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New York Times
[Terrorists Mock Bids to End Use of Social Media]

Washington Post
[Hillary Clinton wants tech companies to help 'disrupt' ISIS. What does that even mean?]

Christian Science Monitor
[Why stakes are high for court's decision on FCC's net neutrality rules (+video)]

Wall Street Journal
[Netflix Says Push for Global Rights 'Has Not Been an Easy Road']

Wall Street Journal
[CBS Forecasts Strong Growth for Broadcast TV Ad Sales in 2016]

Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice
[Online voter registration expected to surge in '16]

Comcast Ventures, the venture arm of Comcast Corp., has taken an investment stake in its third virtual reality company, Baobab Studios, and intends to put money into others. A Comcast Ventures executive compared virtual reality to the "early days of mobile" and said that it could make viewing sports or movies a more immersive experience, which could benefit Comcast Corp., the nation's largest cable company and owner of NBCUniversal.

Wired magazine recently reported that film studios have been experimenting with virtual reality, while Facebook, Google, Samsung and Sony are developing virtual reality headsets. Virtual reality replicates a real or imagined world, allowing viewers to experience those realms or even participate in them. "How many will we do?" Comcast Ventures's Principal Gavin Teo asked, referring to the number of virtual reality investments the fund could make. "We can't tell right now."

But he added that the investment arm could announce several new ones in coming weeks or months. Comcast Ventures is based in the San Francisco area with offices in Philadelphia and New York. It is separate from a Comcast-owned company that will invest $4 billion into growth companies and will be run by former Comcast chief financial officer Michael Angelakis. This venture will begin operations on Jan. 1. The most recent Comcast Ventures investment into virtual reality was Baobab, a Redwood City, Calif., company that develops animated worlds and has connections to gaming and the Dreamworks movie studio. Baobab announced the Comcast Ventures stake last Thursday.

Comcast Ventures was part of a consortium that put $6 million into early stage financing into Baobab, with partners Samsung and Taiwanese mobile-phone and tablet manufacturer HTC Corp. In early November, sports-streamer NextVR announced that Comcast Ventures was part of a consortium that invested $30.5 million into an early round of funding for that company. NextVR's technology makes viewers feel as if they are

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review **Clintons bank on popularity in Pennsylvania with Pittsburgh fundraiser** ***Philadelphia Inquirer*** **Measure to remove Kane to go before full Senate**	at a game or event with a 360-degree camera and seems part of the effort by media firms to add features and dazzle to sports broadcasts to retain viewers and fans. Other investors in NextVR included the venture arm of entertainment giant Time Warner Inc., Hollywood executive Peter Gruber and the Madison Square Garden Co. In July, AltSpaceVR announced that Comcast Ventures was part of a new round of financing that raised $10.3 million, taking AltSpaceVR's total funding to $15.7 million. AltSpaceVR could be used for personal communication or "Skype for virtual reality," Teo said. Besides Comcast Ventures, other groups putting cash into AltSpaceVR include Tencent, Dolby Family Ventures, Raine Ventures Lux Capital, Western Technology Investments, Maven Ventures, Promus Ventures, Streamlined Ventures and Rothenberg Ventures. – ***Philadelphia Inquirer*** --- Beware all you password sharers, a crackdown may be coming. Charter Communications CEO Tom Rutledge, whose company is close to acquiring Time Warner Cable, said on Monday that video streaming services are letting revenue slip away by allowing password sharing to proliferate. Password sharing, he said, has become an increasingly large problem, especially among college-age students. "It's a big deal," Rutledge said at a investor conference hosted by UBS. "If you ask people at colleges, they all have someone else's password. It's a hard sell now. They have a password for all the over the top services that their parents have." Password sharing has escalated as the number of video streaming subscription services have mushroomed. Not only are people sharing passwords for cable-TV service, such as Charter, Optimum, Verizon FiOS and others, they're also sharing passwords for any number of online streaming services. Rutledge didn't name names, but online subscription video services that launched in 2015 include Time Warner 's HBO NOW, CBS's All Access and Viacom's Nogg'in. It's not uncommon to find one subscription is being streamed concurrently in 15 different cities around the country, Rutledge said. In one instance, he cited, a content company has one single account with 30,000 concurrent streams. "The real problem is that content companies created their own sites, and they're streaming their own content but there's no uniform control over the streaming," Rutledge said. "It is an unmanaged churn." Cracking down on multiple password usage is well within the means of content companies, if they choose to make it a priority, the CEO stated. "It could be determined and should be determined," Rutledge said. "What really floors me is the complete lack of consciousness about it. At a time when cable-TV and satellite services are losing about one million subscribers a year, Rutledge said a crackdown on password sharing could help to shore-up revenue. "You can build algorithms to reduce unauthorized usage," he said. To close its $79 billion acquisition of Time Warner Cable, Charter still needs to win approval from the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission as well as state regulators in New York, Hawaii and California, he said. California regulators, Rutledge added, want to push out an approval date further into the future, but he said Charter has been pushing for a quicker approval process. "I can't give you any specific date, but we're working on it," he said, adding that Charter hasn't provoked the kind of public opposition that was sparked during Comcast's failed attempt a year ago to acquire Time Warner Cable. "We're going to be smaller, and we're not vertically integrated," Rutledge said, a reference to Comcast's ownership of NBCUniversal. "We haven't attracted the kind of concerns that that previous deal did. I think it's moving along well." – ***The Street*** --- Verizon is walking a fine line amid rumors that it might bid for some of Yahoo's key

properties. At an industry conference in New York on Monday, Verizon chief financial officer Fran Shammo said it was too early to say whether Verizon would buy, but that "if Yahoo is right," it could be interested. Yahoo is said to be weighing a sale of some of its core Internet businesses, such as search, media and advertising, amid weaker-than-expected growth under chief executive Marissa Mayer. Although Yahoo has been struggling to turn itself around for several years, the fact that its sites **draw a tremendous number of visitors** every month makes it an attractive target for would-be kingpins of Internet content. Shammo's comments Monday were the first official hint of interest from a major company that, analysts say, could be among Yahoo's potential buyers.

If Verizon gets more serious about buying Yahoo, the resulting deal could turn the telecom giant into a network/media hybrid similar to Comcast-NBCUniversal, which controls not only a portal to entertainment but also much of the actual entertainment itself. Verizon has made tentative steps in this direction already by **buying AOL this year** — a company that owns the Huffington Post and major tech sites such as Techcrunch and Engadget. Using AOL's **substantial advertising technology**, Verizon might even be able to supercharge the revenue generated by all those Yahoo visitors in a way that Yahoo perhaps doesn't.

Verizon and other telecom companies operate high-tech communications networks, but as more Americans stream music and consume high-definition video on their mobile devices, it's becoming clear that the most valuable thing is what's traveling over those Internet pipes. So network providers have increasingly eyed content firms as a way to boost their competitiveness. – ***Washington Post***

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