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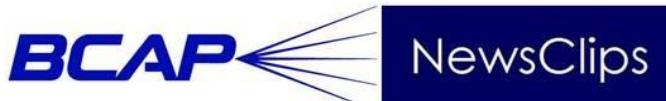


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July 2, 2020

**Hollywood Reporter**  
**Dish Network Closes Deal**  
**for Boost Mobile as It**  
**Pivots to 5G**

**Wired**  
**Schools Already**  
**Struggled With**  
**Cybersecurity. Then**  
**Came Covid-19**

**Protocol**

Internet-based live-TV services, which also include Disney-controlled Hulu + Live TV, Dish Network Corp.'s Sling TV and AT&T Inc.'s AT&T TV Now, have set themselves apart in recent years by offering a thinner selection of TV channels at lower prices than traditional pay TV, without the commitment of a long-term contract. But all five "skinny bundles" have raised prices and offered more channels since the start of 2019, an upward drift that has made them ever closer in price and appearance to the traditional cable and satellite products they were designed to replace.

AT&T TV Now's basic plan costs \$55 a month without HBO, which was once bundled with the service's introductory offers. Sling TV continues to cater to cost-conscious customers with two \$30-a-month channel

[\*\*A wall of silence holding back racial progress in tech: Non-disclosure agreements\*\*](#)

**Reuters**  
[\*\*NBCU's Peacock strikes deal with ViacomCBS to stream 'The Godfather' and others\*\*](#)

**Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**  
[\*\*Pennsylvania makes masks mandatory — even outdoors\*\*](#)

**Harrisburg Patriot-News**  
[\*\*Pa. Republican leaders rebuke court decision that 'essentially granted the governor king status'\*\*](#)

**Harrisburg Patriot-News**  
[\*\*'Overreach' or life-saver? Gov. Wolf's enhanced mask-wearing order draws mixed opinions\*\*](#)

**Philadelphia Inquirer**  
[\*\*Coronavirus isn't scaring Trump's Pa. supporters away from his Republican convention in Florida\*\*](#)

**AdAge**  
[\*\*Trump includes Pennsylvania among nearly \\$100M in TV campaign ads\*\*](#)

**Washington Post**  
[\*\*Lawmakers call for more transparency in health agency's pandemic data collection practices\*\*](#)

**NewsClips will return Monday, July 6.**  
**Happy Independence Day!**

packages. The company on Wednesday said it would fix that price for customers with current accounts as of Aug. 1 for 12 months. A Dish spokeswoman said the company has no plans to raise prices during that time but is giving existing subscribers a guarantee. AT&T's and Dish's offers are a far cry from late 2016, [when they lured millions of cord-cutters fed up with cable TV](#) by dangling packages as low as \$35 and \$20, respectively.

The gap between these services and traditional pay-TV remains significant. The average U.S. household [spends about \\$100 a month for a traditional pay-TV package](#), according to Kagan, a media research group within S&P Global Market Intelligence. Customers have started to respond to the higher prices by [abandoning internet-based live-TV bundles](#). AT&T's online live-TV service started losing customers in late 2018. Sling TV posted its first net customer loss during the quarter that ended in March. Sony Corp.'s PlayStation Vue, an early market entrant, [shut down its live-TV service earlier this year, citing low profitability](#). "As the streaming industry continues to evolve, we are working to build new flexible models for YouTube TV users, so we can continue to provide a robust and innovative experience for everyone in your household without the commitments of traditional TV," YouTube executive Christian Oestlien wrote in a [blog post](#) Tuesday.

On-demand video services such as Netflix Inc. and Disney+ have continued to pile on new customers by keeping prices low. But those services [lack live channels that cater to sports and news viewers](#). Online TV services say their packages still provide better value than their predecessors, including with no-contract subscriptions, slick digital interfaces and less hardware. The services could attract more customers later this summer, when professional sports including the National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball [are expected to return](#).

Some Wall Street analysts still expect the once-booming online pay-TV sector to lose customers over the summer. "The live-TV ecosystem no longer makes sense except for live sports," said Craig Moffett, an analyst for telecom- and media-research firm MoffettNathanson. "It should help stabilize things a bit to have sports coming back, but we're in a period of [high unemployment](#) and tremendous socioeconomic pressure. That tends to make customers look for places to save money." – **Wall Street Journal**

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The chief executives of Amazon.com Inc., Apple Inc., Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google have agreed to testify before the House Judiciary Committee as it investigates their power over the digital marketplace, according to a spokeswoman for the committee. The hearing is planned for later this month, the spokeswoman said. Representatives of the companies either declined to comment or didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. The technology journalist Kara Swisher earlier reported on plans for the hearing.

The bipartisan House investigation is looking at whether U.S. antitrust laws need to be updated to curb what some lawmakers perceive as excessive power wielded by tech giants over markets such as online advertising, online retail and smartphone apps. The testimony would be a first for Amazon Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bezos, [who had previously agreed to testify](#). The others—Apple CEO Tim Cook, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Google CEO Sundar Pichai—have all appeared before Congress in the past.

The House panel has been gathering information about large tech companies for about a year, and last September it demanded emails from the CEOs and other top executives of the firms, as well as other



documents. The companies have since turned over reams of documents, though lawmakers have in recent months been demanding more as well as commitments for public testimony from the firms' top brass.

Lawmakers are working on a report that could include policy recommendations to address a perceived lack of competition or monopolistic behavior in technology markets. The report's publication is expected to follow the CEO hearing, but it doesn't appear likely Congress will pass a law on the matter this year.

More pressing for the companies are ongoing antitrust inquiries by the Justice Department, the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general. Of those, the probe of Google appears to be the most advanced, with the government potentially suing the company later this year for alleged antitrust violations, *The Wall Street Journal* has previously reported. – *Wall Street Journal*

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Pennsylvania closed out its fiscal year Tuesday with a \$3.2 billion shortfall, with revenues falling 9% below official estimates as the state continues to grapple with the economic damage caused by the coronavirus outbreak. Since March, when Gov. Tom Wolf announced strict measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, widespread business closures and record job losses have chipped away at the tax revenues Pennsylvania relies on to pay for crucial services.

In June alone, revenues dropped 18% below estimates, with three-quarters of the shortfall attributed to the continued fallout from the virus. The remaining portion is revenue that will be collected in July, after several key tax deadlines were pushed back. State lawmakers in late May cited the uncertainty around the true economic toll of the outbreak as they passed an unusual stopgap budget, which kept funding in most areas flat for five months. The exception was education, which was funded for a full year. But, as revenues continue to plummet, legislators will likely face tough decisions come November, when they will hash out a spending plan for the remaining months of the fiscal year.

Although Pennsylvania received almost \$4 billion in federal funding under the CARES Act, that money cannot be used to make up for revenue shortfalls under current U.S. Treasury regulations. Given that restriction, lawmakers used some of the money for a \$2.6 billion spending plan that offers emergency rent relief, aid to local governments, and grants for small businesses. For now, they are keeping the rest in reserve.

State officials are still hoping that Congress might relax restrictions and allow the money to be used for budget gaps, or send additional, unrestricted aid to states and cities struggling to balance their budgets in the face of dramatic revenue losses. In May, the state's Independent Fiscal Office estimated that Pennsylvania will permanently lose \$5 billion in revenue through June of next year — assuming there is no need for another wave of business closures. Recently, however, increases in the number of new cases have threatened to slow the state's gradual reopening. On Wednesday, Pennsylvania reported the largest one-day increase in cases since the beginning of June.

In response, Wolf announced an order requiring most Pennsylvanians to wear masks in public — including outdoors if they are unable to keep six feet away from other people — and warned that reopening depends on continued vigilance about social distancing. An earlier order required people to wear masks only when they entered businesses. Philadelphia paused some aspects of its plan for reopening, delaying the start of indoor dining until at least Aug. 1. Officials in Allegheny County ordered bars and restaurants to stop selling alcohol for on-site consumption, after an uptick in cases over the weekend. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Two major TV-over-internet bundles are raising their prices this summer, moves that mean smaller savings for many Americans who choose to cancel their traditional pay-TV subscriptions in favor of leaner, cheaper services. Google's YouTube TV on Tuesday said its basic package now costs \$65 a month, a 30% increase from the previous price of \$50 that the [Alphabet Inc.](#) unit attributed to rising programming costs.

On Wednesday, sports-focused service FuboTV said it would raise the price of its standard package by \$5 to about \$60 in August, when a suite of Walt [Disney Co.](#)-owned channels including ESPN is slated to come online. "Viewership during Covid suggests that people really enjoy these bigger bundles," FuboTV chief David Gandler said, citing company statistics showing some subscribers watching more than 140 hours of TV each month as fears of contracting Covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, have kept workers home. "They're not watching one channel."

I've been thinking a lot about the news biz. Its performance in the time of coronavirus. And how, or if, media ever can win back peoples' trust. You may know such trust has been missing for some time. Gallup polling shows [a majority of Americans haven't trusted media at any point in the last 15 years](#). President Trump's claims of "fake news," and tagging the press "the enemy of the people," hasn't helped. Then came the virus.

It surged in March. [People paid significantly more attention to news](#). And guess what? Media approval still ran low. According to Gallup, lower than just about everything and everyone. Lower than state government (82 percent), President Trump (60 percent), even Congress (50 percent). Media scored a dismal approval rating of 44 percent. Then coronavirus spread, and media favorability stayed flat.

But by May, [Pew Research Center reported a change](#): 59 percent of Americans believed media was providing needed info about the virus. So that was good. Although Republicans rated media far lower than Democrats did (because everything's political). And now? [The U.S. leads the world in confirmed virus cases](#). There are case-upticks in many states, including Pennsylvania. And on top of that, there's news that the news, at least some of it, might have helped the virus spread.

Recent research suggests [consumers of conservative sources, such as Fox News and far-right social media, viewed the virus differently](#) from the start. Separate studies from folks at the [University of Pennsylvania](#), the [University of Chicago](#) and the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#), a 100-year-old, Massachusetts-based non-partisan think tank, tracked the consequences.

They say conservative assertions that coronavirus was like the flu (or Rush Limbaugh's "common cold"), and/or a Democratic plot to undo Trump, resonated with those tuned to conservative outlets. As a result, that group did less staying home, physical distancing, wearing masks; and, in some cases, registered higher infection and mortality rates. Completely verifiable or not, that would seem a further drag on trust. "The research seems sound to me," said Gene Foreman, a retired Penn State journalism professor who ran the Philadelphia Inquirer newsroom during a 25-year period in which it won 18 Pulitzer Prizes, "and it doesn't surprise me."

Foreman's following the issue. He's at work on a third edition of his textbook, "The Ethical Journalist," and said coverage of the pandemic will be part of it. "Misinformation and isolation of people who only listen, watch and read people who agree with them is a problem; whether it's

Fox or, on the other side, MSNBC," he said, "But news companies can make lots of money offering confirmation bias."

Kevin Lerner focuses on the history of journalism. He's a Marist College assistant professor of journalism. He wrote *Provoking the Press: (More) Magazine and the Crisis of Confidence in American Journalism* (University of Missouri Press, 2019). "I tend to compare the media trust issue to ratings of Congress. People hate Congress, but love their congressperson. People don't trust 'media,' but trust whatever outlet of media person they follow," he said. He added that at a time of distrust and polarization, "There's a comfort in consuming media that says the way you see the world is right."

Still, Foreman and Lerner, in separate interviews, agreed media trust is important to democracy. "We're always struggling with that," said Foreman, "and there are some hopeful signs in that, generally, people are more trusting of media like their local newspaper." Said Lerner, "It matters because you need the public to be as informed as possible in order to self-govern. That's the most important role of the press." Important, OK. But gettable? And anytime soon? "I think it's a generational thing," said Foreman, "and it relies on news literacy. How do we get the public to do a better job of testing their news sources?" Lerner calls that the long-term answer: "We need media literacy education." He said teaching, especially young people, how to read, watch and evaluate news is more important than ever due to the wide variety of information choices. Young people need to know, said Lerner, "There's more than TikTok."

I don't know. So much of life is cyclical. So many issues hinge on rigid ideological divides. Maybe all media should stop playing to those divides. Focus more on informing, less on inflaming. Maybe that would help earn back peoples' trust. – **John Baer's column in *Harrisburg Patriot-News***

