

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Future Forward: SCTE, CableLabs CEOs on Workforce Development, AI

Last week's **SCTE** TechExpo was *Maria Popo's* first since becoming CEO of the organization, and the show was a preview of how she and **CableLabs** CEO *Phil McKinney* are working together to push the industry forward.

"One of the things that we found works really well for us now with CableLabs is by leveraging what they're doing, that's how we differentiate ourselves and become more powerful," she told **CFX** during an interview at the show. "I think that will help us also decide what to do on standards and where we focus on workforce development and what the chapters are doing."

Workforce development was the topic of many sessions at SCTE TechExpo, and the SCTE Foundation recently celebrated a complete overhaul that included the launch of a Broadband Labor Academy with a program specifically designed for aspiring fiber splicers. As SCTE invests more in workforce development, Popo wants to think deeply about how to tightly integrate soft skills with the technical skills members are more familiar with.

"In general, everybody might not value soft skills as much, but that's actually what's helping them get their careers going and promoted," she said. "These are the new technical skills of this age—you have to be able to collaborate and use AI together."

She also wants to collaborate with CableLabs on the development of the training coming out of SCTE to ensure the core components of the lessons are as current as possible. There

may also be opportunities to condense the number of offerings SCTE has available to ensure the most key information is being funneled to learners at any given time.

Her other focus is on how to strengthen SCTE chapters and also use them as a tool for outreach to prospective members, community colleges and groups that are currently underrepresented in the organization. She spoke of the potential for a digital platform that would offer opportunities for connection across chapters or the sharing of live training. That platform could also offer career pathing services for members that aren't sure what opportunities are open to them given their individual skills.

Meanwhile, at CableLabs, technologists are bringing their heads together to not only continue work on DOCSIS 4.0, but also lead the way forward on AI research. McKinney is an absolute optimist when it comes to AI and its ability to automate different tasks and free up time for individuals to focus on more complex problems.

"We are wired for problem solving. What we're not good at is chaos, and when you get loads of information, it's chaos. We tend to get overwhelmed and distracted," he said. "Where AI plays a really good role is taking that chaos and organizing it in such a way that I can solve a problem."

McKinney told CFX about research being done on augmented diagnostic recovery in the field. CableLabs is working with members to take all of its knowledge, specifications, learnings from its interop labs and more and make that available in a

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digestible format to technicians in the field. Early experiments throwing all of that information into ChatGPT were unsuccessful with the AI only providing the correct answer to questions 45% of the time.

CableLabs has now developed a format to take all of the technical data and structure it in a way that is AI-friendly. Once that information is fed into an AI tool and it is asked a question, CableLabs finds the accuracy rate to be 93%.

“There’s been a lot of interest outside of the industry even,” McKinney said. “Because you know we’re talking about CableLabs, but you’ve still got **IEEE** and **3GPP**, all these organizations asking ‘Could we do the same thing over here with that?’ It’s getting a lot of attention just because of the accuracy level we’re able to get versus just shoveling in bulk data.”

NBA WANTS TO DISMISS WBD LAWSUIT (AGAIN)

The **NBA** is standing firm with its belief that its ongoing lawsuit from **Warner Bros. Discovery** over matching rights should be tossed out. After filing a motion to dismiss the lawsuit in late August, the league is again asking the New York Supreme Court to dismiss the complaint with prejudice. The NBA claims the lawsuit—filed in July after the league dropped WBD as a media partner and signed deals with **Disney**, **NBCUniversal** and **Amazon** instead—has no merit since it thinks TBS/TNT Sports had no right to match Amazon’s offer. “Under the unambiguous terms of the NBA/TBS Agreement, TBS had no right to match Amazon’s offer to distribute NBA games on a standalone basis via a streaming service, and even if it did, Exhibit 6 to the complaint—Plaintiffs’ redline showing TBS’s changes to Amazon’s offer—demonstrates undeniably that TBS failed to match its material terms exactly, as required by the MRE and New York law,” the league said in its filing, adding that “TBS revised eight of the Amazon offer’s 27 sections, changed 11 definitions, struck nearly 300 words, and added over 270 new words. Plaintiffs’ redline was a counteroffer, not a match.” The NBA also asserted that TNT Sports would need a separate Digital Rights Agreement (which would have no matching rights) in order to distribute individual games on **Max**.

MORE HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF

Comcast NBCUniversal is donating \$500,000 in cash and \$500,000 in advertising time for PSAs in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The company is also pledging \$200,000 to the Comcast NBCU Employee Disaster Assistance Fund, which gives employees financial assistance if impacted by natural disasters or other life-altering events. Comcast’s Florida Region will have \$50,000 go toward the

Volunteer Florida Foundation, \$25,000 to Second Harvest Food Bank of the Big Bend and \$25,000 to All Faiths Food Bank. The United Way of Augusta CSRA in Georgia will get \$100,000 and both the Salvation Army Savannah Corps and East Tennessee Foundation will get \$50,000. The United Way of Southwest Virginia will receive \$10,000. Comcast also opened up more than 360,000 Xfinity WiFi hotspots across those states.

QVC PLAYING PICKLEBALL

QVC is stepping into the live sports game, announcing a multi-year partnership with **USA Pickleball**. QVC will become the exclusive retail industry partner and broadcast partner of USA Pickleball, which includes select Golden Ticket Tournaments and the Nationals event that takes place each November. **QVC+** and **HSN+** will offer curated shoppable entertainment through behind-the-scenes content and livestream coverage. QVC will also be on hand at the upcoming National Championships from Nov. 9-17 with on-site activities and activations.

GWS RANKS MOBILE, BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY PERFORMANCE

The wireless network benchmarking company **Global Wireless Solutions** conducted its Nationwide Connectivity Experience Awards, which looks at broadband and mobile network performance across the U.S. Results awarded **T-Mobile** as the Best Mobile Experience by a major operator, **Verizon** as the Best Broadband Experience and **AT&T** as the Best Combined Connectivity Experience. GWS’ mobile testing looked at reliability, latency, upload and download network available throughputs, delivered throughputs and packet loss. T-Mobile ranked the highest in both the mean download and upload throughput rankings as Verizon and AT&T took second and third in both categories, respectively. Broadband results—which measured reliability, latency, upload and download network available throughputs, FCC benchmark, delivered throughputs and packet loss—revealed Verizon, Xfinity (second in the category), **Cox** (third) and Spectrum (fifth) all had mean download throughputs above 150 Mbps. Cox and Spectrum, however, both had upload speeds below 40 Mbps (Verizon and AT&T posted above 90 Mbps). GWS’ combined testing revealed the AT&T bundle had the best results when factoring the combination of metrics tested, followed by Verizon, Xfinity, Spectrum and T-Mobile. Data was collected from GWS’ opt-in consumer panel of more than 104,000 participants 18+ from Jan. 1 through June 30 this year.

CONSUMERS CHOOSING TO WATCH GAMES ON TV VS IN PERSON

In the age of direct-to-consumer viewing options, bundles, mergers and the rise and fall of regional sports networks, the demand for live sports viewing is as high as ever. **Effectv** released a new report showing that 85% of sports fans prefer watching live sports on TV rather than in person, with fans spending an average of 3.2 hours a week watching sports content. This includes 57% of fans who consume sports through traditional linear TV and 46% who sign up for streaming services for a specific sport. The study also captured the effects of advertising on the overall viewing experience for sports fans and found that 55% of fans do not view ads as disruptive to the game.

NICK ROCKS THE VOTE

Nickelodeon is bringing back its “Kids Pick the President ‘Kids’ Vote” poll along with a half-hour special that’ll reveal the poll’s results and discuss issues young people care about. Kids can cast their votes online before the results are revealed Oct. 28 at 8pm on Nickelodeon. Once they’ve voted, kids will be able to download an “I Voted” badge and learn more about candidates and the electoral process. The “Kids Pick the President” special will be hosted by *Nate Burleson* and his 14-year-old daughter *Mia*, while also featuring several kids who’ll share personal stories and opinions on topics like AI and technology, health and the economy.

LIVERAMP GETS AN UPGRADE

Data collaboration platform **LiveRamp** has received some new features. The updated version of the platform now enables first-party identity graphs with self-service capacity, which allows companies to stitch together and resolve their own first-party data back to an individual. It also has standardized queries to assist with insights and clean room measurement, along with accelerated ecosystem activation that also includes the ability for customers to directly activate with Google’s Display & Video 360 Publisher Advertiser Identity Reconciliation.

OPERATIVE MAKES KEY ADDS

Cox Media, **Effectv** and **Spectrum Reach** have gone live on Operative’s AOS advertising management solution. AOS is a media platform that unifies and activates a company’s cross-platform data, assisting companies in enhancing the sell-through and value of inventory across all platforms. Operative said the moves have helped AOS approach the \$20 billion mark in annual advertising revenue and is increasing support to 6,000 users globally.

RATINGS

The two Monday Night Football games this week averaged over 20.3 million viewers during their 2.5-hour overlap (8:15-10:45pm) across ESPN, ABC, ESPN+, ESPN Deportes and

NFL+. Viewership for the Titans-Dolphins and Seahawks-Lions peaked at 21.4 million during the 9-9:15pm window. The latter, which was on ABC, averaged more than 15 million viewers for the complete game. Later in the week on the diamond, Day 1 of this year’s MLB Wild Card Series averaged 2.5 million viewers across four games on ESPN platforms. Viewership peaked at 6.71 million viewers at 5:30pm when three games were in action. Despite being up against the Vice Presidential debate, ESPN’s two-game viewership averaged 2.75 million viewers, which is up 17% from last year’s first day of the Wild Card.

DOING GOOD

Mediacom Business is partnering with the Springfield Public School District in Missouri to provide a fiber infrastructure that connects the district’s wide-area network. Mediacom Business was selected after SPS released a Request for Proposals for WAN connectivity in 2023, and the WAN will enable a secure private broadband network across 60+ facilities within SPS. SPS will use funding from the **FCC**’s E-Rate Program to cover the costs of the project. – **Cox Communications** announced a phone case design contest as part of its partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In recognition of Cox Innovation Labs’ 20th anniversary celebration, Boys & Girls Clubs members nationwide will submit phone case designs under the theme “A World Within Reach.” The winning design will be implemented on a case to be sold in Cox retail stores nationwide. Finalists will be announced in early 2025.

PEOPLE

ACA Connects upped *Zamir Ahmed* to SVP, External Affairs, giving him more responsibility over day-to-day operations like member recruitment, retention and outreach. Also getting a boost is *Bill Tortoriello* who was promoted to VP, Technology & Policy. Tortoriello, who joined the association in June 2023, will become the point person on member education as it relates to the intersection between tech and public policy. – **Andy Hendrickson** is the **FCC** Enforcement Bureau’s new CTO, joining the agency after more than two decades in telecom. He’ll support the Bureau’s work in privacy, data protection, cybersecurity and more. *Ira Keltz* was named Acting Chief Engineer of the agency, leading the Office of Engineering and Technology. Keltz began work on spectrum policy issues at the FCC in 1994 and most recently served as Deputy Chief of OET.

OBITUARY

Shentel announced *JP West* passed away Sunday at the age of 62. West, who was most recently the Senior Leader of Government Affairs for **Glo Fiber**, spent his entire career in the telecommunications industry. He had an 8-year stint at **Comcast Business** from 2007-15 before moving to **Consolidated Communications** and then **Segra** in 2018. He joined **Horizon** in 2019 and rose to VP, Business Development, before making the switch to Glo Fiber in April when Shentel acquired Horizon.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

First Starz Talk Show Features Fat Joe in Host Seat

After more than 20 years in the hip-hop industry, rapper and cultural icon *Fat Joe* has shifted his focus to storytelling. Developed by **Starz**, “Fat Joe Talks” (premiering Friday) will feature exclusive interviews and intimate conversations that bring viewers into the lives of various celebrities, public figures, artists, and more, sharing stories from their perspectives. “Everybody has a different, unique journey. I want people to look at these interviews and be inspired, to know they can make it,” Fat Joe told **CFX**. “Every single interview is done from a different lens. You’re not seeing the repetitive stuff or the same questions.” The talk show is set to cover a variety of areas, from hip-hop to even political spaces. Upcoming guests include singer *Mary J. Blige* and House Minority Leader *Hakeem Jeffries*. Fat Joe, a Bronx-based Latino rapper active since the early '90s, has sold more than 2.5 million records and is credited with discovering and mentoring talents like *DJ Khaled* and *Remy Ma*. And while music may be what he’s best known for, Fat Joe has been involved in the interview and conversation space for years. In 2018, he created and hosted the “Coca Vision” podcast on Tidal, and in 2020, he interviewed prominent figures such as Dr. *Anthony Fauci* on Instagram Live during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those experiences strengthened his ambitions. “I had a dream of having a talk show for 15 or 20 years,” he said. “What I plan on doing is inspiring the youth and everyone who loves our culture and hip-hop. People who aren’t part of our culture are also welcome to learn about our struggles and triumphs. You’ll hear powerful testimonies from your favorite artists that you’ve never heard before, and you’ll be like, ‘Wow, this is the Fat Joe Show. This is ‘Fat Joe Talks.’” Friday’s premiere episode will feature legendary rapper and Wu-Tang Clan member Method Man, who currently stars in Starz’s “Power Book II: Ghost.” “Fat Joe Talks” is the network’s first-ever weekly talk show, with new episodes to premiere every Friday. - *Noah Odige*

REVIEWS

“Land of Women,” streaming on **Apple TV+**. Loyal readers of this page know of your reviewer’s penchant for storytelling about small communities. Once the opening of this *Eva Longoria*-led series is over, most action moves from NYC to a small, wine-producing village in Spain. It’s there that Longoria’s character, Gala, an entrepreneur, hides from the sort of loan collectors who only take cash and think nothing of seeking physical revenge on non-payers and their families. The charm of this story, yes, charm, is the setting in Spain, where residents know everyone else’s business. Besides learning about Castilian culture, it’s enjoyable watching glamorous Gala rough it in Spain, sometimes speaking Spanish, covered in mud and, of course, still looking great. Moreover, Gala’s interplay with her wily mother, veteran Spanish actress *Carmen Maura*, is priceless. — “The Penguin,” 9pm, new episodes, Sunday, **HBO**, and streaming on Max. After viewing initial eps of this TV view of the villain from “The Batman” film (2022), at least one critic said *Colin Farrell*, who also played Penguin in the film, should clear shelf space for an Emmy. Perhaps. The svelte, handsome Irish actor is transformed, thanks to his excellent performance and great makeup from *Mike Marino*, who, like Farrell, worked on the movie, too. Rivaling Farrell for an Emmy is *Cristin Millioti*, as a serial killer in sheep’s clothing. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(09/23/24-09/29/24)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.724	2297
MSNBC	0.362	1148
ESPN	0.248	787
CNN	0.216	686
HALL	0.210	667
HGTV	0.185	585
USA	0.156	494
INSP	0.144	456
TWC	0.143	453
TBSC	0.140	443
TLC	0.128	404
FOOD	0.127	402
DISC	0.124	393
TVLAND	0.108	342
HIST	0.104	330
ID	0.101	321
GSN	0.089	282
FX	0.087	276
HALLMYS	0.082	259
TNT	0.079	251
NWSMX	0.076	241
PRMNT	0.076	240
REELZ	0.073	233
LIFE	0.072	229
AMC	0.070	221
WETV	0.069	219
A&E	0.067	214
BRAVO	0.066	209
OXY	0.062	196
NAN	0.057	182
BET	0.056	178
ADSM	0.055	174
NFL	0.054	171
TRAVEL	0.050	158
FETV	0.049	156

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