

# CableFAX Daily™

Monday — August 1, 2011

What the Industry Reads First

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## Twitter Tales: Nets Take Linear Storylines to 140-Character Limits

Full blown fiction has come to **Twitter** in the latest attempt to increase fan interaction through social media. **USA's** Twitter-only story, "Covert Affairs Tweetcast: Mission Budapest," ended its 6-week run on July 15 and **Nickelodeon** recently wrapped up its 3-day long Twitter prequel to a "SpongeBob SquarePants" episode. USA leveraged actor *Chris Gorham's* more than 40K strong Twitter following with a story focused on his character, Auggie, guiding 2 other agents in a mission gone wrong. Fans could read Tweets sent between the 3 characters, see pictures and videos, and interact and influence the outcome of events. "It's sort of a choose your own adventure type of mechanism using crowd sourcing, or character sourcing as we're trying to call it over here, to help tell the story," said *Jesse Redniss*, USA's vp, digital. "We're looking to really engage our current fans in a way they haven't heard the story before and then when those fans are engaged they're out there telling the story, they're out there retweeting and putting it out into their stream for the new fans." Behind the scenes, USA worked with **30 Ninjas**, a creator of cutting-edge transmedia entertainment, and **SocialSamba**, a company that implements scripted social media, to conceive and manage the multiple Twitter accounts, fan interaction and website. At Nick, SpongeBob fans found their Twitter streams full of Tweets between SpongeBob and friends as they talked about and prepared for a big race. The Twitter tale targeted the show's adult audience, an apparent third of its total viewers, according to *Roland Poindexter*, Nick's svp, animation and current series. "We wanted to extend the show to new places like Twitter for older fans to experience it," he said. Whatever the age, Nickelodeon reached an audience of SpongeBob's more than 188K Twitter followers. From followers to retweets, these Twitter stories raise the issue of how to measure success in the social media sphere. USA looked at the collective reach of the multiple Covert Affairs Twitter handles and subsequent retweets; estimating it to be about 3.2mln. "We had about 35K unique visitors come through the experience and for us that's a great number because those are the active fans that are then helping to push the message out to the next level, getting those retweets, getting their message out into their friends' stream," said Redniss.

**Gimme a U-S-F:** Verizon, AT&T and 4 other telecom companies Fri unveiled their plan for overhauling the FCC's Universal Service Fund and intercarrier compensation. With a goal of transitioning USF over 5 years to an exclusive focus on broadband deployment, the plan would target support to in areas where there is no business case for companies to



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provide broadband, would support only 1 provider in area and would not grow the \$4.5bln high-cost fund. **Free Press** called the plan, submitted by Verizon, AT&T, **CenturyLink**, **Frontier**, **Windstream** and **Fairpoint**, self-serving. Its concerns include a proposed increase to the monthly subscriber line charge, saying it amounts to a gift to the companies who authored the proposal. **NCTA** likes that the plan is aimed at communities where broadband isn't currently available and that it transforms intercarrier comp to a lower, uniform rate. But it has "important questions" over how these principles would be fairly applied during a transition period. "We believe these issues deserve to be aired and considered, but more than anything, we hope that our collective interest in change will serve as a springboard to reform that will establish meaningful controls on the size of the high-cost fund, expand broadband to those without access today, and create a new mechanism more attuned to the realities of modern technology and fair competition," said **NCTA's Michael Powell**. **ACA** is reserving final judgment until it sees the plan's specifics, but it is pleased that it appears to limit "runaway growth."

**Program Carriage:** Remember that **FCC** program carriage order we've been telling you for months is coming (**Cfax**, 5/19)? Apparently, it came. And sorry, cable. Despite your best efforts, it contains a standstill requirement. The **FCC's** 3 Dems had approved the order weeks ago, with **B&C** reporting Fri that Republican **Robert McDowell** has now cast his vote (dissenting to the standstill part). Still waiting the official word from the **FCC**.

**Complaint Dept:** As promised, **WealthTV** refiled its petition Thurs for the **FCC** to reconsider rejecting its carriage complaint against **Bright House**, **Comcast**, **Cox** and **Time Warner Cable** (**Cfax**, 7/29). It withdrew concerns and retracted arguments it had raised about former **FCC** commish **Meredith Attwell Baker** leaving the agency for **Comcast**, saying that responses to **FOIA** requests among other things "clarified what was left unclear." **Wealth's** petition for reconsideration is based partly on comments from the Enforcement Bureau in the **Tennis-Comcast** case that there are nor standard or inconsistent standards in determining what programming is substantially similar.

**In the Courts:** **Rovi** is going after **Hulu**, claiming it infringed on its electronic program guide patents. **Rovi**, formerly **Gemstar**, said it initiated discussions about licensing its tech with **Hulu** in Aug '08 and has attempted to continue discussions. **Rovi** is seeking unspecified damages involving 3 patents, according to the complaint filed Thurs in federal court in **DE**.

**Carriage:** **Charter** announced that it will launch the **Big Ten Net** in many markets outside the Conference where the net has previously been unavailable. It'll also roll out **TV Everywhere** service **BTN2Go** when it launches.

**HBO Executive Session:** The **HBO** brass had choice words at **TCA** for **Cablevision** and **Time Warner Cable**, which are the only 2 major **MSOs** not yet carrying its online product **HBO Go**. "All of you should put in your various publications and blogs that the customers should tell **Time Warner Cable** to get with it, because there's no **HBO**

MEET TODAY'S LEADERS.

# UNLEASH

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Go.” said co-pres *Richard Plepler*. As for Cablevision, “you can write to them too... We’re working as hard as we can to close the deal.” During Thurs’ 2Q earnings call, TWC pres Rob Marcus said the product is attractive. “We think we’d like to deliver it to our customers, and we’re merely working through the structure of the deal to make that happen,” he said. Meanwhile, HBO pres, programming *Michael Lombardo* said that while the net has some “really strong dramas,” he hopes to develop more half-hour comedies that resonate in the same way with viewers. “I think we would love for some of those shows to pop out a bit more,” he said. “None of the shows were recognized by the Emmy voters this year, and that’s frustrating for us.” Plepler said one challenge is simply sifting through the “embarrassment of riches” in that so many show creators pitch the network, which must figure out “a way to not only keep the wonderful stuff that we have but to build the next generation of shows... That is a very high-class problem and one, frankly, which we worked very hard to get.” Critics also seemed especially enamored with HBO’s “Game of Thrones” franchise but also asked several skeptical questions about whether the net can keep up the prolific book series—and how to end the expensive series at some point with so much material from author *George R.R. Martin*. “I hope it lasts for 20 years,” he said. “You know, I can promise that we won’t stop it before it’s ready to stop.”

**Programming:** Sign up for *Oprah School*. **OWN** is offering a companion online class accompanying series “OWN Your Life” (formerly “Oprah’s Encore”). The new series (debuts Oct 10, 8pm) has Oprah teaching lessons that matter most through her show’s 25 years worth of archives. OWN’s goal is for 1mln viewers to take the online class, which includes actual course work. At 7pm on Oct 10, “The Rosie Show” talker will bow. -- **C-SPAN’s** “Communicators” continues to air interviews taped during June’s **Cable Show**. Sat’s program features **Insight’s** *Michael Willner*, **ESPN’s** *Sean Bratches*, **FCC** commish *Mignon Clyburn*, **Bend Broadband’s** *Amy Tykeson*, **TiVo’s** *Matt Zinn* and the **Kaitz Foundation’s** *David Porter* (6:30pm ET). It’s also available at [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org).

**BBC America at TCA:** **BBC America** booked a full 2 hrs at TCA this year, and made full use of the extra time. It trumpeted its new series “The Hour” (premieres Aug 17), a post-war political thriller set in London’s BBC newsroom during the 1950s, a historical backdrop that was appealing to West. “It was the best time for BBC news in its history,” said star *Dominic West*. He said the country was “shaking off its rather staid post-war traditions and becoming something new and interesting.” Critics asked about the **News Corp** phone hacking scandal, and “the connections between politics and journalists does seem very pertinent now. Who you have lunch with one day and how stories are leaked... It’s another reason the story feels so topical,” said exec prod *Derek Wax*. Also on display was BBC’s “24 hours in the ER” (Sept 27), 14-part documentary series films the daily drama that takes place in the emergency room at King’s College Hospital in London. The use of 70 remote cameras allowed the crew to capture patients’ stories without being too intrusive, said producer/dir *Amy Flanagan*. “There is no crew of 2 or 3 people in the department,” she said. “It allowed us to get very, very intimate footage that I don’t think you would normally be able to get with a normal camera crew.” The BBC America co-production “Bedlam” (premieres Oct 1) takes place in a former insane asylum which, having been converted into luxury apartments, still bears the building’s dark history. A supernatural thriller shot on location in Manchester, England, the series borrows elements from classic ghost stories like “The Shining” and Japanese horror, such as “Ringu and ‘Audition.’” Writer/creator *David Al-lison* wanted it to be “a big, strong, stand-alone kind of ghost story that has all the references there, that’s really enjoyable and that you can engage with.” And the new comedy “Friday Night Dinner” (July 30) focuses on the necessary yet often painfully embarrassing weekly event of dinner with the family. The point of the show, said lead actor *Simon Bird*, is that “people behave differently around their parents, and revert to a slightly more immature state.” And of course there’s “Doctor Who,” the UK’s highest rated series, which premieres new episodes on Aug 27. “What’s really extraordinary about the 2nd half of the series,” said exec prod *Piers Wenger*, “is it explores some of the emotional impact that the big plot twists have had on the characters. I think we’ll see a kind of deepening of their experiences as they continue to travel together.”

**Memorial App:** **Nat Geo** has launched a “Remembering 9/11” **Facebook** app in conjunction with its Remembering 9/11 Week, beginning Aug 28. Developed with **Neo-Pangea**, the app will allow users to post personal stories, view friends’ and others’ geo-tagged stories and post comments. The app will be available worldwide in 9 languages.

**People:** **Oxygen** svp, original pgming *Amy Introcaso-Davis* is leaving after 3 years, according to *Hollywood Reporter*.

**Party Circuit:** **BBC America** did the party honors at **TCA** on Wed night, renting out the rooftop of The London hotel in Beverly Hills and treating critics to fish tacos, steak and other delectables—as well as a good amount of BBC America talent (including “Luther” star *Idris Elba*, who attracted a large press gaggle). But perhaps the ultimate creative tour de force came when several swimsuit-clad synchronized swimmers suddenly jumped into the pool and conducted a few perfectly timed routines. Our question: How do they hear the music underwater? **CableFAX** will continue to ask the tough questions until we get answers...

**CableFAX Week in Review**

Company	Ticker	7/29 Close	1-Week % Chg	YTD %Chg
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BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS				
DIRECTV:	DTV	50.68	(3.19%)	51.96%
DISH:	DISH	29.63	(7.44%)	42.66%
DISNEY:	DIS	38.62	(4.99%)	19.75%
GE:	GE	17.91	(5.93%)	18.37%
NEWS CORP:	NWS	16.50	(2.08%)	3.64%

MSOS				
CABLEVISION:	CVC	24.36	(6.31%)	(5.65%)
CHARTER:	CHTR	54.00	(9.62%)	0.00%
COMCAST:	CMCSA	24.02	(3.34%)	42.47%
COMCAST SPCL:	CMCSK	23.34	(3.03%)	45.78%
GCI:	GNCMA	11.35	(7.12%)	77.90%
KNOLOGY:	KNOL	13.73	(4.05%)	25.73%
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	LCAPA	79.86	(7.23%)	234.42%
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	LBTYA	41.80	(4.94%)	90.95%
LIBERTY INT:	LINTA	16.40	(3.36%)	51.29%
SHAW COMM:	SJR	22.54	(1.79%)	9.58%
TIME WARNER CABLE:	TWC	73.31	(6.94%)	77.12%
VIRGIN MEDIA:	VMED	26.46	(6.17%)	57.22%
WASH POST:	WPO	402.30	(5.01%)	(8.48%)

PROGRAMMING				
AMC NETWORKS:	AMCX	37.19	(0.85%)	(6.68%)
CBS:	CBS	27.37	(7.35%)	94.80%
CROWN:	CRWN	1.70	(1.73%)	17.24%
DISCOVERY:	DISCA	39.80	(3.02%)	29.77%
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	TV	22.19	(1.73%)	6.89%
HSN:	HSNI	32.69	(4.83%)	61.91%
INTERACTIVE CORP:	IACI	41.39	8.61%	102.10%
LIBERTY:	L	39.87	(2.52%)	9.68%
LIBERTY STARZ:	LSTZA	76.76	(1.4%)	66.33%
LIONSGATE:	LGF	7.10	6.13%	22.20%
LODGENET:	LNET	2.83	(7.21%)	(48.82%)
NEW FRONTIER:	NOOF	1.40	(3.45%)	(25.93%)
OUTDOOR:	OUTD	6.65	(3.9%)	14.66%
SCRIPPS INT:	SNI	46.35	(4.02%)	11.69%
TIME WARNER:	TWX	35.16	(4.2%)	20.66%
VALUEVISION:	VVTV	7.49	(5.43%)	56.04%
VIACOM:	VIA	54.59	(5.04%)	73.30%
WWE:	WWE	10.07	(1.85%)	(34.31%)

TECHNOLOGY				
ADDVANTAGE:	AEY	2.62	1.95%	32.99%
ALCATEL LUCENT:	ALU	4.05	(20.43%)	21.99%
AMDOCS:	DOX	31.53	(0.44%)	10.52%
AMPHENOL:	APH	48.89	(4.19%)	5.87%
AOL:	AOL	17.18	(12.57%)	(26.2%)
APPLE:	AAPL	390.48	(0.72%)	85.30%
ARRIS GROUP:	ARRS	12.00	3.99%	4.99%
AVID TECH:	AVID	13.09	(4.73%)	2.59%
BIGBAND:	BBND	1.95	(7.14%)	(43.31%)
BROADCOM:	BRCM	37.07	4.51%	17.79%
CISCO:	CSCO	15.97	2.44%	(33.29%)
CLEARWIRE:	CLWR	2.17	(28.38%)	(67.9%)
CONCURRENT:	CCUR	6.43	0.47%	62.37%
CONVERGYS:	CVG	12.44	(5.61%)	15.72%
CSG SYSTEMS:	CSGS	17.76	(4.36%)	(6.97%)

Company	Ticker	7/29 Close	1-Week % Chg	YTD %Chg
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EHOSTAR:	SATS	33.46	(8.68%)	66.14%
GOOGLE:	GOOG	603.69	(2.35%)	(2.63%)
HARMONIC:	HLIT	5.43	(23.52%)	(14.08%)
INTEL:	INTC	22.33	(3.46%)	9.46%
JDSU:	JDSU	13.15	(14.28%)	59.39%
LEVEL 3:	LVLTL	2.18	(10.29%)	42.48%
MICROSOFT:	MSFT	27.40	(0.47%)	(10.1%)
MOTOROLA MOBILITY:	MMI	22.38	(9.06%)	0.00%
RENTRAK:	RENT	16.54	(11.36%)	(6.4%)
SEACHANGE:	SEAC	9.56	(7.63%)	45.73%
SONY:	SNE	25.10	(6.45%)	(13.45%)
SPRINT NEXTEL:	S	4.23	(18.02%)	15.57%
THOMAS & BETTS:	TNB	48.78	(10.33%)	36.30%
TIVO:	TIVO	9.40	(12.8%)	(7.66%)
UNIVERSAL ELEC:	UEIC	23.41	(2.98%)	0.82%
VONAGE:	VG	4.01	(4.3%)	186.43%
YAHOO:	YHOO	13.10	(6.29%)	(21.93%)

TELCOS				
AT&T:	T	29.26	(3.5%)	4.39%
VERIZON:	VZ	35.29	(3.95%)	6.52%

MARKET INDICES				
DOW:	DJI	12143.24	(4.24%)	16.45%
NASDAQ:	IXIC	2756.38	(3.58%)	21.47%
S&P 500:	GSPC	1292.28	(3.92%)	12.89%

**WINNERS & LOSERS**

**THIS WEEK'S STOCK PRICE WINNERS**

COMPANY	CLOSE	1-WK CH
1. INTERACTIVE CORP:	41.39	8.61%
2. LIONSGATE:	7.10	6.13%
3. BROADCOM:	37.07	4.51%
4. ARRIS GROUP:	12.00	3.99%
5. CISCO:	15.97	2.44%

**THIS WEEK'S STOCK PRICE LOSERS**

COMPANY	CLOSE	1-WK CH
1. CLEARWIRE:	2.17	(28.38%)
2. HARMONIC:	5.43	(23.52%)
3. ALCATEL LUCENT:	4.05	(20.43%)
4. SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.23	(18.02%)
5. JDSU:	13.15	(14.28%)

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