The popular "Conversation with a Commissioner" session is also back this year, and Commissioners *Anna Gomez* and *Brendan Carr* will be on hand to spar over issues including net neutrality, federal funding for broadband and more Wednesday at 10:20am PT.

Cox Communications turned up at last year's CES to announce it had rolled out **Cox Mobile** across its footprint. It'll be back again to offer an update on its first year in the mobile business, hosting a lunch Tuesday with reporters and Cox Mobile SVP *Tony Krueck*.

And, of course, programmers, studios and distributors



100FX Cablefax
100

**Nominate the most influential executives
in the media, cable & broadband industry
for a coveted spot on the Cablefax 100 list.**

NOMINATE BEFORE JAN. 12

www.Cablefax100.com

have flocked to CES in recent years to talk about the shift of content from linear spaces over to streaming and the future of entertainment and media. This year is no different with **Disney** hosting a session Tuesday at 10am PT with Disney EVP, Category Sales and Client Solutions *Lisa Valentino* on hand to discuss how audience and engagement across streaming will fuel the future of advertising. Wednesday will bring “The Future of the Entertainment industry” at 9am PT with **TikTok** Head of Entertainment *Catherine Halaby*; Disney EVP, Unscripted and Alternative Entertainment *Rob Mills*; **Universal Television Alternative Studio** *Toby Gorman*; and **Telemundo** EVP/GM, Streaming *Romina Rosado* debating how media and content creators move forward in 2024.

If the calendar is too packed to set aside the time needed to take in everything CES has to offer, there’s still good news for you. CTA has been one of the organizations that has continued to embrace hybrid models in the years after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a large number of sessions from CES’s C-Space and other venues across the city to be made available via the CES 2024 app.

CHARTER, LIONSGATE CLOSE TO CALLING OFF ‘MANHUNT’ SPAT

Charter and **Lionsgate** have reached a settlement in principle over litigation involving the TV series “Manhunt” and carriage of **Pop TV**. The companies have requested a Jan. 10 status conference be continued by approximately 45 days while they finalize the settlement agreement, according to court documents. Terms of the settlement weren’t disclosed, and both companies declined comment. Charter filed the [suit](#) in April 2023 claiming that Lionsgate had breached a 2018 contract that had Charter paying \$20 million to carry Pop TV for three years in return for the ability to co-produce, co-own and exclusively premiere Seasons 2 and 3 of Manhunt through its **Spectrum Originals** arm. While Charter described Season 2 of Manhunt, which focused on the terrorist attack at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, as a “great success” for Spectrum, it said it was an “economic failure” for Lionsgate. The deal became less palatable to Lionsgate in 2019 after it sold its Pop stake to CBS, Charter said. The operator said the deal included a provision that would have Lionsgate pay damages of \$10 million for each season it failed to deliver, but Lionsgate didn’t pay and started working with **Apple Studios** on a series of the same name centered on the search for *John Wilkes Booth*. The show, based on *James Swanson’s* bestselling book *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln’s Killer*, is slated to debut on **AppleTV+** on March 15 and stars *Anthony Boyle*, *Hamish Linklater* and *Tobias Menzies*.

B/R SPORTS ADD-ON STAYING FREE FOR NOW

The current \$0 price point for **Max’s Bleacher Report Sports Add-On** is staying around for a little longer. **Warner Bros. Discovery** announced the sports package will become a paid add-on later than its initial Feb. 29 date, citing the need for more time to finalize tech integrations. “The B/R Sports Add-On will continue to be made available to Max subscribers on us for a few more months as we finalize some tech integrations that will ensure a more seamless customer experience with our platform partners. We’ve seen great engagement with live sports on Max so far and look forward to continuing to delight fans with upcoming premium sports events like March Madness, the NBA, and NHL,” Max said in a statement. Max had [originally rolled out](#) the B/R Sports Add-On for \$0 before planning to have it rise to \$9.99/month as of Feb. 29. The delay likely pushes the price increase beyond **NCAA** March Madness and potentially the **NBA** and **NHL** playoffs as well.

SIAC ROLLING WITH HBCU GO

ESPN isn’t the only one with a big media rights announcement of late. **HBCU GO** sealed a 10-year media rights deal with the Division-II **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** (SIAC). HBCU GO will get the cable, linear, streaming, broadcast, VOD and PPV rights for all SIAC team sports through 2032. The platform also nabbed distribution for SIAC sporting events on **CBS** O&O stations in several markets including NY, LA, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Boston, Seattle, Miami and Pittsburgh. HBCU GO has an existing 10-year deal with the **CIAA** as well as a multi-year partnership with the **SWAC**.

AT THE COMMISSION

Mark your calendar for Feb. 5. That’s the deadline to submit comments to the **FCC** on its proposal to adopt protections that prohibit cable operators and DBS providers from imposing early termination fees and require them to offer credits to customers for any remaining days in a billing cycle after cancellation. Reply comments are due March 5. The FCC voted 3-2 in December to approve the so-called “junk fee” NPRM.

MORE 2023 RATINGS

Spectrum News finished 2023 averaging 2 million daily viewing households, more than what the broadcast nets, **CNN**, **Fox News** and **MSNBC** checked in at within areas Spectrum News distributes to. The Spectrum News mobile app reached 3.5 mil-

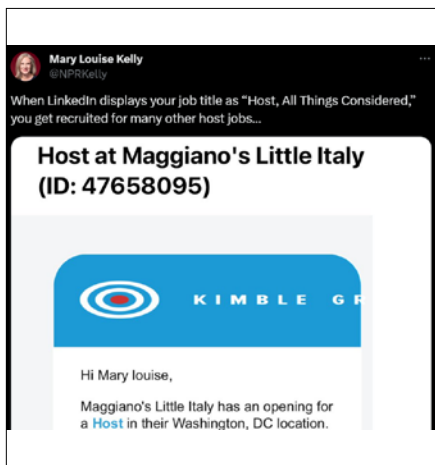
lion downloads since its launch in 2021, and its CTV app expanded availability with the addition of Xumo devices. – **Hallmark Channel** solidified itself as the top entertainment cable network in 2023 in both total day and weekend total day across households, total viewers, W25-54, W and P18+ and W and P 55+. The network also clinched an entire decade of being the most-watched entertainment cable network in 4Q among W18+ thanks to the continued success of “Countdown to Christmas” and other holiday events. It had two of its top three most-watched original scripted series of the year in the W18+ category with Season 10 of “When Calls the Heart” (No. 1) and Season 1 of “The Way Home” (No. 3). – All editions of **ESPN’s “SportsCenter”** recorded YOY viewership growth in 2023. The late-night “SportsCenter with Scott Van Pelt” led the way with an average of 741,000 viewers per episode, ending the year with 963,000 viewers for the month of December. The 11pm show came second with 469,000 viewers followed by 6pm (446,000), weekend AM (437,000) and 1am (411,000).

PEOPLE

Warner Bros. Discovery Chief Communications Officer *Nathaniel Brown* is stepping down after a nearly five-year run with the company. SVP, Corporate Communications *Laura Watson* and **Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group** EVP, Communications *Katie Martin Kelley* will fill in on an interim basis. Brown first joined Discovery pre-merger in 2019 as EVP, Head of Global Communications. He was elevated to his most recent role after the merger’s closing, overseeing communications for various business segments like **Warner Bros. TV Group**, **HBO**, **Max**, **CNN** and more. Before WBD Brown had made stops at XM Satellite Radio, **MTV Networks** and 21st Century Fox. – **TDS** named *Jeff Mand* its new VP, Construction and Service Enablement. He’s been with the company since starting as a network engineer in 1999. Mand was most recently Director, New Market Implementation, where he managed the strategic vision and execution of the implementation, support and ongoing maintenance functions for all out-of-territory network operations.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Social Media Hits



Research

(Source: [Hub's "TV Advertising: Fact vs. Fiction" Survey](#))

- Nearly 2/3 of consumers say they would choose an ad-supported option if it saves them \$4-5/month on a video subscription. That’s up from 59% in June 2023.
- 38% would choose one service over others if it offers a lighter ad load (shorter breaks and/or fewer ads).
- 46% are more likely to pay attention to shorter ads and ad breaks.
- Most viewers consider ad breaks reasonable if they are one minute or shorter. 90 seconds is the tipping point where most viewers no longer consider a break reasonable.

Up Ahead

- JAN. 9-12:** [CES 2024](#); Las Vegas
- JAN. 16-18:** [NATPE Global](#); Miami
- JAN. 29-FEB. 1:** [Realscreen Summit](#); New Orleans
- FEB. 8:** [Regional Fiber Connect](#); Richmond, VA
- FEB. 25-27:** [NCTC Winter Educational Conference](#); Las Vegas

Quotable

“The funny thing about telecom businesses is the narrative is never good. Everybody has a phone, the industry seems saturated, all the carriers look the same and cable companies are now selling mobile. But beneath that, the big three telecoms are all solid businesses. Verizon in particular has been refreshed by new management and they’re growing by selling more to the customers they have. So with all the 5G money spent, we think now just paying down debt can drive the stock nicely higher.”

– Wolfe Research Media and Telecom Analyst Peter Supino on CNBC’s “Squawk on the Street” [discussing](#) the firm’s decision to upgrade Verizon’s stock to “Outperform.”