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## BCAP NewsClips

July 1, 2020

**Washington Post**  
[California begins enforcing digital privacy law, despite calls for delay](#)

**NorthcentralPA.com**  
[AT&T expands communications network for area first responders](#)

**Fierce Video**  
[Charter adds more 'Latino targeted' channels](#)

**Ars Technica**  
[The Apple TV is getting 4K YouTube, and Macs are getting 4K HDR Netflix](#)

**CNBC**  
[Companies joining the Facebook ad boycott risk their](#)

Comcast says its broadband network has earned high marks for its performance so far during the Covid-19 pandemic, and now Wall Street analysts are projecting more broadband subscriber growth for the company.

The company claims its network is delivering above-advertised speeds nationwide, based on the results of more than 700,000 daily diagnostic network speed tests. Upstream traffic is up 32% as more Americans work from home, and downstream traffic is up 11%. The company sees its solid network performance as a bright spot in the midst of the Covid crisis. "It's been an amazing three months," said Comcast Chief Network Officer Jan Hofmeyr. "You work so hard for so many years to build something, and then to see it really come to life in a moment like this is for us just amazing." Hofmeyr said that since 2017, the company has invested \$12 billion to build more than 33,330 route miles of new fiber into the network and to increase network automation and artificial intelligence.

The analyst team at Wells Fargo recently increased its Q2 estimate for Comcast broadband subscriber additions to 275,000 from 165,000, a bump of 66%. "Broadband continues to see tailwinds," wrote analyst Jennifer Fritzsche, noting that both the increase in home-based workers and the higher demand for home-based entertainment are good for Comcast.

Meeting that demand has required many of Comcast's network technicians to work throughout the pandemic. "In March and April of 2020, as the Covid-19 surge rose, our network teams more than tripled the number of network enhancements they made during the same period a year before," Hofmeyr wrote in a blog post. He said the team added 1,700 new 100-gigabit links to the network. "We basically implemented in those two months the entire

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speech kicks off**

**Pittsburgh Post-  
Gazette  
Editorial: Can  
people be compelled  
to unlock their  
phones for police?**

capacity that we were planning to do for the year," Hofmeyr told FierceTelecom, adding that Comcast had virtually no network downtime during the upgrade, and was able to add the capacity without hiring additional technicians. "We had that critical workforce that stayed within the data centers, and they performed the upgrades," Hofmeyr said.

Meanwhile, Comcast moved almost all of its cable call center staff to a work-from-home model. The company also committed \$500 million to support pay and benefits for employees whose jobs are interrupted. The five members of its senior leadership team, two of whom have recovered from Covid-19, are donating their salaries to Covid-19 relief efforts until the crisis ends.

One of those executives, CFO Michael Cavanagh, recently told investors at a Crédit Suisse conference that he thinks the pandemic is prompting consumers to make the switch to broadband, and he expects them to stick with the service. He sees video and mobile as offerings that can make Comcast's broadband product more attractive. "The lifetime profitability of a broadband customer is so high, we want to continue to optimize that and deepen the relationship," he said.

One thing Comcast hasn't yet offered to its home broadband customers is enterprise-grade connectivity that is distinct from its consumer product. Competitor Cox Business recently [announced](#) a WFH solution that includes endpoint security and Microsoft 365, and last month Comcast told FierceTelecom it was [working on a home-based SD-WAN solution](#). This month Hofmeyr said the company has nothing to announce on that and continues to look at various options for new offerings. – **Fierce Video**

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The COVID-19 outbreak has magnified troubles many rural areas face without high-speed broadband. With more than \$6.6 million in federal CARES Act relief funds allocated to Somerset County, officials said Tuesday they plan to use half of the total toward their broadband initiative, which has been a top goal for years. "With kids learning remotely and businesses at home ... (COVID-19) is bringing this need to the forefront," Commissioner Pamela Tokar-Ickes said, describing the opportunity as a "silver lining" to the otherwise problematic coronavirus pandemic.

Through an effort led by Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development, Somerset joined seven other counties last year to conduct a regional study that surveyed thousands of residents and businesses in areas where reliable internet is lacking. The group is expected to release the results in the fall. President Commissioner Gerald Walker said extending high-speed coverage to 85 percent of the county is expected to cost more than \$8 million.

Board members said their \$3.5 million would go a long way toward that. With state and federal agencies recognizing how important it is to increase internet availability, there are a growing number of other funding sources dedicating money for projects like Somerset's, including the United States Department of Agriculture, Commissioner Colleen Dawson said. The only issue is that the county must spend its CARES Act money by December, board members said, while the regional wireless project was viewed several years down the road.

Walker said businesses in the county have already talked about smaller-scale high speed internet projects and a southern Somerset County group is discussing adding fiber optics lines – seen as "shovel ready" partial solutions toward the larger goal. "There are so many avenues we can go down," Dawson said. The county outlined its application for spending its CARES ACT stimulus funding Tuesday, saying another \$2.3 million would be used to cover the county's COVID-19 response, planning and outreach costs – which includes remote workforce technology upgrades, constituent communication initiatives and creating quarantine space at the county jail. A portion of that money will also cover enhanced 911 dispatch back-up capabilities, the board said. – **Johnstown Tribune-Democrat**

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Google's YouTube has banned several white supremacist channels. Those banned include some of the net's most high-profile far-right commentators, including former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke; Canadian white nationalist activists/conspiracy theorist Stefan Molyneux; and U.S. white supremacist Richard Spencer, said to have coined the term "alt right." "We have strict policies prohibiting hate speech on YouTube, and terminate any channel that repeatedly or egregiously violates those policies," a YouTube said in a statement . "After updating our guidelines to better address supremacist content, we saw a 5x spike in video removals and have terminated over 25,000 channels for violating our hate speech policies." Molyneux took to Twitter to call his channel's banning an "egregious error," and a Spencer tweet called YouTube's decision part of a "system coordinated effort," saying he would appeal it, reported BBC News. – **MediaPost**

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Comcast Corp., the largest U.S. pay-TV provider, has cut its ties to conservative activist Matthew Schlapp, who has drawn criticism for remarks about Black Lives Matter. "He's no longer representing us as an outside lobbyist," a Comcast spokeswoman said Monday by phone, without elaborating.

Schlapp is chairman of the American Conservative Union and a principal of Cove Strategies, an organization that's aligned with Republican politicians. In early June, he accused Black Lives Matter of being "hostile to families, capitalism, cops, unborn life and gender." Last week, Abbott Laboratories announced it was cutting ties to Schlapp, according to Crain's Chicago Business. On Fox News, he was also critical of groups seeking to remove historic statues that they find offensive.

According to Popular Information, Schlapp had a lobbying contract until April 2017 with the Motion Picture Association, whose members include Comcast's Universal Pictures and Walt Disney Co. After that, the MPA continued to support him through the ACU. The organization donated \$175,000 to the ACU, according to tax filings obtained by Popular Information. Schlapp defended his work on behalf of people of color in a [tweet](#) Tuesday, citing his advocacy for criminal-justice reform legislation and saying he has kicked white nationalists out of his group's annual conference. "Under my leadership ACU's record working toward equality for Black Americans is without question," he said. – **Bloomberg**

