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Washington Post
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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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Philadelphia Inquirer
Verizon, Comcast customer data to transform ad markets: reports

Light Reading
FCC Probes TWC Programming Assets

Fierce Cable
Young adults 23% more likely to use pay-TV if they're aware of TVE, consulting group says

Bloomberg
Sky First-Quarter Sales Rise on Pay-TV, Streaming Services

Allentown Morning Call
Term limit pledge, what term limit

Atlantic Broadband said it has launched its service and brand in eastern Connecticut on the heels of its acquisition of the MetroCast Communications system there, and outlined plans to bring residential gigabit service to the area.

As part of its broader multi-million dollar investment plan, Atlantic Broadband has kicked off a "major commitment" in eastern Connecticut to bring "affordable Gigabit Internet service" utilizing DOCSIS 3.1, the emerging multi-gigabit platform for HFC networks. For more about D3.1 developments, please see **this week's coverage** of the SCTE Cable-Tec Expo in New Orleans.

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The MSO said it expects to launch residential gigabit Internet service "widely throughout its Connecticut footprint" next year. "We understand the economic benefits of ultra-fast Internet service in today's digital age and our broadband network is uniquely suited to enable customers on a wide scale," said David Isenberg, Atlantic Broadband's president and chief revenue officer. "That's why we're investing millions of dollars in the latest technology to launch Gigabit Internet service as soon as we possibly can."

As for today, the MSO has launched a new suite of faster broadband services, including a new offering that tops out at 120 Mbps (down). Existing MetroCast subs will get automatic speed upgrades in the coming months. On the video end, Atlantic Broadband is launching premium movie service EPIX, which will be included in all double-play and triple-play bundles, as well as its new Digital Plus service.

In June, Atlantic Broadband agreed to purchase MetroCast of Connecticut from Harron Communications for $200 million, a deal involving systems passing about 70,000 homes (and 23,000 TV subs) in New London, Waterford, East Lyme, Montville, Plainfield, Killingly, Sterling, Griswold, and Putnam. This system currently serves approximately 23,000 TV, 22,000 Internet and 8,000 Phone customers. – ***Multichannel News***

HBO Chief Executive Richard Plepler made a case for big broadband providers to market

pledge?

pennlive.com
Activist Gene Stilp, and an old friend, call for Attorney General Kathleen Kane's ouster at Capitol

the company's new standalone streaming service, saying it would help both sides grow without compromising the traditional pay-television business.

Speaking at The Wall Street Journal's WSJD Live event here, Mr. Plepler noted that companies like Comcast Corp., Charter Communications Inc. and AT&T Inc. have millions of broadband-only households, and suggested it would be in their interest to offer HBO Now, the new streaming product, to target those audiences. "Why wouldn't you want to take a product like HBO…and make it a part of your package, and share the revenue with us?" Mr. Plepler said. "We're having better conversations with some than others."

HBO Now offers the Time Warner Inc. premium cable channel's programming—from "Game of Thrones" to "Veep"—to customers who don't have pay-TV connections. The $15 a month streaming service is available through outlets like Apple Inc. and Roku Inc., but the biggest broadband companies so far haven't signed on as distributors.

Mr. Plepler downplayed the notion that cable companies should be concerned about HBO Now cannibalizing the hugely profitable pay TV business. He said less than 1% of customers who signed up for HBO Now were pay-TV customers. "This is going to be a tremendous expansion of their reach as well," he said, referring to the broadband companies. Mr. Plepler declined to comment on the number of subscribers HBO has signed up, but said the company is pleased so far.

Amid growing industry concerns about cord-cutting, Mr. Plepler said he believes the pay-TV industry is moving toward offering "skinny" bundles, smaller packages of channels. He said that outcome would benefit HBO, putting it in reach for more households. "What people really want are bundles that don't have 500 channels," he said. Big TV channels will survive in the skinny bundle world, he said, while smaller networks that have been "riding on the backs" of larger sibling networks will struggle, he said.

Despite constant talk of a rivalry between Netflix Inc. and HBO, Mr. Plepler said the companies' services complement each other. "We overindex in their homes. They overindex in our homes," he said, adding that the households that tend to like both services are "entertainment junkies." Mr. Plepler said the company has been trying to invest in content strategically, citing the company's deals to carry Sesame Street programming and the signing of sports commentator Bill Simmons away from ESPN. He said Vice Media's new daily newscast will have "a little more HBO production patina to it" than the Vice documentaries HBO has carried thus far. "I like the grit of that organization," he said of Vice. "I like their bravery. I like their storytelling." – ***Wall Street Journal***

Maybe it was around the time of the great cable merger battles of the early 2000s—that is, so long ago that we don't exactly remember. A letter from cable pioneer Leo Hindery warned that it would be a mistake to trust the cable industry to build our broadband future because cable had a basic conflict of interest. Broadband would eventually enable high-def video streams that would threaten cable's traditional TV business.

Mr. Hindery's fears were entirely rational but have proved misplaced: Netflix exists. The explosion of over-the-top TV exists, delivered by cable companies whose traditional business is being undermined in the process. In fact, with much of its profits nowadays coming from broadband, cable has been the one industry investing billions to let households watch multiple Netflix streams simultaneously.

OK, that's old news, but apparently still not understood by the Rip van Winkles who populate the Washington bureaucracy. Four recent speeches by major policy makers—Federal Communications Commission chief Tom Wheeler, Justice Department antitrust chief Bill Baer, plus two of their top deputies—were apparently written for dial-up America.

Mr. Baer, speaking to a Duke University conference this month, uttered words that must have had his audience checking their smartwatches to see if they had been transported

back to 1999. Darkly he warned that “cable companies have both the incentives and means to use their gatekeeper power to slow innovation to protect their video profits.”

What’s actually happening is that Mr. Baer and friends are grabbing an invitation proffered by the White House to invent excuses to envelop the new and conspicuously successful Internet video business in Washington’s rent-seeking and mission-expanding regulatory politics. (In regulatory circles, such efforts are applauded as making “new law.”) Three embryonic initiatives emerge in the speeches:

1) To regulate programming markets on grounds that “overbuilders” won’t roll out new physical networks if they can’t obtain rights to TV shows as cheaply as the cable incumbents, with their millions of subscribers. Google is the prime lobbyist behind this push. Indeed, a story that may finally get traction in the coming year is the white elephanthood of its vaunted Google Fiber project. It turns out customers aren’t interested in signing up for Google’s superfluously fast Internet service unless it comes with a standard TV bundle, which Google is finding prohibitively expensive to provide. Never mind that Washington turns causation on its head. Content costs are rising for everybody, not just Google, because Hollywood and the sports leagues, not the cable guys, are the ones with leverage. But Washington is also deluded to imagine its thumb on the scales in content negotiations is enough to render projects like Google Fiber economical. It isn’t.

2) So around Justice and the FCC, a second idea is taking shape: Pressure the cable guys to overbuild each other’s turf. This stipulation is already being bruited as possible condition for approving the pending Charter Communications -Time Warner Cable merger, but it’s a formula for killing cable investment altogether. The cable guys aren’t crazy. They’ve seen Verizon struggle to earn a return on its $23 billion FiOS investment. If overbuilding is the price of consolidation, cable will skip consolidation, stop investing, and milk their existing infrastructure. In fact, it’s already happening: New spending is being reined in, and cable stocks have only soared as a result.

3) Which brings us to a third emerging regulatory scrum, over wireless “LTE-unlicensed.” The government unwisely shot down wireless mergers that are actually the best bet for providing a true alternative to cable broadband. Now it unwisely may side with Google (yep, again), allied this time with Big Cable, to prevent wireless players from expanding their networks into the unlicensed spectrum used by Wi-Fi.

Understand: The wireless guys would simply be adding more users to the Wi-Fi spectrum that is constantly adding users, and would have to abide by the same cooperative, noninterference rules as everybody else. Google and the cable guys are simply engaged in competitive special pleading. They want free Wi-Fi spectrum reserved for their own use, to maintain an economic advantage over the cellular incumbents who had to spend huge sums to buy spectrum from the government.

Keep an eye on the pending Charter-TWC deal, where some or all of these initiatives may become part of the approval negotiations. And things will only get worse if Hillary Clinton is elected, and possibly even if a Republican is elected. Be prepared to be shocked and appalled at how quickly a new age of stagnation descends over the U.S. broadband sector. That sector, for all its warts, has supplied steadily rising Internet speeds and the force that has dismantled once-cozy oligopolies from Big Music to the long-distance industry to the traditional cable bundle. But happy days aren’t always meant to last. – ***Wall Street Journal***

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