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Here's what the latest work at Universal's new Epic Universe theme park includes

Richard Bilbao

374 words

15 April 2022

Orlando Business Journal

ORBJ

English

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Universal Orlando Resort has been incredibly busy at the future Epic Universe theme park site so far this month.

The theme park giant has filed 83 permits through Orange County for **infrastructure** work, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, gas, fire systems and general commercial permits.

Some of the work described includes:

- * Landscape and irrigation
- * Installing new fire alarm systems in a data center
- * New heating, venting and air-conditioning construction
- * Electrical work including lighting receptacles and panel boards

All the work appears to be early stage activity for the future theme park, which is slated to open in 2025.

Executives with Universal were not available for comment.

Once open, Epic Universe will have multiple lands, including one themed as Super Nintendo World. That land is part of a partnership with video game company, Nintendo Co. Ltd. The first Super Nintendo World debuted in Universal Studios Japan in March 2021 with other lands set for Hollywood and Orlando in 2023 and in 2025, respectively.

The plans for Epic Universe were revealed in August 2019, with the potential to draw millions of new visitors to the region, generate more than \$11 billion in new economic impact, create 14,000 new industry jobs and more.

Meanwhile, Universal's [Epic Universe-area property is part of a lawsuit filed earlier this month](#). Fourth Watch Acquisitions, a Georgia-based real estate entertainment company, named a related Universal entity as part of the lawsuit, which seeks \$250 million in damages.

Universal Orlando Resort, which is part of Philadelphia-based Comcast Corp. (Nasdaq: CMCSA), typically draws a combined 20 million-plus tourists through its Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios Florida theme park gates and its Volcano Bay water park in Orlando each year. Universal also owns the CityWalk dining/shopping/entertainment complex, several area hotels and more than 700 acres for development off of Universal Boulevard, where it is building its future Epic Universe theme park.

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DEADLINE

Breaking News -

Neon And Universal Group Team On Brett Morgen's David Bowie Doc 'Moonage Daydream' For Post-Cannes Release

Matt Grobar

331 words

14 April 2022

Deadline

DLINE

English

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Neon and Universal Pictures **Content** Group have announced that they will release Moonage Daydream, the first-ever David Bowie doc sanctioned by his estate, following its bow in the Midnight Screenings section of the 75th Cannes Film Festival. Neon will distribute the film in the U.S., with UPCG releasing it internationally. HBO Documentary Films holds North American rights for streaming and cable in spring of 2023.

The film exploring the iconic performer's creative, musical and spiritual journey hails from acclaimed documentarian Brett Morgen (Cobain: Montage of Heck, Jane), and is just now near completion after a rigorous, five-year production and assembly process. It illuminates not only the life, but also the genius of Bowie, who worked across several disciplines—most notably music and film—but also explored art forms throughout his life including dance, painting, sculpture, video and audio collage, screenwriting, acting and live theatre. The motion picture reveals the icon through his own voice and features 48 of his musical tracks, mixed from their original stems.

Morgen wrote, directed, edited and produced the film, with Hartwig Masuch, Kathy Rivkin-Daum and Justus Haerder exec producing for BMG, alongside Michael Rapino, Heather Parry, and Ryan Kroft for Live Nation Productions, Bill Zysblat, Tom Cyrana, Aisha Cohen, and Eileen D'Arcy from RZO, Billy Gerber and Debra Eisenstadt. BMG and Live Nation Productions also served as pic's financiers.

Bowie's estate presented filmmaker Brett Morgen with unfiltered access to Bowie's personal archives, including all master recordings, in 2017. The film will be joined in Cannes' Midnight Section by Lee Jung-Jae's Hunt and Quentin Dupieux's Fumer Fait Tousser, as announced earlier today. Neon's Jeff Deutchman negotiated its deal for North America with Kevin Koloff, as well as Karen Gottlieb of Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks, with P.C. Submarine and WME handling sales.

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An in-depth look into President Tate's cybersecurity and military initiative

1,061 words

14 April 2022

U-Wire

UWIR

English

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Louisiana State University; Baton Rouge, LA - news

By

LSU President William F. Tate IV announced last month plans to integrate and improve LSU's cybersecurity and military science programs as part of his scholarship first initiative.

Golden Richard, director of the LSU Applied Cybersecurity Lab, and Greg Trahan, LSU's director of economic development, explained what those plans will look like in the future and how they will affect the university.

Partnerships

Richard said that some local and federal agencies are considering putting labs on LSU's campus. This would allow students to work directly with federal and local law enforcement.

Trahan said that the cybersecurity department is currently partnered with the Louisiana State Police and private defense contractor Radiance Technologies, among others. Part of Tate's plan includes expanding current partnerships as well as seeking new ones.

"At a high level, we've been in conversations with the Secret Service around digital forensics," Trahan said.

Trahan couldn't reveal more details because the partnership was not finalized, but that the Secret Service would be involved with talent development at the university.

Radiance Technologies already has a stable partnership with LSU, Trahan said. The Huntsville, Alabama-based defense contractor, has hired several LSU graduate students and previously sponsored several Ph.D. students.

Trahan said that LSU expects to finalize partnerships with the National Guard and the National Security Agency this year.

Elevating ROTC

Trahan said one of the most important parts of Tate's announcement is the elevation of ROTC.

Trahan said that Tate's plan aims to elevate ROTC in a way that honors LSU's military history as the Ole War Skule, but also looks to the future.

The elevation of ROTC is planned to be accomplished by improving recruiting and infrastructure, creating a leadership certificate program and partnering with state and private agencies for talent development.

Moving of ROTC

Eventually, ROTC, which is currently located in the Military Science Building, will be moved into the Louisiana Emerging Technology Center. Trahan could not comment on when the move will take place.

The Louisiana Emerging Technology Center will be the foundation of a new cyber-military corridor.

Mechanical engineering junior Colin Raby, who was formerly involved in Air Force ROTC, said the current Military Science Building was "in a sorry state of disrepair."

Business junior and previous member of Air Force ROTC Austin Firmin also commented on the need for new ROTC facilities.

"[Air Force ROTC] recently had a Vietnam veteran alumnus come back and visit, and he was like 'Dang, this building was old when I was here back in the '70s,'" Firmin said.

New Cyber Military Corridor

To integrate the cybersecurity and military programs, Tate's plan designates a new Cyber Military Corridor on campus. The Louisiana Emerging Technology Center will act as the cornerstone for LSU's new hub for cybersecurity and defense.

"That's how you're going to start generating really great ideas and hopefully elevating a lot of that talent," Trahan said.

FIREStarter

Last semester, LSU announced a new program called FIREStarter, which partners with the Louisiana State Police to provide students with "an immersive cyber teaching experience that uses Louisiana data and experts as well as real-world, real-time attacks to train a new generation of cyber talent" according to the LSU cybersecurity website.

The lab has since been built, and students are taking class in it. Someone with Louisiana State Police teaches a class in the FIREStarter lab using its resources, Richard said.

Richard also mentioned a proposal for a second FIREStarter lab.

"We are asking for more funding from the state to essentially do something that will be like FIREStarter II," Richard said. "It'll be another lab that enhances the capabilities of that stuff and lets people learn about forensics and industrial control systems; so basically stuff you'd see on CSI."

Richard says the industrial control system aspect is very exciting because there is a great oil, gas and chemical industry in Louisiana.

Cybersecurity Scholarships

Part of Tate's plan to improve the cybersecurity program is to hire 10 new cybersecurity faculty members. Richard says they have identified two candidates they would like to have in place by the fall and are looking into the process of bringing these candidates in for interviews.

Richard said he expects more scholarships will be offered in the future than what is currently offered as the Office of Research solidifies partnerships with industrial agencies.

"The Office of Research in talking to these industrial and federal partners, they're interested in making sure that there are internship opportunities for students and potentially scholarships," Richard said.

Richard also said they are looking to grow the Scholarship for Service program.

Cybersecurity Student Response

Richard said that student interest in cybersecurity has been growing.

"When we started the cybersecurity concentration, we immediately had roughly 20 students, and now it's way over 100 and we don't even have the full numbers for this year," Richard said. "It's exploding."

Another part of Tate's plan is to implement a cyber boot camp for incoming computer science freshmen.

According to Anas Mahmoud, an associate professor of computer science, the boot camp will be more like a summer camp to introduce incoming freshmen to cybersecurity early on.

Mahmoud said the program will include a variety of basic exercises that don't require a lot of coding experience or knowledge in math that introduce topics like cryptography, security, important threats facing the nation and how to defend against these threats, ethical issues and privacy. Students will also be introduced to tools that will help them in their computer science careers.

The summer camp should bring more awareness to students about cybersecurity scholarships and opportunities from the university, Mahmoud said.

Mahmoud also said he hopes the summer camp will help decrease the computer science drop-out rate.

"Most of the time, dropping out from computer science is because people come here, they don't know what the expectations are and then they get lost and they feel like they have no friends and if they could switch majors they might have a better social life," Mahmoud said. "So I'm hoping this camp will also target these problems."

((Distributed for UWIRE via M2 Communications www.m2.com))

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Welcome Tech Announces \$30M in New Capital, Expands Board of Directors and Executive Team

830 words

14 April 2022

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PR Newswire

PRN

English

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Amid record growth, Welcome Tech secures additional **funding**, bolsters its Board of Directors with Mónica Gil of NBCUniversal Telemundo and Michael Camuñez, former Special Counsel to President Obama, and hires its first CMO

LOS ANGELES, April 14, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Welcome Tech (or "the Company"), a digital **platform** providing immigrant families with the tools and services required to thrive in the U.S., today announced \$30M in new capital, following an oversubscribed \$35 million Series B in April 2021. This capital was raised exclusively from existing institutional investors including TTV Capital, Owl Ventures, SoftBank Group Corp's SB Opportunity Fund, Mubadala Capital, and Next Play Capital, bringing Welcome Tech's total **funding** to date to \$70 million.

"The immigrant community continues to be the fastest-growing group in the U.S., while remaining underserved by legacy companies," said Gosia Karas, Investment Director and Head of Growth Stage Investments at SB Opportunity Fund. "Leveraging data and technology to address its needs is Welcome Tech's superpower, and we are thrilled to continue supporting Amir, Raul and team as they scale the business."

In 2021, Welcome Tech's primary consumer platform, SABEResPODER, experienced 60 percent year-over-year growth, surpassing 3 million registered users. Welcome's digital wallet and banking services for the immigrant community saw 2200 percent growth and surpassed 1 million app downloads. This new financing will enable further expansion of Welcome Tech's product offerings and diverse team, to support the growth of its digital wallet and subscription healthcare program, and to bolster the national launch of its credit card product in the second half of 2022.

"The impact Welcome Tech's platform has on the lives of millions of people is profound," stated Ross Darwin, at Owl Ventures. "The innovative team is making a major difference in lives with critical educational resources and differentiated, valuable services. We're excited to be a part of Welcome Tech's continued hyper growth."

"Welcome Tech is building a powerful consumer platform and lifestyle brand. The company's first-party data and proprietary technology is unmatched," said Gardiner Garrard, Co-founder and Partner at TTV Capital. "This information enables the company to personally cater its products and services in a way not many others can do."

Welcome Tech has also appointed two new board members: Mónica Gil and Michael Camuñez. Mónica Gil is the EVP, Chief Administrative & Marketing Officer at NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises, where she leads the company's Operations, Marketing, Strategy and Insights, and Communications teams. Michael Camuñez is the current President, CEO, & Co-Founder at Monarch Global Strategies, where he advises U.S. companies in domestic and global markets. He is a former White House Special Counsel to President Obama and U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Today, Welcome Tech is one of the most diverse teams in the industry, a key alignment to the company's core consumer and mission. Welcome Tech's Board of Directors is now over 71 percent ethnically diverse, in line with the company's leadership team. Including all full-time employees, the company's rapidly growing and changing workforce is made up of almost 50 percent diverse minorities.

Additionally, Brooke Norton Lais has joined Welcome Tech as the company's first Chief Marketing Officer. After spending several years driving digital transformation and revenue growth for emerging fintech firm, Green Dot Corporation and delivering global initiatives for Procter & Gamble Beauty, Brooke will focus on driving revenue via the development and execution of a truly unique integrated marketing strategy spanning consumer insights, advertising, growth marketing, social media, content, communications, customer lifecycle, creative and design.

"We're excited to see our investors recognize that our business model and technology give us the unique ability to deliver a major breakthrough in this market," says Amir Hemmat, Co-Founder, President & CEO of Welcome Tech. "Welcome Tech is also proud to have one of the most diverse Boards and teams in tech. We intend to continue proving that our purpose and vision can improve customers' lives, deliver sustainable business growth and attract the best talent in the world."

For more information on Welcome Tech, please visit: <https://welcome.tech/>

About Welcome Tech

Welcome Tech, an incorporated For Benefit Corporation, is the world's first digital platform to provide the global, multigenerational immigrant community with the linguistically and culturally relevant resources to thrive in a new country. Welcome Tech's unparalleled consumer insights, first-party data, and proprietary technology inform affordable, fair, and best-in-market custom solutions across key services including banking, rewards, credit, healthcare, education, and more.

The company's initial and highly reputable consumer platform, SABEResPODER, currently serves millions of Hispanics.

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View original content to download
multimedia:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/welcome-tech-announces-30m-in-new-capital-expands-board-of-directors-and-executive-team-301525267.html>

SOURCE Welcome Technologies

(END)

Document PRN0000020220414ei4e000i6

Culture -
David Bowie Documentary 'Moonage Daydream' Is Coming to Theaters, HBO

Darlene Aderaju

677 words

13 April 2022

Billboard

BBRD

English

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An all-new documentary celebrating the life of late British rockstar David Bowie is nearing completion and will be released by NEON and Universal Pictures **Content** Group, the companies announced Wednesday (April 13). Titled Moonage Daydream, the film will be released by NEON in the U.S., while Universal Pictures **Content** Group has international distribution rights.

No theatrical release date has been announced, though the film is slated to premiere on HBO and HBO Max in spring 2023 via HBO Documentary Films. Theatrical engagements for Moonage Daydream — which marks the first film under a multi-picture deal between Morgen and BMG for IMAX Productions — will include IMAX screenings in select markets.

Five years in the making, Moonage Daydream was written, directed, edited and produced by Brett Morgen, who was given “unfiltered” access to Bowie’s personal archives, including all master recordings, according to a press release. While researching the film, Morgen came across hundreds of hours of never-before-seen 35mm and 16mm footage, allowing him to assemble Bowie’s performances from these original camera masters. The resulting project is described as “an artful and life-affirming film that takes the audience on a journey through Bowie’s creative life.”

Morgen was assisted in the effort by Bowie’s long-time collaborator, friend and music producer Tony Visconti; sound mixer Paul Massey (Bohemian Rhapsody); sound engineer David Giammarco (Ford v. Ferrari); the sound design team of John Warhurst and Nina Hartstone (Bohemian Rhapsody); and visual effects producer Stefan Nadelman (Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck).

Guided by “Bowie’s narration,” according to the release, Moonage Daydream includes 48 musical tracks mixed from their original stems and is the first film to be officially sanctioned by his estate. BMG has a 25% stake in Bowie’s songs released between 1970 to 1977, including the title song “Moonage Daydream” along with “Changes,” “Starman,” “Ziggy Stardust,” “The Jean Genie,” “All The Young Dudes,” “Life on Mars,” “Rebel Rebel,” “Fame,” “Young Americans” and “Golden Years.” The company additionally has the rights to six early Bowie recordings first released on the Pye label in 1966. BMG notes that its relationship with the Bowie catalog isn’t affected by WMG’s January acquisition of Bowie’s song catalog.

Moonage Daydream is part of an ongoing Bowie75 commemoration in honor of the icon’s life and musical legacy. Bowie died of liver cancer in January 2016 and would have turned 75 on Jan. 8, 2022.

In a statement, BMG executive vp of global repertoire Fred Casimir said, “This has been a five year labour of love to honour one of the greatest song catalogues in music history. BMG is proud to build on our long-term relationship with the David Bowie estate working hand-in-hand with our partners Live Nation Productions to bring Brett Morgen’s vision to the big screen.”

Live Nation Productions partnered with BMG on Moonage Daydream as co-financiers and executive producers. Additional executive producers on the project include Hartwig Masuch, Kathy Rivkin-Daum and Justus Haerder for BMG; Michael Rapino, Heather Parry and Ryan Kroft for Live Nation Productions; Bill Zysblat, Tom Cyrana, Aisha Cohen and Eileen D’Arcy for RZO; Billy Gerber and Debra Eisenstadt.

NEON’s Jeff Deutchman negotiated the North America deal with Kevin Koloff, as well as Karen Gottlieb of Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks, P.C. Submarine and WME handled sales.

Moonage Daydream is the latest documentary film project for BMG, which announced its expansion into music-related movies in 2017. Previous releases include Bad Reputation, about the life and career of Joan Jett; David Crosby: Remember My Name, which was nominated for Best Music Film at the 62nd Grammys; DIO: Dreamers Never Die, about the life and career of Ronnie James Dio; Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records; and Echo In The Canyon, about the Laurel Canyon music scene of the ’60s and ’70s. BMG also recently partnered with Pulse and Quickfire Films to produce Lewis Capaldi’s debut feature-length documentary.

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Effectv to use Comscore's local TV measurement platform

105 words

13 April 2022

Telecompaper Americas

TELAM

English

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Comscore and Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, announced that Effectv will use Comscore's local TV measurement platform as a new form of currency. Effectv will use Comscore's audience impression-based measurement product with local advertising clients to deliver an advanced industry measurement platform for marketers.

Comscore's expanded collaboration with Effectv follows its 2020 agreement with Comcast to integrate deidentified Comcast viewing data into its local and national measurement services.

Effectv joins other media organisations, such as Paramount, Fox Corporation, WarnerMedia, Discovery, Disney, Spectrum Reach and OpenAP, in adding Comscore as currency.

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Press Release: Comcast's Effectv Taps Comscore for Local TV Measurement Currency

543 words

12 April 2022

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Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Comcast's Effectv Taps Comscore for Local TV Measurement Currency

The agreement offers Effectv's advertiser clients choice in their selection of a measurement currency **platform**.

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 12, 2022--

Comscore, Inc. (Nasdaq: SCOR), a partner for planning, transacting and evaluating media across platforms, and Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, announced today that Effectv will be using Comscore's local TV measurement solution as a new form of currency.

Effectv will use Comscore's audience impression-based measurement product with local advertising clients to deliver an advanced industry measurement solution for marketers.

Comscore's expanded collaboration with Effectv follows its 2020 agreement with Comcast to integrate de-identified Comcast viewing data into its local and national measurement services.

"With local media emerging as a key channel for brands due to its consumer relevancy and proximity to point of purchase, there is a need for proven, more reliable approaches to measurement," said Bill Livek, CEO and Executive Vice Chair, Comscore. "We are looking forward to working with Effectv to enable advertisers to use Comscore's local TV measurement as currency to deliver that enhanced campaign reporting."

"The pace of change in media measurement continues to accelerate and advertisers today are seeking new solutions and capabilities to better understand consumer behavior and to reach and engage with them across multiple screens and devices," said James Rooke, General Manager, Effectv. "We're looking forward to working with Comscore to drive innovation and new frontiers in measurement, while offering choice and independence for our clients."

As the industry continues to reevaluate the media measurement landscape, Effectv joins other media organizations, such as Paramount, Fox Corporation, WarnerMedia, Discovery, Disney, Spectrum Reach and OpenAP, in adding Comscore as currency. This includes NBCU, which awarded Comscore audience measurement certification at its recent One22 event, allowing their NBC owned and operated stations, as well as their Telemundo stations, to use Comscore as their local market currency.

About Comscore

Comscore (NASDAQ: SCOR) is a trusted partner for planning, transacting and evaluating media across platforms. With a data footprint that combines digital, linear TV, over-the-top and theatrical viewership intelligence with advanced audience insights, Comscore allows media buyers and sellers to quantify their multi-screen behavior and make business decisions with confidence. A proven leader in measuring digital and TV audiences and advertising at scale, Comscore is the industry's emerging, third-party source for reliable and comprehensive cross-platform measurement.

About Effectv

Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, helps local, regional and national advertisers use the best of digital with the power of TV to grow their business. It provides multi-screen marketing solutions to make advertising campaigns more effective and easier to execute. Headquartered in New York with offices throughout the country, Effectv has a presence in 66 markets with nearly 35 million owned and represented subscribers. For more information, visit www.effectv.com.

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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Comcast's Effectv Taps Comscore for Local TV Measurement Currency

526 words

12 April 2022

16:44

Business Wire

BWR

English

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The agreement offers Effectv's advertiser clients choice in their selection of a measurement currency **platform**.

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 12, 2022--

Comscore, Inc. (Nasdaq: SCOR), a partner for planning, transacting and evaluating media across platforms, and Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, announced today that Effectv will be using Comscore's local TV measurement solution as a new form of currency.

Effectv will use Comscore's audience impression-based measurement product with local advertising clients to deliver an advanced industry measurement solution for marketers.

Comscore's expanded collaboration with Effectv follows its 2020 agreement with Comcast to integrate de-identified Comcast viewing data into its local and national measurement services.

"With local media emerging as a key channel for brands due to its consumer relevancy and proximity to point of purchase, there is a need for proven, more reliable approaches to measurement," said Bill Livek, CEO and Executive Vice Chair, Comscore. "We are looking forward to working with Effectv to enable advertisers to use Comscore's local TV measurement as currency to deliver that enhanced campaign reporting."

"The pace of change in media measurement continues to accelerate and advertisers today are seeking new solutions and capabilities to better understand consumer behavior and to reach and engage with them across multiple screens and devices," said James Rooke, General Manager, Effectv. "We're looking forward to working with Comscore to drive innovation and new frontiers in measurement, while offering choice and independence for our clients."

As the industry continues to reevaluate the media measurement landscape, Effectv joins other media organizations, such as Paramount, Fox Corporation, WarnerMedia, Discovery, Disney, Spectrum Reach and OpenAP, in adding Comscore as currency. This includes NBCU, which awarded Comscore audience measurement certification at its recent One22 event, allowing their NBC owned and operated stations, as well as their Telemundo stations, to use Comscore as their local market currency.

About Comscore

Comscore (NASDAQ: SCOR) is a trusted partner for planning, transacting and evaluating media across platforms. With a data footprint that combines digital, linear TV, over-the-top and theatrical viewership intelligence with advanced audience insights, Comscore allows media buyers and sellers to quantify their multi-screen behavior and make business decisions with confidence. A proven leader in measuring digital and TV audiences and advertising at scale, Comscore is the industry's emerging, third-party source for reliable and comprehensive cross-platform measurement.

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Comcast pitches smart solutions for clever cities

Phil Harvey

1,112 words

11 April 2022

Light Reading

LITEREAD

English

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Comcast [unveiled Comcast Smart Solutions](#) last week, a new business unit to address the unique needs of **connectivity** and IoT solutions business for cities, communities and campuses.

The company said it will provide **connectivity** and consulting services

using parts of its vast empire of acquired and internally formed businesses; these include Comcast Business, Xfinity Communities and its enterprise IoT unit, MachineQ.

In Pennsylvania, the cableco said it has been using Philadelphia's Midtown Village neighborhood as a proving ground for its new approach.

[Click here to view Figure 1.](#)

In a recent blog post, Comcast said it was "installing smart streetlights with built-in optical and environmental sensors that can count pedestrians, vehicles, bicyclists, and parked vehicles, and measure temperature, relative humidity, and carbon monoxide."

No more hiding somewhere in the night

Philadelphia's Smart City director, Emily Yates, told the crowd assembled at the Smart Cities Connect conference last week that her city will [continue to be careful](#) with the kind of data that it can collect by monitoring people in public spaces.

During a keynote panel Yates was joined by Comcast's SVP, Community Connections, Stephen Hackley. Both said that there was no personally identifiable information (PII) being collected during this pilot program.

The sensors are looking to see whether objects on a street or sidewalk are pedestrians, vehicles or something else. They're looking to see if an object is a bike, not a Schwinn, according to Hackley.

US Ignite, the government-based nonprofit [that helped match](#) Philadelphia's needs and Comcast's capabilities, had a role in making sure both sides of the pilot program, [called SmartBlockPHL](#), worked well together.

US Ignite's senior director of partnerships and outreach, Mari Silbey (a former Light Reading editor), moderated last week's conference panel and asked Hackley and Yates about what's changed in the relationship between the city of Philadelphia and Comcast.

Hackley's answer ticked all the right boxes. He talked about long-term

relationships with cities, not just rushing to ring up sales.

"It will scale when it's ready to scale and I think the people who are participating in this movement need to understand that they need to have that staying power," Hackley said.

"This can be sort of a quick flash - let's be transactional - because

things move around on us just a bit."

The "movement," has Hackley called it, is nothing new. Telcos have tried to crack the code of selling smart cities solutions before, though they primarily were focused on speeding up small cell installations to boost their 5G networks. Most telco smart city efforts have never lived up to their own hype or expectations.

[Click here to view Figure 2.](#)

The journey, and the destination

If Comcast's new business unit has the autonomy to work and treat cities as something more than a large collection of poles for holding 5G radios, it could succeed. Comcast does have a deep bench of IoT expertise, media and consumer home networking in-house.

On paper, it has the ability to supply more than just connectivity, which, in turn, helps it connect more things to its network.

Though Comcast dominates consumer living rooms and the media landscape, Hackley said that company's approach to smart cities will be to foster collaboration.

"We're not trying to invent new technologies or go back into the lab and do it all ourselves," he said.

"We think it's too new, too early. And so we favor bringing the right solution providers to bear and the right integrators and the right consultancies to solve problems."

The SmartBlockPHL pilot has been, Yates said, a testament to Comcast's patience and flexibility. The project first was centered around stopping illegal dumping in a part of town with high foot traffic and lots of restaurants and retail.

But the pandemic hit, and the approach now focuses on understanding how citizens, who are now doing more outside after COVID-19 lockdowns, are using public spaces.

Want to know more about the Internet of Things? Check out our [dedicated IoT content channel](#) here on Light Reading.

During that time, the city said it was eager to replace 100,000 aging street light fixtures with new LED lights and better technology. Comcast's patience could yet pay off with the scale that Hackley mentioned earlier.

Indeed, Comcast seems to understand that its approach will help it succeed in smart cities applications where many telcos couldn't.

"We know that at the heart of every smart city smart solution is a network and Comcast kind of does network well, whether it's broadband and fiber, Ethernet or CBRS or WiFi," Hackley said.

That Hackley at least mentioned using the right kind of network for the problem, not just answering every question with "5G," is another encouraging sign.

"So, at the heart, we feel like this is a market that we are credentialed to be in," Hackley said on the panel.

"And as we look at where there's growth and excitement, this is a terrific place for us to put a stake in the ground and build a new practice within Comcast."

Some will win, some will lose

Even with the success of SmartBlockPHL, the program's future is still up in the air. The pilot program is expected to run through July. Yates [said in a LinkedIn post](#) that her last day on the job was Friday, April 8.

Now Philly is looking for a new Smart Cities Director who will be charged with picking up the pieces of this and other city pilots, making some sense of them in a broader strategy and making sure they don't run over budget.

[Click to view video.](#)

Meanwhile, Comcast is not just waiting on one city to find a way to make money in this game. The company said it has several pilots and solutions in various stages of completion at Arlington County, Virginia; College Park, Georgia; Pleasanton, California; and Moraga, also in California.

The solutions include using sensors in streetlights and other city-owned fixtures to do everything from counting vehicles, pedestrians and environmental analysis.

Related stories and links:

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* [Verizon's mmWave 5G deployment continues to polarize](#)

* [US Ignite, NSF name 7 'Project Overcome' winners to take on the digital divide](#)

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* [Verizon, AT&T redraw smart city efforts](#)

* [How Vegas built an LTE network in 45 days, and what it might do next](#)

* [Comcast's enterprise IoT unit sets sail for scale](#)

- [Phil Harvey](#), Editor-in-Chief,

[Light Reading](#)

harvey@lightreading.com

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Magic City Newsmakers: HICA, PRSA, BioHorizons, Leadership Shelby, Comcast and more

Stephanie Rebman

880 words

11 April 2022

Birmingham Business Journal

BIRM

English

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Good works

Future Forward Business Grant winners have been named. Winners of the business grant include YOGI DADA, Stēz, West Princeton Dental Clinic, Fountain Heights Farms, Birmingham Compost, Infinity Treats, Right Way Bookkeeping, C&A Drone Solutions, True Life and Health, Homecoming Coffee & Books, RightThere Corp., Bumblebee's Cleaning Services, Project WEvitalize, Erica B Airbrush Designer, AJA ACRES and Love Your Scalp. Love Your Scalp received the most community votes and the honor of Fan Favorite. Grants will be dispersed to each organization ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 in stipends. The Penny Foundation partnered with the Birmingham Business Resource Center, Foundation Capital, Building Alabama Reinvestment, as well as the A.G. Gaston Business Institute and A.G. Gaston Conference to support the programs mission in expanding Birmingham's Black business **ecosystem**. Grant recipients received recognition during the recent A.G. Gaston Conference.

Freshwater Land Trust teamed up with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jefferson County and other partners to address erosion in Turkey Creek to improve an endangered Vermilion Darter habitat, and the project is now complete. The nonprofit also named Ashton Regard as its spring stewardship intern.

Nonprofit organization Women Donors Network said Tyra Robinson received a Jean Hardisty Initiative Grant for \$50,000 to supply funding for her organization, Good People Vote. Good People Vote is an initiative that aims to break down the barriers of voter communication through art-based education. The Jean Hardisty Initiative Grant enables Robinson and her organization to facilitate insightful conversations about today's issues from various communities in Alabama, relating those current issues to the roles of elected officials for the 2022 state elections.

Comcast is offering free and discounted internet options for Alabama residents through the Affordable Connectivity Program and the company's broadband adoption program, Internet Essentials.

The Alabama chapter of the Public Relations Society of America named its 2022 board of directors. This year, the state chapter president is Betsy Emmons, associate professor of communication and media at Samford University. The executive team includes president-elect LaShana Sorrell, marketing manager of business development at Southern Veterinary Partners; Robin DeMonia, senior vice president at Direct Communications; and Briana Bryant, director of communication at Southern Research. Past president Meg Burton, communications director at Brasfield & Gorrie and second-year past president Rachel Olis, marketing and communications director at Balch & Bingham, also serve on the board's executive team. Other board members include: Jacqueline Allen, Cristina Almanza, Abby Basinger, Robyn Bridges, Sharee Broussard, Missy Burchart, Simone Byrd, Dawnette Chambers, John Cole, Patti Conwell, Christina Crowe, Colleen Dolan, Ally Dorrough, Andrew Felts, Brittany Fillmore, Sara Franklin, Abbie Kate Hancock, Eliza Heidelberg, Josh Kincaid, Buffy Lockette, Holly Lollar, Polly Manuel, John Matson, Chris McCollough, Julie McKinney, Breann Murphy, Tiffany Nabors, Philip Poole, Adam Pope, Susan Ray, Angela Miller Riley, Jacqueline Shaia, Erin Slay-Wilson, Yvonne Taunton, Robyn Tucker, Erin Vogt, Brandon Wilson and Carla Jean Whitley.

Leadership Shelby County Director Carol Bruser has retired and Shelby County Manager of Tourism and Events Kendall Williams has taken over as director, according to the Shelby County Reporter.

BioHorizons, an oral reconstructive device company headquartered in Birmingham, recently donated \$750,000 to Scholarships for Kids, a nonprofit organization in Alabama that offers scholarships and access to better education for underserved children throughout the state.

A Tallassee resident who trains at Lakeshore Foundation has been named to USA Wheelchair Rugby's 2022 Americas Championship Team. Monterius Hucherson was one of 12 athletes competing at the Americas Championship in Colombia.

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church partnered with Red Mountain Theatre to present the musical drama "Memorial" in the historic church's sanctuary March 20.

The Salvation Army Greater Birmingham Area Command's Bessemer Service Center has launched SALT — the Seasoned Adults Lunch and Teaching program. The free program is for seniors, ages 50 and older for arts and crafts, Bible study, lunch and fellowship.

On March 19 at the Vestavia Country Club, 10 aspiring young singers, chosen from 181 applicants from around the country, participated in the 2022 Opera Birmingham Vocal Competition, competing for over \$10,000 in cash prizes and a chance to perform in future Opera Birmingham productions.

Regions Bank is making a \$50,000 contribution to RIP Medical Debt, a nonprofit that leverages donations to purchase large bundles of medical debt and then relieve that debt with no tax consequences to people.

Hispanic Interest Coalition Of Alabama has named new board members and officers, including James Cason, CPA at Warren Averett; Ian Cooley, director of inclusion and diversity at Spire; Deivid Delgado, financial analyst at Royal Cup; Michael Eady, president of Knight Eady; Amanda Storey, executive director of Jones Valley Teaching Farm; and Michele Jenkins-Utomi, assistant vice president, relationship manager at PNC. The 2022 board officers include Chair Kary Wolfe, a partner in the labor and employment practice group of Jones Walker; Vice Chair Tiffany Kahlon, founder and attorney recruiter at The Kahlon Network; Treasurer Jon Davies, senior vice president of Regions Financial Corp.; and Secretary Amanda Loper, principal at David Baker Architects, Birmingham.

Have good works or news tidbits? Send them to srebman@bizjournals.com.

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PRESS RELEASE: MARY'S PLACE AND COMCAST PARTNER TO PROVIDE FREE WIFI TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SEATTLE

925 words

11 April 2022

16:05

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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DGAP-News: Comcast Washington 2022-04-11 / 17:05 The issuer is solely responsible for the **content** of this announcement.

Comcast and Mary's Place today announced a continued commitment to helping advance digital equity for women and families. As a part of an ongoing partnership, Comcast is providing free WiFi access through the company's Lift Zones initiative. With five Lift Zones installed inside Mary's Place shelters in King County, women, children, and families can get online while receiving safe, inclusive shelter services on their journey out of homelessness.

Comcast Lift Zones are located at five Mary's Place shelters in Bellevue, Kenmore, Burien, and Seattle. With the addition of free WiFi access from Comcast, Mary's Place can make online resources and technology available to help guests attain life and job skills through training, education, computer classes, internships, job placement, housing search, doing homework, and more.

'Comcast is helping families find stability and housing by providing free high-speed Internet at our shelters,' said Marty Hartman, Executive Director, Mary's Place. 'We are incredibly grateful for Comcast's generous donation and believe it will help increase digital equity for our community at a time when access to tools and services online continues to get more and more important.'

Between 2019 and 2020 alone, Washington saw a more than 6% increase in people experiencing homelessness - the third-largest increase among all U.S. states. Comcast's Lift Zones will help families experiencing homelessness at Mary's Place access technology integral for economic stability and social connection.

'We believe our partnership with Mary's Place will help them make a significant positive impact for families who are experiencing homelessness in the region,' said Rodrigo Lopez, Region Senior Vice President, Comcast Washington. 'March being Women's History Month also shines a light on the issue of women and families experiencing homelessness and we are proud to be supporting an organization like Mary's Place, which does such great work with families to help them find permanent, stable housing.'

Comcast has partnered with Mary's Place for several years and has supported the organization through grants, in-kind contributions, and educational workshops.

Through its Lift Zone initiative, Comcast is installing free WiFi for those needing Internet access in local community centers across the nation. In collaboration with cities, community organizations, and local nonprofit partners, Comcast has now installed free WiFi in more than 90 community centers statewide.

Lift Zones complement Comcast's Internet Essentials program and are part of the company's ongoing commitment to help connect low-income households to the Internet in and outside of the home. Internet Essentials is Comcast's signature digital equity initiative and the nation's largest and most comprehensive private-sector broadband adoption program. Since 2011, Internet Essentials has connected 560,000 low-income individuals statewide to broadband Internet, including 336,000 people in the Puget Sound area.

This effort is part of Project UP, Comcast's USD1 billion commitment to reach tens of millions of people over the next 10 years with the tools, resources, and skills needed to succeed in a digital world. Project UP is Comcast's company-wide initiative to advance digital equity, which includes Internet Essentials, the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program.

About Mary's Place

Mary's Place believes that no one's child should sleep outside. They provide safe and inclusive shelter and resources for women, children and families on their journey out of homelessness. Today, Mary's Place operates six crisis response family shelters providing refuge and community for 700 family members. The organization focuses on an innovative strategy of combining prevention, mobile outreach, emergency shelter, and resources for transition back into housing to end family homelessness. In 2021, Mary's Place helped over 550 families find permanent housing. To learn more, visit www.marysplaceseattle.org. Families that need emergency shelter should call the King County Emergency Family Intake Line at 206-245-1026 between 8 am and 11:30 pm daily.

About Comcast Corporation

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information. Contact Details

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Drug Abuse - NFVCB and NBC in the Dock

Chuks Akamadu

This Day

1,110 words

11 April 2022

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AllAfrica

AFNWS

English

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Chuks Akamadu urges the National Film and Video Censors Board to be alive to its responsibilities

In 2015, a Nigerian musician named "Olamide" released a substance abuse-promoting song titled "Science Student". A section of the public, for good measure, considered it offensive on account of the song's **content**. The song was so odious that Federal Ministry of Health had to register its displeasure with it by publicly accusing the singer of breaching the Tobacco Act.

But let's face it, Olamide is not alone in this. There are many other influential Nigerian musicians whose movie-videos clearly promote drug abuse in violation of Part VII Section 36 (1) (b) (ii) of National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Act which gives the Board the power not to register any video that is "likely to induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality". Or does the word "video" not include music-videos? If it does not, who then regulates music-video contents that are churned out daily for public consumption?

Quite frankly, we need not go far. There is "Smoke Some Weed" by Burna Boy featuring Onos, "Ginger" by Wizkid and "Energy" by Runtown. Others include "Marry Juana" by Naira Marley & Max Twigz, "Ganja Man" by 9ice and "Kush" Music by Phyno.

Now, given scary figures from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which indicate that the prevalence of drug abuse in Nigeria is about thrice the world's average and the obvious nexus between drug abuse and the rising wave of violent crimes in the society, is it not disheartening that whilst other government institutions such as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) are working tirelessly to reverse the drug abuse trend in Nigeria, a key stakeholder like NFVCB (or is it NBC?) is sleeping on its statutory duties that ought to complement the concerted efforts of those other two agencies?

Take for instance, Section 33 (1) of the NFVCB Act states that "As from the commencement of this Act, no person shall exhibit, cause or allow to be exhibited a film without a censorship certificate issued by the Board for such exhibition". Same Act prohibits public consumption of videos with content that is "likely to encourage or glorify the use of violence" as well as "likely to incite or encourage public disorder or crime". The Act - and even the name of the board, as God would have it, acknowledge and separate "film" and "video"; meaning in its literary sense that the Act applies to both films and videos - whether it is music video or not (I think).

For the avoidance of doubt, I am inclined to think that the matter in question is directly under NFVCB's purview because it is too crucial to be accommodated merely under the National Broadcasting Commission's (NBC) Broadcast Code. But in the event that the contrary is the case, then nation has an emergency on its hands whilst the NBC should carry the can.

In the light of the serial contraventions of these extant laws and the presumably complicit role being played the supposed watchdogs, NFVCB and NBC, that I wish to publicly condemn, in its entirety, the making of drug abuse-promoting music videos by our artistes, because such songs do not only corrupt public morality, they lure vulnerable listeners and viewers into the self-destructive arms of drug abuse. In the end, the victim has their mental and physical health put in harm's way; and not only that, they constitute immense security risk and liability to a society that is contending with violent crimes. In even stronger terms, I give both NFVCB and NBC thumbs down for allowing these injurious breaches go unpunished.

I would therefore like to pray the National Assembly to quickly set up an ad-hoc committee comprising members of their committees on judiciary, information, drugs and narcotics and culture and tourism to undertake the task of (a) Investigating the operations of NFVCB and NBC especially as it relates to their functions and enforcement of the provisions of the Acts that established them; and (b) Determining whether both Acts need amendment for better result.

For the purpose of guaranteeing optimal outcome, it is further suggested that the NASS should also interface with other major stakeholders in the industry such as Performing Musicians Employers' Association of Nigeria (PMAN), Audio Visual Rights Society (AVRS) and Collecting Society of Nigeria (COSON) and get them to collaborate with regulatory bodies (NFVCB and NBC) to ensure the reign of sanity in their industry - as pertains to compliance and enforcement of industry statutes and codes. Who knows, this might just be an opportunity for the parliament to thoroughly examine the relevant portions of our body of laws with a view to identifying the inherent gaps, defects and mischief, and accordingly supply suitable cure and proffer fitting solutions.

You see, for those who do not appreciate the urgency of the times, the future of Nigeria, especially her youths' is under threat. Narcotic, psychotic and psychotropic substances are circulating among our youth population as though the human body needs them more than it needs vitamins C and A. Put bluntly, the nation is at war with harmful drugs and substances. And if one pays attention to credible data that deal with the nation's demography and unemployment rate, it then becomes all too glaring that except we make hay while the sun shines, our tomorrow would be as good as traded!

It is for this reason that NDLEA with the collaboration of other local and international stakeholders painstakingly produced, last year, the National Drug Control Masterplan (2021-2025) for the purpose of nipping the foreseeable tragedy in the bud and eliminating obstacles to our sustainable development.

Please for the sake our children, young adults and youths who do not know their left and right, this matter should be looked into urgently and speedily dealt with. We cannot continue to have our airwaves being polluted at will without consequences. We have the moral, mental and physical health of our children and wards to jealously protect. What we now see on our screens and hear on our airwaves actually assault our cultural essence and violate our moral codes as a people. We can no longer continue to sit idly by and watch some of our artistes stand our values on their heads and sell poisonous lyrics and videos to an obviously susceptible younger generation.

Akamadu, M.IoD is President, Centre for Ethical Rebirth Among Nigerian Youths

Document AFNWS00020220411ei4b0018j

DRUG ABUSE: NFVCB AND NBC IN THE DOCK

1,110 words

11 April 2022

This Day

AIWTHD

English

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Chuks Akamadu urges the National Film and Video Censors Board to be alive to its responsibilities

In 2015, a Nigerian musician named “Olamide” released a substance abuse-promoting song titled “Science Student”. A section of the public, for good measure, considered it offensive on account of the song’s **content**. The song was so odious that Federal Ministry of Health had to register its displeasure with it by publicly accusing the singer of breaching the Tobacco Act.

But let’s face it, Olamide is not alone in this. There are many other influential Nigerian musicians whose movie-videos clearly promote drug abuse in violation of Part VII Section 36 (1) (b) (ii) of National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Act which gives the Board the power not to register any video that is “likely to induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality”. Or does the word “video” not include music-videos? If it does not, who then regulates music-video contents that are churned out daily for public consumption?

Quite frankly, we need not go far. There is “Smoke Some Weed” by Burna Boy featuring Onos, “Ginger” by Wizkid and “Energy” by Runtown. Others include “Marry Juana” by Naira Marley & Max Twigg, “Ganja Man” by 9ice and “Kush” Music by Phyno.

Now, given scary figures from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which indicate that the prevalence of drug abuse in Nigeria is about thrice the world’s average and the obvious nexus between drug abuse and the rising wave of violent crimes in the society, is it not disheartening that whilst other government institutions such as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) are working tirelessly to reverse the drug abuse trend in Nigeria, a key stakeholder like NFVCB (or is it NBC?) is sleeping on its statutory duties that ought to complement the concerted efforts of those other two agencies?

Take for instance, Section 33 (1) of the NFVCB Act states that “As from the commencement of this Act, no person shall exhibit, cause or allow to be exhibited a film without a censorship certificate issued by the Board for such exhibition”. Same Act prohibits public consumption of videos with content that is “likely to encourage or glorify the use of violence” as well as “likely to incite or encourage public disorder or crime”. The Act – and even the name of the board, as God would have it, acknowledge and separate “film” and “video”; meaning in its literary sense that the Act applies to both films and videos – whether it is music video or not (I think).

For the avoidance of doubt, I am inclined to think that the matter in question is directly under NFVCB’s purview because it is too crucial to be accommodated merely under the National Broadcasting Commission’s (NBC) Broadcast Code. But in the event that the contrary is the case, then nation has an emergency on its hands whilst the NBC should carry the can.

In the light of the serial contraventions of these extant laws and the presumably complicit role being played the supposed watchdogs, NFVCB and NBC, that I wish to publicly condemn, in its entirety, the making of drug abuse-promoting music videos by our artistes, because such songs do not only corrupt public morality, they lure vulnerable listeners and viewers into the self-destructive arms of drug abuse. In the end, the victim has their mental and physical health put in harm’s way; and not only that, they constitute immense security risk and liability to a society that is contending with violent crimes. In even stronger terms, I give both NFVCB and NBC thumbs down for allowing these injurious breaches go unpunished.

I would therefore like to pray the National Assembly to quickly set up an ad-hoc committee comprising members of their committees on judiciary, information, drugs and narcotics and culture and tourism to undertake the task of (a) Investigating the operations of NFVCB and NBC especially as it relates to their functions and enforcement of the provisions of the Acts that established them; and (b) Determining whether both Acts need amendment for better result.

For the purpose of guaranteeing optimal outcome, it is further suggested that the NASS should also interface with other major stakeholders in the industry such as Performing Musicians Employers’ Association of Nigeria (PMAN), Audio Visual Rights Society (AVRS) and Collecting Society of Nigeria (COSON) and get them to collaborate with regulatory bodies (NFVCB and NBC) to ensure the reign of sanity in their industry – as

pertains to compliance and enforcement of industry statutes and codes. Who knows, this might just be an opportunity for the parliament to thoroughly examine the relevant portions of our body of laws with a view to identifying the inherent gaps, defects and mischief, and accordingly supply suitable cure and proffer fitting solutions.

You see, for those who do not appreciate the urgency of the times, the future of Nigeria, especially her youths' is under threat. Narcotic, psychotic and psychotropic substances are circulating among our youth population as though the human body needs them more than it needs vitamins C and A. Put bluntly, the nation is at war with harmful drugs and substances. And if one pays attention to credible data that deal with the nation's demography and unemployment rate, it then becomes all too glaring that except we make hay while the sun shines, our tomorrow would be as good as traded!

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The Sydney Morning Herald

Business

Delayed Peacock launch opens door for last US content deals

Zoe Samios

738 words

11 April 2022

The Sydney Morning Herald

SMHH

First

30

English

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Streaming

US film studio giant NBCUniversal has delayed plans to launch its streaming service Peacock in the Australian market, setting the stage for a fierce battle between the nation's commercial networks for the last major Hollywood content deal.

The Comcast-controlled media company flew in Justin Che, NBCU's managing director - Asia Pacific from Singapore several weeks ago to formally start the process of selling its programs, films and channels in Australia. Several industry sources, who spoke anonymously because the talks are confidential, said the company has met with local media executives that are expected to bid against one another for the content over the next few months, given most existing deals expire in December.

NBCU's negotiations will be fiercely competitive and expensive as they could be the last major content discussions to occur in the Australian market. Other international players such as Disney and Paramount have already taken back content from local networks and launched direct-to-consumer streaming services.

The decision to strike a content deal delays NBCU's previous plan to launch its streaming service Peacock into the market, or tie-up with a local player such as Seven West Media, which held joint venture talks with the company. NBCU has had commercial deals in place with Stan and Foxtel for several years, but these agreements have become critical as the market fragments and international production companies take back content for their own services.

International exclusivity deals - such as the agreement struck between Netflix and Sony for popular US sitcom Seinfeld - have also affected what content is available on various services.

This masthead reported last year that NBCU was considering bringing Peacock into the market on its own or through a joint venture partnership with a player such as Seven West Media or Paramount (it has a relationship with Paramount internationally).

However, media industry observers believe it could potentially make more money from selling its content to established players in the local market.

NBCUniversal's slate includes content from Peacock, Sky Studios (which parent company Comcast bought in 2018) and traditional NBCU programs. It is the largest deal in terms of volume in this market. Sky Studios, which was behind Chernobyl, has invested a large amount of money in original programming since 2019 and has established a major production studio an effort to become the Hollywood of England. NBCU's library also includes The Office (US), Brooklyn 99, and Downtown Abbey.

The existing content deals - including a 2020 deal with Stan for Peacock originals - all expire later this year. For Foxtel and Stan, a deal would reduce the risk of losing market share to another streaming player. Stan, which is owned by Nine Entertainment Co (owner of this masthead), cannot afford to lose its current output deal as other major international companies, like HBO and Showtime, provide their new content to Foxtel and Paramount.

Foxtel would need a deal with NBCU to ensure it has international content available to subscribers if it loses HBO Max shows such as Succession and Euphoria when its current contract expires in December 2023.

HBO Max is expected to merge with Discovery Plus in the next 18 months following the merger of Discovery and WarnerMedia, which was completed last week. Johannes Larcher, head of HBO Max International, said last week the streaming service had ambitions to hit 190 territories by 2026 by rapidly expanding its slate of

international original programs. Such a move would put the current relationship between Foxtel and WarnerMedia at risk.

Seven needs content to be able to operate in the online streaming space and Paramount, which locally owns Network Ten, has a partnership with NBCU in Europe. The value of the contract is unclear because the output is split across multiple services. But sources familiar with the contract most recently signed between WarnerMedia and Foxtel - estimated to be about \$100 million per year - expect the next deal with NBCU in Australia could be worth more.

Observers believe NBCU is in a strong position in negotiations with local networks because it has the option of bringing Peacock to Australia, and because of a scarcity of remaining content available for local players services to buy.

Any contract is expected to include a termination clause allowing NBCU to go direct to consumer at any point in the future. NBCUniversal was unavailable for comment.

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Any contract is expected to include a termination clause allowing NBCU to go direct to consumer at any point in the future. NBCUniversal was unavailable for comment.

Document AGEE000020220410ei4b0001c

Last major US **content** deal up for grabs as NBCU delays local Peacock launch

Zoe Samios

743 words

10 April 2022

20:00

The Sydney Morning Herald - Online

SMHHOL

English

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Document SMHHOL0020220410ei4a0025y

RWS Entertainment Group; Broadway And Universal Studios Award-Winning Creatives Join RWS Entertainment Group

710 words

8 April 2022

Entertainment Newsweekly

ENTWK

15

English

© Copyright 2022 Entertainment Newsweekly via VerticalNews.com

2022 APR 15 (VerticalNews) -- By a News Reporter-Staff News Editor at Entertainment Newsweekly -- RWS Entertainment Group, the world's exclusive, full-service provider of award-winning guest experiences and attractions, welcomes two powerhouse creative leaders to the team. Jason A. Sparks joins as Senior Director, Theatrical Creative **Content** and Damien Gray joins as Director, Immersive Creative **Content**. Sparks, recently Associate Director for the anticipated Broadway revival of Take Me Out, will add a fresh layer of expertise to creative direction, direction and choreography for RWS theatrical productions. Gray, an expert in creating immersive experiences, brings a rich portfolio of international projects.

An award-winning creative director, director and choreographer, Jason A. Sparks has worked in a wide range of mediums, from Broadway musicals and independent short films to award shows and concert dance. He has served as the associate to Warren Carlyle on multiple Tony Award-winning Broadway productions, including Hello, Dolly! with Bette Midler; Kiss Me, Kate; She Loves Me; and After Midnight, as well as choreographing productions for New York City Ballet and the Tony Awards.

Damien Gray is known for his boundary-breaking work for top companies worldwide, including Universal Studios Japan, Universal Beijing Resort and the soon-to-open Ocean Flower Island Resort and theme park in Hainan, China. For Universal Studios and Illumination Entertainment, Gray created the smash concert spectacular, SING ON TOUR, based on the animated hit film SING, which is now playing at the Illumination Theaters in Osaka and Beijing. He also created both Steps in Time, at Disney California Adventure and the long-running hit Animagique, for Walt Disney Studios in Paris. He will infuse RWS experiences with his wild imagination, knowledge of leading-edge technology and love for all things pop culture.

"The level of natural talent and boundary-pushing creativity that Jason and Damien bring to our team is invigorating," said Craig Laurie, Executive Vice President, Creative. "Both are uniquely qualified to bring a vibrant perspective to our productions. With more than thirty years of combined skill, creativity and insight into live and immersive experiences, our clients and their guests will be thrilled with the results."

RWS also welcomes Greg Brown, Vice President, Talent Casting & Recruitment; Ericka Womack, Senior Casting Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers; and Kendra Lucas, Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers.

Greg Brown, Vice President, Talent Casting & Recruitment: Previously with Royal Caribbean Group as Manager, Talent Casting, Brown has more than 20 years in the entertainment industry and brings his unique creative output as director, music director, orchestrator, arranger, professor and casting professional. His body of work includes casting for Broadway, concert and performance venues across the globe. With a passion for guiding and training young artists, Brown continues to make an impact on the next generation of arts professionals through his active teaching career and professorship.

Ericka Womack, Senior Casting Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers: Previously with Royal Caribbean Cruises, Womack brings experience in all aspects of entertainment performance, choreography, show creation and management. She is dedicated to working side by side with front-line performers, management and executives.

Kendra Lucas, Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers: Previously a performer for RWS, Lucas now uses her knowledge and experience to help guide RWS productions as part of the casting team. She began her casting career in NYC assisting at various casting offices working on projects including national tours, regional theater productions and musicals on major cruise lines. Lucas has a passion for casting and is committed to making entertainment more equitable, inclusive and diverse.

Over the past two decades, RWS has established a career trajectory for performers and technicians, giving them the opportunity to follow their dreams, develop their skills and showcase their talent on stage and on screen. RWS' 6,500 seasonal roles provide performers and technicians with a memorable summer job, a roadmap to success or the opportunity of a lifetime.

With offices in New York, London and Cincinnati, RWS continues to expand with full-time, seasonal and contract positions: <https://rws.applytojob.com>.

Keywords for this news article include: RWS Entertainment Group.

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Document ENTWK00020220408ei480000c

Consumer Electronics People

163 words

7 April 2022

Warren's Consumer Electronics Daily

CEDW

Volume 22; Issue 67

English

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Gannett nominates Amy Reinhard, Netflix vice president-studio operations, for election to its board at June 6 annual meeting ... Disney hires Kristina Schake from White House COVID-19 vaccine **education** campaign as executive vice president-global communications ... Skechers adds Cinedigm Chief **Content** Officer Yolanda Macias to its board, increasing it to eight members ... Digital advertising **platform** Foundation Direct hires Jessie Niespolo, Google's former senior automotive retail strategist, as senior vice president-performance ... Sports media company Dazn Group taps former Sky Deutschland executive Alice Mascia as CEO-Germany, Austria and Switzerland, effective May 1 ... Game developer Streamline Media Group names Kenji Kajiware, ex-Sony Interactive Entertainment, as general manager, head-Japan ... RealNetworks appoints Mike Cooley, ex-Sprint Nextel, president-KONTXT, messaging and telecom, newly created position ...

Senate confirms Katherine Vidal, from Winston & Strawn, as Commerce Department undersecretary-intellectual property and director-U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (see 2204060041) ... Phosphorus Cybersecurity announces Art Coviello, ex- RSA Security, as board chairman.

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Communications Personals

145 words

7 April 2022

Communications Daily

COMD

Volume 42; Issue 67

English

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Latham & Watkins adds Makan Delrahim, former DOJ antitrust chief, as a partner-Antitrust and Competition Practice and member-Litigation and Trial Department ... Disney hires Kristina Schake from White House COVID-19 vaccine **education** campaign as executive vice president-global communications ... RealNetworks appoints Mike Cooley, ex-Sprint Nextel, president-KONTXT, messaging and telecom, newly created position ... Sports media company Dazn Group taps former Sky Deutschland executive Alice Mascia as CEO-Germany, Austria and Switzerland, effective May 1.

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Document COMD000020220412ei470000s

Wi-Fi 6E Becomes Affordable Option with Comcast's Deployment of 'Supersonic' Gateways

Daniel Frankel

386 words

7 April 2022

Multichannel News

MULTN

English

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Comcast begins rollout of the pricey **devices**, which maximize bandwidth for tasks like video streaming, on a doable \$14-a-month lease

[Wi-Fi 6E](#) dramatically improves the way routers and gateways handle multiple **devices** at once, but the initial product releases have been pricey, coming in at around \$1,500.

Prices have come down — you can get this [Linksys Hydra Pro 6E off Amazon](#) for \$299 right now — but the [biggest advancement in WiFi tech to come along in years](#) still isn't cheap.

For its part, Comcast has provided the most affordable option yet — that is, if you can stomach monthly leasing of "customer premises equipment" from cable companies — with the top U.S. MSO now [rolling out its new "Supersonic Gateway."](#) on a \$14-a-month lease, to customers with its fastest internet speed tiers (those with Xfinity Internet Gigabit and Ultrafast plans).

Comcast [introduced its DOCSIS 3.1-enabled xFi Advanced Gateway at CES](#) earlier this year. Comcast claims the devices provide increase bandwidth in the home by three times, using the sixth iteration of the 802.11 Wi-Fi standard which was introduced in 2019, with certifications by the Wi-Fi Alliance beginning in early 2021.

Wi-Fi 6 has been around for several years, but the "E" — which stands for "extended" — is the new part, with the tech adding a third 6 GHz band to existing 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands. The additional 1,200 MHz of midband unlicensed spectrum is super helpful in places like apartments and condos, where users' with more limited Wi-Fi frequency means often bump into each other.

But the other major improvement is how the Wi-Fi is distributed to devices.

Wi-Fi 6 devices tap into OFDMA (orthogonal frequency division multiple access), a modulation scheme similar to what is used in DOCSIS and LTE that helps routers and gateways increase the efficiency of how channels are split.

It all adds up to far more efficient usage of the high-speed internet connection — it's one thing to have a gigabit-level speed come into your home, but you still have to get those ones and zeros to your Roku or Xbox. ■

[Comcast Wi-Fi 6E gateway \(Comcast\)](#)

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For its part, Comcast has provided the most affordable option yet -- that is, if you can stomach monthly leasing of "customer premises equipment" from cable companies -- with the top U.S. MSO now [rolling out its new "Supersonic Gateway."](#) on a \$14-a-month lease, to customers with its fastest internet speed tiers (those with Xfinity Internet Gigabit and Ultrafast plans).

Comcast [introduced its DOCSIS 3.1-enabled xFi Advanced Gateway at CES](#) earlier this year. Comcast claims the devices provide increase bandwidth in the home by 3x, using the sixth iteration of the 802.11 Wi-Fi standard which was introduced in 2019, with certifications by the Wi-Fi Alliance beginning in early 2021.

Wi-Fi 6 has been around for several years, but the "E" -- which stands for "extended" -- is the new part, with the tech adding a third 6 GHz band to existing 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands. The additional 1,200 MHz of midband unlicensed spectrum is super helpful in places like apartments and condos, where users' with more limited Wi-Fi frequency means often bump into each other.

But the other major improvement is how the Wi-Fi is distributed to devices.

Wi-Fi 6 devices tap into OFDMA (orthogonal frequency division multiple access), a modulation scheme similar to what is used in DOCSIS and LTE that helps routers and gateways increase the efficiency of how channels are split.

It all adds up to far more efficient usage of the high-speed internet connection -- it's one thing to have a gigabit-level speed come into your home, but you still have to get those 1s and 0s to your Roku or Xbox.

[Comcast Wi-Fi 6E gateway \(Comcast\)](#)

Document MULTN00020220407ei470005I

Neal Richter, Director of Science of Amazon Advertising, Named Chair of IAB Tech Lab Board of Directors for Fourth Year

1,074 words

7 April 2022

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PR Newswire

PRN

English

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New Board Members EMX Digital, GroundTruth, Sharethrough, and T-Mobile Join Top Executives from Amazon, Meta, Oracle, GroupM, NBCUniversal, and Microsoft

NEW YORK, April 7, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- IAB Tech Lab, the global digital advertising technical standard-setting body, announced today that they have elected their 2022 board members. Board members are voted in by the wider membership base and are responsible for determining IAB Tech Lab's strategic direction during their appointed term. This year, leadership from EMX Digital, GroundTruth, Sharethrough, and T-Mobile will join the IAB Tech Lab board to contribute to the strength of the digital advertising **ecosystem**.

IAB Tech Lab currently has over 800 members across the digital advertising ecosystem and is responsible for pioneering respected and widely adopted industry standards such as OpenRTB, ads.txt, the Open Measurement SDK, and more. In addition to the new board members, IAB Tech Lab has announced Neal Richter, Director of Science at Amazon Advertising, as Chair of the organization's Board of Directors for the fourth year in a row. As Chair for the past three years, Richter has been a member of the Board since its inception as the IAB Ad Technology Advisory Council.

"Neal has been a member of the Board from the very beginning and has been instrumental in helping to move the industry forward. With a finger on the pulse of the latest innovations in data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, Neal has contributed to a number of notable achievements including the development of the OpenRTB protocol, ads.txt, ads.cert, sellers.json, and other associated standards," said Anthony Katsur, Chief Executive Officer, IAB Tech Lab. "Neal is a true visionary and I look forward to another year of working closely alongside him and the Board of Directors to ensure that we create a thriving, unified marketplace to address the concerns of our members and the industry at large."

Richter is a software industry veteran with over 25 years of experience. For the vast majority of his career, he's been focused on data science, machine learning, and AI applications. He is currently the Advertising Science Director for Amazon DSP, where he oversees a team of data scientists and engineers focused on RTB bidding algorithms and systems across display, mobile, audio, and video. Prior to joining Amazon, Dr. Richter was Chief Scientist at SpotX, Chief Technical Officer at Rakuten Marketing, and CTO and Chief Scientist at the Rubicon Project.

"As the industry is at a crucial moment with the changes in rules for cookies and identifiers, IAB Tech Lab is the leading trade organization tackling the issues of privacy, identity, and addressability for all constituents within the digital ad ecosystem," said Richter. "I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the members of the Board, Anthony Katsur and all members of IAB Tech Lab to ensure we evolve the changing ecosystem and meet the needs of companies and the consumers they serve."

New members of the IAB Board of Directors elected for a two-year term include:

-- Michael Zacharski, Chief Executive Officer, EMX Digital

-- Eddie Dingels, Chief Operating Officer, GroundTruth

-- Curt Larson, Chief Product Officer, Sharethrough

--

Michael Peralta, Vice President & General Manager, T-Mobile Marketing Solutions

Additionally, J. Allen Dove, Chief Technology Officer of Magnite, has been appointed to the board in an interim fashion pending next year's election by our members.

The remaining IAB Tech Lab Board of Directors is comprised of the following:

- Paul Bannister, Chief Strategy Officer, CafeMedia
- Daniel Brackett, Chief Technology Officer, Extreme Reach
- Will Bullock, Director, Statistic & Privacy (R&D),
Meta
- Ray (Jiayi) Cao, Managing Director, Head of Global Product Strategy and
Operations, TikTok
- Travis Clinger, Senior Vice President of Addressability and Ecosystem,
LiveRamp
- Karan Dalal, Senior Vice President, Operations, Media.net
- Giovanni Gardelli, Senior Director, Ad Targeting Products, Yahoo
- Mark Kopera, Senior Director, Product Management -- Oracle Advertising
and CX, Oracle Advertising
- Ai Matsubara, Video Ads Specialist, Yahoo Japan
- Ryan McConville, Executive Vice President, Ad Platforms, NBCUniversal
- Derek Nicol, Vice President, Advertising Technology, ViacomCBS
- Jeff Olchovy, Chief Technology Officer, Tapad
- Michael Palmer, Global Vice President, Emerging Technologies, GroupM
- Todd Parsons, Chief Product Officer, Criteo
- Gruia Pitigoi-Aron, Senior Vice President, Product, The Trade Desk
- Aleksandr Rebrikov, Partner Architect, Microsoft
- Chris Record, Senior Vice President, Product, Technology & Operations --
SXM Media & AdsWizz, Pandora
- Paul Ryan, Chief Technology Officer, OpenX
- John Sabella, Chief Technology Officer, PubMatic
- Gyanda Sachdeva, Vice President, Product, LinkedIn
- Tom Sharma, Chief Product Officer, Integral Ad Science
- Ashish Shukla, Chief Technology Officer, MediaMath
- Steve Silvers, Senior Vice President, Product & GM, Customer Experience,
Neustar Inc.
- Somer Simpson, Vice President, Product, Quantcast
- Michael Smith, Chief Data Officer, Hearst
- Kevin Solinger, Vice President, Product Management, Xandr
- Ken Weiner, Chief Technology Officer, GumGum

IAB Tech Lab Executive Committee includes::

--

Andrew Casale, President & Chief Executive Officer, Index Exchange

-- David Cohen, Chief Executive Officer, Interactive Advertising Bureau

-- Sheryl Goldstein, Executive Vice President, Member Engagement & Development, Interactive Advertising Bureau

-- Neal Richter (Chairperson), Director of Science, Amazon Advertising

-- Scott Spencer. Vice President, Product Management, Privacy and User Trust,

Google

For more information about the IAB Tech Lab Board of Directors, please visit iabtechlab.com/about-the-iab-tech-lab/tech-lab-leadership/.

About IAB Technology Laboratory

Established in 2014, the IAB Technology Laboratory (Tech Lab) is a non-profit consortium that engages a member community globally to develop foundational technology and standards that enable growth and trust in the digital media ecosystem. Comprised of digital publishers, ad technology firms, agencies, marketers, and other member companies, IAB Tech Lab focuses on solutions for brand safety and ad fraud; identity, data, and consumer privacy; ad experiences and measurement; and programmatic effectiveness. Its work includes the OpenRTB real-time bidding protocol, ads.txt anti-fraud specification, Open Measurement SDK for viewability and verification, VAST video specification, and Project Rearc initiative for privacy-centric addressability. Board members/companies are listed at <https://iabtechlab.com/about-the-iab-tech-lab/tech-lab-leadership/>. For more information, please visit <https://iabtechlab.com>.

View original content to download

multimedia:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/neal-richter-director-of-science-of-amazon-advertising-named-chair-of-iab-tech-lab-board-of-directors-for-fourth-year-301519626.html>

SOURCE IAB Tech Lab

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News

Ryman inks landmark deal with NBCUniversal, Atairos

Sandy Mazza and , Matthew Leimkuehler; Nashville Tennessean

777 words

7 April 2022

The Oak Ridger

OKRGR

OKR-OakRidger

A3

English

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Nashville's music scene is expanding its global reach for country, roots and Americana fans, and the city's iconic entertainment brands are leading the effort.

A new ally in Opry Entertainment Group's ambitions for Circle, home of Opry Live, and other Nashville-centric entertainment brands, has pledged \$300 million to scale up the media network and its **content** providers.

Private-equity firm Atairos Group will take a 30% stake in OEG, a subsidiary of hotel-and-convention-center resort leader Ryman Hospitality Properties.

Opry Entertainment acts as the premier gatekeeper of Nashville's best-known trade – country music.

Together, the companies hope to leverage OEG to be a global powerhouse as "the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content," according to a joint statement.

The deal includes investment from NBCUniversal that could create future opportunities with other Comcast businesses.

Circle's platform will expand to maneuver in the hyper-competitive streaming landscape where brand giants such as Disney+, HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video – which hosted the ACM Awards last month – and Netflix continuously push to court subscribers with big-budget programming.

"This is a big deal for the company and a big deal for the city of Nashville," Ryman CEO Colin Reed said. "Our philosophy is to put these businesses in markets where the country-lifestyle consumer resides or visits. Ireland is a massive market for country music."

OEG worth \$1.5 billion

Atairos's partnership brings with it another meaningful landmark for the growing enterprise – OEG's first independent market valuation.

The firm signed onto the long-term partnership with Ryman Hospitality Properties after determining its entertainment properties are valued at between \$1.4 billion and \$1.5 billion.

The valuation is based on projected total earnings this year of \$80-88 million, multiplied by up to 18 times, according to company documents.

Assets include the 96-year-old Grand Ole Opry, 130-year-old Ryman Auditorium, WSM 650 AM radio station, media network Circle and Blake Shelton's Ole Red country-bar brand in Nashville, Orlando and Gatlinburg. Coming soon: A location in Las Vegas.

"We are pleased with the valuation," Reed said. "But, more importantly, we are pleased to have culturally compatible strategic partners in Atairos and NBCUniversal who will help us realize our long-term goal of reaching more country music fans than ever before."

Ryman is already investing in the subsidiary with the under-construction Ole Red Las Vegas and a pending \$27 million deal to buy Block 21, Austin's massive music-themed complex, anchored by "Austin City Limits" performance home Moody Theater.

The additions could add a bevy of new content opportunities.

'Durability demonstrated'

Ryman's hotel and resort arm dominates its business model, though its media and entertainment branch is growing. Meanwhile, Ryman's hospitality assets continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic's hit to business travel.

RHP is organized as a real-estate investment trust, a structure with low taxes that requires profits be paid to shareholders as dividends.

"If our business continues to recover the way we think it will, we anticipate being a dividend-paying company again in 2023," Reed said. "The hotel business is rapidly recovering. Convention traffic is improving rapidly."

If media and entertainment division OEG also continues to grow, it could be spun into a fully separate vehicle, he added.

There are more than 120 million U.S. consumers predisposed to country-music brands and entertainment experiences, according to Country Music Association's market research. That could expand exponentially with global exposure, officials said.

"If you look at what's happened to the live-entertainment business through the pandemic," RHP CFO Mark Fioravanti said. "Investors are ascribing higher values because of the durability demonstrated for live entertainment."

Sandy Mazza can be reached via email at smazza@tennessean.com, by calling 615-726-5962, or on Twitter @SandyMazza.

The deal by the numbers:

30% Atairos Group stake in Opry Entertainment Group

70% of OEG will remain with Ryman Hospitality Properties

\$1.5 billion valuation of Opry Entertainment Group

\$300 million capital infusion from Atairos Group

\$80-88 million anticipated OEG profit this year

21% increase in country-music listeners outside U.S. since 2015

The Ryman Auditorium is one asset of Ryman Hospitality Partners, along with the Grand Ole Opry, WSM radio station, the Ole Red bar brand and more. Shelley Mays/The Tennessean file Garth Brooks takes the stage with Trisha Yearwood to perform a song with Lauren Alaina after her Grand Ole Opry induction February 12. Alan Poizner

Document OKRGR00020220407ei4700002

News Industry Increasingly Keyed on Streaming: NBCU News Group Head

263 words

6 April 2022

Communications Daily

COMD

Volume 42; Issue 66

English

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Entertainment audiences' consumption patterns are becoming fixed, with a big focus on streaming, but new consumption patterns for news are just starting to form, which is why NBCUniversal is investing heavily in news streaming platforms and product, NBCU News Group Chairman Cesar Conde said Tuesday at an Axios event. Comcast's NBCU and other **content** producers are moving increasingly to a digital model of distributing **content** from talent, brands and franchises via all their various platforms, he said. He said MSNBC commentator Rachel Maddow is an example of the company's omnichannel digital strategy, with her becoming part of its streaming platforms, podcast and long-form documentaries, he said. "We are doing that with a lot of talent," he said, citing CNBC host Jim Cramer. He predicted increasing use of subscription services by NBCU and other media outlets, and said MSNBC **content** will be a paywalled part of its Peacock streaming service, though free news options will remain.

He said there's a large hunger for news in the Spanish-language space and Telemundo will invest in alternative platforms. General Motors CEO Mary Barra predicted personal autonomous vehicles will be available as early as 2025. Northrop Grumman CEO Kathy Warden said the U.S. and allies are aware of the need for space norms, and space policies to promote them are under discussion by the White House, but there likely won't be big developments this year. Warden also discussed work with AT&T on a 5G-based DOD data network (see 2204050051).

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6 April 2022

Warren's Consumer Electronics Daily

CEDW

Volume 22; Issue 66

English

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Document CEDW000020220410ei4600007

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Features

Rear Window

Joe Aston and Myriam Robin

862 words

6 April 2022

The Australian Financial Review

AFNR

First

40

English

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Blue Sky's Vinomofo going nowhere

It's now been 14 months since online wine merchant Vinomofo swapped **investment** banks - calling in Jarden after Macquarie Capital conceded defeat - in a quixotic attempt to list itself on the Australian Securities Exchange.

As we'd always suspected, there isn't an equities capital markets desk in this wide brown land that could sell this insipid enterprise to institutional investors.

Only two weeks before Vinomofo switched ECM advisers, Federal Court Justice Michael Lee handed down his judgment in defamation proceedings brought against us by former Blue Sky Alternative Investments executive director Elaine Stead. Regarding our contentions in two 2019 columns that Vinomofo was "unviable" and "a worthless start-up", Justice Lee found that we had failed to prove them true.

Blue Sky, under Stead's direction, had invested \$25 million for 22.7 per cent of Vinomofo in 2016, promoting an internal rate of return of 25 per cent per annum (net of fees) and an anticipated exit in three to five years.

Blue Sky, therefore, sought to achieve a return for its VC fund investors of \$49 million in 2019 or \$76 million in 2021.

At the time of the original investment, Blue Sky provided Vinomofo revenue forecasts depicting a phenomenal trajectory: 42 per cent compound annual growth, from \$55 million in FY16 to \$164 million in FY19. These ludicrous figures were published in the information memorandum.

As we've set out in previous columns, Vinomofo's revenue generation bore no resemblance to these forecasts.

The company's actual revenue was just \$39 million in FY16 and \$45 million in FY19. That's a pitiful CAGR of 4.9 per cent - unheard of in venture capital, a sector devoted to high-growth firms.

It also bears repeating that Vinomofo co-founder Andre Eikmeier brazenly misled the market in July 2017, telling this newspaper that Vinomofo's "revenue run rate" was "around \$70 million". FY17 had just concluded, in which Vinomofo had posted revenue of \$44 million. It posted \$45 million of revenue in FY18.

In August 2020, bankers told Street Talk that Vinomofo "has about \$80 million in annual revenue ... growing at 20 per cent to 30 per cent in recent years". We can now reveal that for the 12 months ending June 30, 2020, Vinomofo booked revenue of \$56 million. Mysteriously, nobody who talks about this company's financials is capable of doing so accurately.

Vinomofo recently lodged its financial accounts for FY21. In that period, Vinomofo generated revenue of \$69 million. Since Blue Sky invested, that's a CAGR of 12 per cent - a long way from the forecast 42 per cent.

Even after COVID-19 provided a heavenly step-change in operating conditions for both e-commerce and alcohol, Vinomofo delivered a profit in FY21 of just \$1.3 million. Five long years since Blue Sky plunged in, Vinomofo is barely profitable.

To meet its targeted investment performance after six years, Blue Sky would need to achieve a \$95 million return from its 22.7 per cent Vinomofo stake. Problem is, 100 per cent of Vinomofo still isn't worth that much.

So nobody is pretending any longer that Vinomofo is headed for the ASX boards. How could they?

End of the road for Brightday

Diversa Trustees is in the process of winding up yet another cohort of the teeny tiny superannuation funds it oversees.

One of the latest to get the chop is Brightday, which was launched to some fanfare in 2014 and was pitched at those who wanted to take an active role in their superannuation without the trouble of setting up a self-managed fund.

Eight years on, you wouldn't describe it as popular. Last June, it had just 161 members. Soon, it won't exist, remaining account holders given the option of transferring into another product or having their funds forwarded to the Australian Taxation Office.

It's an ignominious end for a brand whose corporate history is chequered with associations to some of the biggest names in Australian business media.

It was founded by the then-Alan Kohler-edited Eureka Report in the period it was owned by News Corp, and pitched as a natural extension to that publication's retail investor focus.

Brightday was sold two years later to Celebrity Apprentice host Mark Bouris' Yellow Brick Road as part of that outfit's push into wealth management. Until that company rethought its wealth foray in 2019 (citing growing regulation) and so decided to offload its superannuation arm to Pearl Funds Management, which runs Brightday today.

The one constant through this has been OneVue, which partnered on the launch and merged with current trustee Diversa in 2016. Through its many transitions, it's never been made clear just how much Brightday's various owners paid for it. Wonder if the (evidently immaterial) amounts add up to the \$15 million in funds under management it has today.

Though one thing's clear: with such a piddling FUM figure, we're sure the likes of Rupert Murdoch, Kohler and Bouris aren't among those currently transferring out their savings.

Document AFNR000020220408ei4600019

Atairos, NBCUniversal to invest in Ryman Hospitality's Opry Entertainment

Karl Angelo Vidal

285 words

6 April 2022

SNL Real Estate Securities Daily: North America Edition

RES D

Issue: 116033

English

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Atairos Management LP and NBCUniversal Media LLC will acquire a 30% stake in Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc. subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings LLC, which directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group.

The 30% equity **investment** will be approximately \$293 million, of which Atairos will directly invest roughly \$278 million and NBCUniversal will directly invest up to approximately \$15 million.

The investment values Nashville, Tenn.-based Opry at about \$1.42 billion, including a recapitalization of Opry with a new \$300 million term loan B and the assumption of a \$137 million commercial mortgage-backed securities facility for Block 21, which Opry is acquiring.

Atairos agreed to make an additional \$30 million investment in Opry depending on certain performance targets.

Ryman will retain a controlling 70% interest in Opry upon completion of the transaction, which is expected to occur in the second quarter, subject to customary conditions.

Opry operates country music brands including the Grand Ole Opry concert series, Ryman Auditorium and WSM 650AM.

Upon closing, Ryman expects to receive gross transaction proceeds of about \$593 million, which the company plans to use to pay transaction expenses and to fully repay its \$300 million term loan A and substantially all of the outstanding borrowings under its revolving credit facility.

Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC is Ryman's financial adviser and Bass Berry & Sims PLC is providing legal advice. Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP is offering tax counsel to Ryman.

Moelis & Co. LLC is financial adviser and Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP is legal adviser to Atairos.

JPMorgan Chase Bank NA and Morgan Stanley Senior Funding Inc. provided financing commitment for the transaction.

Document RESD000020220407ei4600004



Atairos, NBCUniversal to invest in Ryman Hospitality's Opry Entertainment

Karl Angelo Vidal

285 words

6 April 2022

SNL Financial Services Daily

SFSD

Issue: 116034

English

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Moelis & Co. LLC is financial adviser and Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP is legal adviser to Atairos.

JPMorgan Chase Bank NA and Morgan Stanley Senior Funding Inc. provided financing commitment for the transaction.

Document SFSD000020220407ei4600008



Extra

'Game of Thrones' prequel on Sky's NOW; Crackle Plus' April content slate

Frances Josephine Espeso, Mark Anthony Gubagaras, Mohammad Shayan Javeed

708 words

6 April 2022

SNL Financial Extra

SNLFE

English

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The Program Guide highlights notable programming announcements and upcoming original debuts from online video platforms around the world.

"House of the Dragon" Source: Warner Media

Top News

* Comcast Corp.-owned Sky Ltd. will premiere the "Game of Thrones" prequel series, "House of the Dragon," on Aug. 22 on Sky Atlantic, its NOW streaming service. The show will be available in all Sky markets, including the U.K. and Ireland, Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland.

* Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment Inc.'s streaming service, Crackle Plus, unveiled its April slate, including the 10-episode limited series "Les Norton," "Sherlock," a mockumentary titled "We Are CVNT5" and "Fairwood."

The Americas

* World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. is stepping into the production of fictionalized TV, Dow Jones Newswires reported. The company is working on two scripted TV series: a Spanish-language comedy about an aspiring female wrestler in Mexico and a drama about a fictional family that runs a wrestling company.

* Apple Inc.'s Apple TV+ is working on the comedy series "Shrinking," which centers on a grieving therapist who begins to break the rules and tells his clients exactly what he thinks, The Hollywood Reporter reported.

* Hulu LLC is working on a psychological drama titled "Saint X," The Hollywood Reporter reported. The eight-episode show is based on a novel by Alexis Scharitkin.

* Amazon.com Inc.'s Prime Video acquired U.S. rights to romantic action comedy "Shotgun Wedding," The Hollywood Reporter reported.

* Fox Corp.'s free streaming service, Tubi, is set to launch the thriller film "Cinnamon" later in 2022, Deadline reported. The film, which is in production, follows the story of a struggling small-town gas station attendant and aspiring singer whose life is sent into a tailspin when there is a robbery at work.

* Netflix Inc. entered into a deal with U.S. filmmaker Nancy Meyers to write, direct and produce a new comedy film for the streamer, Deadline reported.

* Paramount Global's streaming service, Paramount+, acquired crime thriller "Finestkind," Deadline reported. The film will be launched later in 2022.

Europe, Middle East and Africa

* Walt Disney Co. confirmed the launch dates and pricing for its streaming service, Disney+, in 42 countries and 11 territories in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

* Telefónica SA and DAZN Ltd. reached a nonexclusive distribution agreement, bringing soccer division La Liga's games for the 2022-23 to 2026-27 seasons to Telefónica's Movistar Plus+ streaming platform. The deal is valued at €1.4 billion, according to Bloomberg News.

* Netflix teamed up with Amaury Sport Organisation, along with the participation of France Télévisions SA, on the creation of a new documentary series on the Tour de France 2022, expected to launch in the first half of 2023.

* Warner Media LLC acquired rights to broadcast the action-comedy animated series "Jade Armor" from France's TeamTO SA on its HBO Max streaming platform in Europe, West Asia and North Africa in 2022, Variety reported.

* Nordic Entertainment Group AB's Viaplay streaming service is set to debut in the U.K. by the end of 2022, The Daily Telegraph (London) reported.

* Nordic Entertainment announced an original documentary, "Liv Ullmann: The Road Less Travelled," for its Viaplay streamer. Viaplay also secured exclusive streaming rights to the heavyweight boxing title match between Tyson Fury and Dillian Whyte in 10 European countries.

* The British Broadcasting Corp. unveiled "Floodlights," a new factual drama on former professional soccer player Andy Woodward, set to launch on the iPlayer streamer and BBC Two in the spring.

Asia-Pacific

* "Legends of the Ramayana with Amish," a three-part docuseries, will premiere April 7 on Discovery Inc.'s streaming service discovery+ India, World Screen reported. The Wide Angle Films-produced docuseries, helmed by author Amish Tripathi, will look into the ancient stories and myths about the ancient Indian epic "Ramayana."

* Netflix said Japanese hit thriller series "Alice in Borderland" will release its second season on the platform in December 2022. The first season premiered in December 2020.

Links are current as of publication time, and we are not responsible if those links are unavailable later.

Document SNLFE00020220407ei46000mh



DISCOVERY'S STREAMING TV EVERYWHERE GO APPS NOW AVAILABLE ON COMCAST'S XCLASS TV AND XFINITY FLEX - Discovery, Inc.

395 words

6 April 2022

M2 Presswire

MTPW

English

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New York, NY - - Discovery, Inc. today announced that a selection of Discovery's streaming TV everywhere (TVE) GO apps are now available on Comcast's XClass TV and Xfinity Flex, providing more customers with direct and easy access to HGTV GO, TLC GO, Food Network GO, Discovery GO and ID GO.

To access Discovery's TVE GO apps on XClass TV and Flex, customers can simply say the name of the app into the device's voice remote. Built on Comcast's global technology **platform**, XClass TV and Flex offer customers a simple and personalized entertainment **platform** that makes finding live and on demand streaming **content** from hundreds of apps and services just a click or voice command away.

###

About Discovery

Discovery, Inc. (Nasdaq: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK) is a global leader in real life entertainment, serving a passionate audience of superfans around the world with content that inspires, informs and entertains. Discovery delivers over 8,000 hours of original programming each year and has category leadership across deeply loved content genres around the world. Available in 220 countries and territories and nearly 50 languages, Discovery is a platform innovator, reaching viewers on all screens, including TV Everywhere products such as the GO portfolio of apps; direct-to-consumer streaming services such as discovery+, Food Network Kitchen and MotorTrend OnDemand; digital-first and social content from Group Nine Media; a landmark natural history and factual content partnership with the BBC; and a strategic alliance with PGA TOUR to create the international home of golf. Discovery's portfolio of premium brands includes Discovery Channel, HGTV, Food Network, TLC, Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, MotorTrend, Animal Planet, Science Channel, and the forthcoming multi-platform JV with Chip and Joanna Gaines, Magnolia Network, as well as OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network in the U.S., Discovery Kids in Latin America, and Eurosport, the leading provider of locally relevant, premium sports and Home of the Olympic Games across Europe. For more information, please visit corporate.discovery.com and follow @DiscoveryIncTV across social platforms.

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Comcast launches Eros Now streaming app on X1 & Flex devices

BestMediaInfo Bureau

Distributed by Contify.com

345 words

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Best Media Info

ATBEMI

English

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Comcast announced it has launched the Eros Now app, an OTT South Asian entertainment platform owned by Eros STX Global Corporation, on its X1 and Flex platforms.

The service replaces the Eros Now SVOD product, offering Xfinity customers the ability to stream high-definition, ad-free titles including blockbuster Bollywood films, original comedy and drama series and movies, and Indian cinema classics.

Eros Now's catalogue with over 12,000 titles feature a breadth of South Asian language content in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and other regional languages.

"We are excited to bring Xfinity subscribers even more great international entertainment through our partnership with Eros Now. We are committed to expanding our offering of thousands of hours of premium South Asian movies, originals and music in high definition and multiple languages, as well as making it more easily accessible to our customers who can simply say 'Eros Now' into the Xfinity voice remote," said Keesha Boyd, Executive Director, Multicultural Video & Entertainment, Xfinity Consumer Services.

"We are excited to offer the most extensive repository of Indian movies and Original series to Comcast's X1 and Flex platforms subscribers. The US is the largest market for us outside India. With this partnership, Eros Now will further consolidate its position as a preferred platform for the consumption of Indian content," said Ali Hussein, Chief Executive Officer, Eros Now.

Xfinity customers can subscribe to the Eros Now app via their X1 TV Box or Xfinity Flex streaming TV Box.

Some highlights available to stream on Eros Now include Bollywood blockbusters like Bajirao Mastani, Devdas, Golmaal 3, Cocktail, Haathi Mere Saathi and more, original series and movies such as Flesh, Metro Park Season 1&2, Barun Rai And The House On The Cliff, Switchh, Halahal to name a few. In addition, consumers can also watch the upcoming show - Caves, a supernatural thriller that changes the lives of five best friends who embark on an adventure trip to a haunted cave.

Info@BestMediaInfo.com

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DEADLINE

Breaking News -

Starzplay Acquires HBO Max's 'Tokyo Vice'; DAZN Makes Key European Hire; Vice's Flight MH370 Doc Sells – Mip TV Briefs

Jesse Whittock

510 words

6 April 2022

Deadline

DLINE

English

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Starzplay Acquires HBO's Max's Ken Watanabe Crime Thriller Series 'Tokyo Vice'

HBO Max's upcoming crime thriller Tokyo Vice is headed to streaming service Starzplay in Europe. The Starz streamer has acquired rights in Austria, Germany, German-speaking Switzerland, Ireland and the U.K. and will debut with two episodes on Sunday May 15. The Endeavor **Content** series, penned by J.T. Rogers, is loosely based on American journalist Jake Adelstein's firsthand account of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police in the late 1990s. It stars Ansel Elgort as Adelstein and Hiroto Katagiri, a detective who guides Jake through the neon-soaked underbelly of the city.

DAZN Hires Ex-Sky M&A Exec Alice Mascia For Key European Role

Sports entertainment streamer DAZN has hired former Sky Deutschland exec Alice Mascia as CEO for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. She will join on 1 May to oversee the strategically-important region, where DAZN has rights to the German Bundesliga, UEFA Champions League, Italy's Serie A and Spain's La Liga. DAZN has made a series of management shifts in recent months, following Shay Segev's appointment as group CEO. Mascia's hire comes soon as Bosco Aranguren was tapped to lead Spain and Franco Bernabè and Stefano Azzi were appointed to oversee Italy.

History Boards Vice & Paramount+'s Doc 'MH370: The Last Flight'

Cable channel History is among three buyers of Paramount+ and SBS's upcoming three-part doc MH370: The Last Flight (working title). TV2 in Denmark and Viaplay (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland and pan-Baltic) have also snapped up the three-part series, which Vice Distribution launched at Mip TV this week. MH370: The Last Flight looks into the unexplained disappearance of the Malaysian Airlines flight in March 2014 through the eyes of victims' families. Paramount+ originally commissioned The Vice World News-produced doc along with Australian public broadcaster SBS.

Paramount's Pluto TV Adds A+E Networks UK Channels To Its FAST Streaming Service

Paramount's free streaming service Pluto TV has added a pair of A+E Networks UK channels. Inside Crime UK and Mystery TV are the latest channels to launch on the FAST service, which currently offers 1,000+ channels globally. Inside Crime will offer the likes of Crimes That Shook Britain and Britain's Darkest Taboos, while Mystery TV will include William Shatner's supernatural investigations series Weird or What.

Film & TV VFX House Misc Studios Launches In London

London's latest VFX house is Misc Studios, which post-production veterans Adam Luckwell and Michael Elson have launched this week. The company, based just north of post-production hub Soho, is already working on Amazon drama The Rigg, LucasFilm's Trapper Keeper and Disney+ European original Nautilus. Lucwell and Elson, who also run advertising post house Unit, plan to run Misc with progressive culture based around sustainability and well being.

Document DLINE00020220406ei460005v



Comcast develops city services with Smart Solutions business

170 words

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TELAM

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Comcast announced at the Smart Cities Connect Spring Conference & Expo in Columbus, Ohio, an expanded smart products business for cities, communities, and campuses called Comcast Smart Solutions. Building upon its existing offerings from Comcast Business, Xfinity Communities, and MachineQ, Comcast Smart Solutions will provide **connectivity** and consulting services in areas such as lighting, parking/curb, public works and waste management, storm water monitoring, asset tracking, video/light detection and ranging (LiDAR) analytics, building solutions and LED displays and digital kiosks.

Recently, Comcast Smart Solutions worked with the city of Philadelphia on a smart lighting pilot, installing streetlights with built-in optical and environmental sensors that can count pedestrians, vehicles, bicyclists, and parked vehicles, and measure temperature, relative humidity, and carbon monoxide. The Philadelphia project is one of several pilots and products that the Comcast Smart Solutions team deployed working in partnership with local communities where the company operates. Other projects include Arlington County, Virginia; College Park, Georgia; and Pleasanton and Moraga in California.

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News

Ryman inks landmark deal with NBCUniversal, Atairos

By Sandy Mazza and Matthew Leimkuehler Nashville Tennessean

783 words

6 April 2022

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English

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Nashville's music scene is expanding its global reach for country, roots and Americana fans, and the city's iconic entertainment brands are leading the effort.

A new ally in Opry Entertainment Group's ambitions for Circle, home of Opry Live, and other Nashville-centric entertainment brands, has pledged \$300 million to scale up the media network and its **content** providers.

Private-equity firm Atairos Group will take a 30% stake in OEG, a subsidiary of hotel-and-convention-center resort leader Ryman Hospitality Properties.

Opry Entertainment acts as the premier gatekeeper of Nashville's best-known trade – country music.

Together, the companies hope to leverage OEG to be a global powerhouse as "the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content," according to a joint statement.

The deal includes investment from NBCUniversal that could create future opportunities with other Comcast businesses.

Circle's platform will expand to maneuver in the hyper-competitive streaming landscape where brand giants such as Disney+, HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video – which hosted the ACM Awards last month – and Netflix continuously push to court subscribers with big-budget programming.

"This is a big deal for the company and a big deal for the city of Nashville," Ryman CEO Colin Reed said. "Our philosophy is to put these businesses in markets where the country-lifestyle consumer resides or visits. Ireland is a massive market for country music."

OEG worth \$1.5 billion

Atairos's partnership brings with it another meaningful landmark for the growing enterprise – OEG's first independent market valuation.

The firm signed onto the long-term partnership with Ryman Hospitality Properties after determining its entertainment properties are valued at between \$1.4 billion and \$1.5 billion.

The valuation is based on projected total earnings this year of \$80-88 million, multiplied by up to 18 times, according to company documents.

Assets include the 96-year-old Grand Ole Opry, 130-year-old Ryman Auditorium, WSM 650 AM radio station, media network Circle and Blake Shelton's Ole Red country-bar brand in Nashville, Orlando and Gatlinburg. Coming soon: A location in Las Vegas.

"We are pleased with the valuation," Reed said. "But, more importantly, we are pleased to have culturally compatible strategic partners in Atairos and NBCUniversal who will help us realize our long-term goal of reaching more country music fans than ever before."

Ryman is already investing in the subsidiary with the under-construction Ole Red Las Vegas and a pending \$27 million deal to buy Block 21, Austin's massive music-themed complex, anchored by "Austin City Limits" performance home Moody Theater.

The additions could add a bevy of new content opportunities.

'Durability demonstrated'

Ryman's hotel and resort arm dominates its business model, though its media and entertainment branch is growing. Meanwhile, Ryman's hospitality assets continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic's hit to business travel.

RHP is organized as a real-estate investment trust, a structure with low taxes that requires profits be paid to shareholders as dividends.

"If our business continues to recover the way we think it will, we anticipate being a dividend-paying company again in 2023," Reed said. "The hotel business is rapidly recovering. Convention traffic is improving rapidly."

If media and entertainment division OEG also continues to grow, it could be spun into a fully separate vehicle, he added.

There are more than 120 million U.S. consumers predisposed to country-music brands and entertainment experiences, according to Country Music Association's market research. That could expand exponentially with global exposure, officials said.

"If you look at what's happened to the live-entertainment business through the pandemic," RHP CFO Mark Fioravanti said. "Investors are ascribing higher values because of the durability demonstrated for live entertainment."

Sandy Mazza can be reached via email at smazza@tennessean.com, by calling 615-726-5962, or on Twitter @SandyMazza.

The deal by the numbers:

30% Atairos Group stake in Opry Entertainment Group

70% of OEG will remain with Ryman Hospitality Properties

\$1.5 billion valuation of Opry Entertainment Group

\$300 million capital infusion from Atairos Group

\$80-88 million anticipated OEG profit this year

21% increase in country-music listeners outside U.S. since 2015

The new front entrance of the Ryman Auditorium is part of a \$14 million improvement project that includes a new state-of-the-art daytime tour attraction, Cafe Lula, enhanced food and beverage services throughout the building, a new box office with interior and exterior windows, additional bathrooms, larger lobbies and an expanded retail area. | Photos by Shelley Mays/The Tennessean

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Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal M&A Call - Final

6,821 words

5 April 2022

VIQ FD Disclosure

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English

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Presentation

OPERATOR: Welcome to Ryman Hospitality Properties Investor Call. Hosting the call today from Ryman Hospitality Properties are Mr. Colin Reed, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer; Mr. Mark Fioravanti, President; Ms. Jennifer Hutcheson, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Scott Bailey, President, Opry Entertainment Group; and Todd Siefert, SVP, Corporate Finance and Treasurer.

This call will be available for digital replay. The number is (800) 938-0996 with no conference ID required. (Operator Instructions)

It is now my pleasure to turn the floor over to Mr. Mark Fioravanti. Sir, you may begin.

MARK FIORAVANTI, PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR, RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES, INC.: Good morning. Thank you for joining us today. This call may contain forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Any statements we make today that are not statements of historical facts may be deemed to be forward-looking statements. Example of these statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the pending acquisition of the Block 21 mixed-use project in Austin, Texas; the proposed investment by Atairos Group, Inc. and its affiliates in our Opry Entertainment business and the potential benefits of such transactions.

These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the statements made today. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, any event or change in circumstances that could delay the closing of the Block 21 transaction or the Atairos transaction or that could result in the termination of the Block 21 transaction or the Atairos transaction prior to closing or the occurrence of any other event which could adversely impact our business, including the outbreak of a new variant of COVID-19 virus or a downturn in the U.S. economy generally. Other risks and uncertainties that could cause results to differ are described in filings made from time to time by us with the Securities and Exchange Commission and include the risk factors described in our annual report on Form 10-K for the year-ended December 31, 2021 and subsequent filings. Except as required by law, we will not update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or any other reason.

We may also discuss non-GAAP financial measures today. We reconcile any such non-GAAP measure to the most comparable GAAP measure in the investor presentation we issued in connection with today's call.

I'll now turn the call over to Colin.

COLIN V. REED, CHAIRMAN & CEO, RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES, INC.: Thanks, Mark. These safe harbors get longer. Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us.

Today is the beginning of the next chapter in the life of Ryman Hospitality and, particularly, Opry Entertainment business. Over the last several years, we've spent a lot of time exploring ways in which we can unlock value in our entertainment business, but at the same time demonstrate to you, our shareholders, that this business that we know as OEG is indeed very valuable.

Notwithstanding the impact of COVID on our company, last year, many entities, including multiple SPAC originators, contacted us to suggest that we partner with them or, in some cases, sell this business outright to them. I can tell you firsthand that this has been an enormously complex set of challenges that we've had to navigate, but I believe we've arrived at a very satisfactory outcome.

Since 2013, being a REIT has clearly served its purpose and allow us to create a lot of value for our shareholders, but a REIT structure is not ideal for our entertainment business. We hold OEG in a taxable REIT subsidiary and the increasing value and profitability that these businesses generate don't contribute to the qualifying assets and income for our REIT compliance tests. This creates some challenges for us as we look to continue to grow this business and unlock its value.

So early in the second quarter of last year, we appointed Morgan Stanley to help us think through the optimal structure and to help evaluate which strategic partner would bring the most muscle to help us turbocharge the growth of our entertainment business.

In the third and fourth quarter of last year, we spent time in discussions with about 10 different organizations who had expressed serious interest in partnering with us. During every discussion we had, we stressed that there were very, very, very important points that we were looking for. Number one, a partner who cares as much about this business as we do, someone who is committed to preserving and protecting the cultural integrity of the magnificent assets under our care. Two, a partner who brings expertise and resources to the table, that will help us position our business with a global audience and form new relationships with customers. Three, a partner who shared our vision for how our company could become a global leader in the country lifestyle and live entertainment space. And four, a partner who was prepared to work with us and accommodate our needs, particularly as it relates to our REIT structure and our desire to control this business for the foreseeable future given our belief around growth and long-term value creation.

As a consequence of all of this, we found a partner that we believe checks every box, and we are excited to announce that Atairos, an investment firm whose capital comes from NBCUniversal, as well as NBCUniversal itself in a direct investment role, will be our partners prospectively.

Now when you step back and observe what Atairos and NBCUniversal brings to the table, it's quite impressive. Patient capital, deep industry expertise, a vast network of resources, capabilities and relationships highly relevant to the Opry family as well as an international expertise. This is very exciting.

The structure of our partnership, whereby Atairos and NBCUniversal will initially acquire 30% of the Opry Entertainment's group equity for a combined sum of \$293 million, \$15 million of which comes directly from NBC, is also the ideal outcome for our shareholders.

The agreed upon valuation of our business at a minimum of \$1.4 billion, inclusive of Block 21 assets to be acquired, is far above the average of what most analysts who write about our stock have ascribed to it, which validates what we have long believed and puts a public mark on these assets. And that value can grow by an additional \$100 million, implying an additional \$30 million of proceeds to Ryman should Opry Entertainment Group achieve certain targets. This valuation range represents a multiple of 19 to 20x on 2019's pro forma adjusted EBITDA of \$74 million, and this assumes Opry and Block 21 have been combined for this year.

Alternatively, it represents a 17 to 18 multiple, at the midpoint of our expectations, for the combined entities in 2022's pro forma adjusted EBITDA of \$84 million.

For comparison, our shares this year to date have traded right about 17x on analyst views of our consolidated 2022 EBITDA. But of course, 2022 is not a full COVID-recovered run rate for our hotel business, so with so many of our expansions and investments still maturing and the impact of Omicron weighing on the first half of this year.

So truly, this transaction represents an attractive valuation for our company compared to where RHP as a whole is currently valued by the market on a normalized earnings basis.

Furthermore, by retaining 70% of the business at this time, our shareholders will participate meaningfully in the value creation that we, Atairos and NBCUniversal envision in the years ahead.

And the capital that we will raise from this investment will allow Ryman to incrementally delever our balance sheet, accelerating our return to pre-pandemic levels.

Separately, the new Opry Entertainment Group entity will take on its own direct indebtedness in the form of a fully underwritten \$300 million Term Loan B and a revolving credit facility with a \$50 million -- with \$50 million of capacity. After fees and expenses, the proceeds of this term loan, along with the Atairos' funds, will be applied to pay down Ryman's \$300 million Term Loan A and the remaining -- and the remainder to outstanding balances on our revolving credit facility, resulting in a net reduction of about half-turn in leverage on the consolidated RHP.

Finally, our artists, employees, sponsors and other community stakeholders, this structure ensures that the will continue to contribute to the stewardship of these iconic venues, with no abrupt changes or disruptions as we bring Atairos into the fold. So it's truly a win-win all around for everyone involved in this transaction.

Now I'm sure you'll have plenty of questions about what we and Atairos may have in our strategic plan for the future. We'll do our best to address these for you today, though it's too early to talk in terms of specific plans and decisions as we're currently focused on closing and integrating Block 21 and then closing this transaction.

Nevertheless, there are some broad strategic categories in which we can give you a taste. These include exploring new distribution channels and methods; developing new forms and sources of content and programming; applying more technology across all facets of the business, both online and in and around the venue experience; and finally, leveraging our combined financial and strategic resources to pursue both organic unit growth and further acquisitions, development or partnerships.

From this point, the real fun and interesting work begins as we pursue these and other opportunities together now with Atairos with a unified vision of establishing the Opry Entertainment Group as a leading player in the country lifestyle and live entertainment content.

Last but not least, I want to thank my partners here at the company, particularly Mark and Scott Lynn, our General Counsel, and the rest of the management team, who have really worked so hard on these negotiations and the structuring of this pretty complicated transaction. They've done a world-class job, very proud of the work they've done.

And so now what we'd like to do, Gretchen, I think, is go directly to questions. I'm sure there are quite a few. So let's open the call up for questions.

Questions and Answers

OPERATOR: (Operator Instructions) And we'll take our first question from Dori Kesten from Wells Fargo.

DORI LYNN KESTEN, SENIOR ANALYST, WELLS FARGO SECURITIES, LLC, RESEARCH DIVISION: And congratulations on the announcement. Can you give us some details around your partners' right to acquire up to 49% of OEG?

COLIN V. REED: Yes. Mark, do you want to take those?

MARK FIORAVANTI: Sure. Dori, they do have an incremental purchase right. And that purchase right in over 3 years, 2023, 2024 and 2025. And it is -- it's based on a formula value subject to a floor, and it's capped. The amount is capped each year in association with our ability to sell down due to our REIT constraints, specifically the 75% gross income test.

DORI LYNN KESTEN: Okay. And I guess I was just wondering, was the delay in the closing of Block 21 in any way related to this? Or is it just a slow process with the servicer as it was last time?

MARK FIORAVANTI: No. It's just been a slow and opaque process with the CMBS servicer, particularly because it's in special servicing coming out COVID. So it has just taken longer than we certainly anticipated. But we are, I would say, rounding third and headed home, we've gotten servicer approval at this point and just finalizing the documentation. So ...

COLIN V. REED: We are hopeful, what, you think at the end of the month, Mark?

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes. We've extended our agreement with (inaudible) at the end of May.

COLIN V. REED: Yes, but we hope to get it done before then -- yes.

DORI LYNN KESTEN: Yes. So the midpoint of OEG's net debt-to-EBITDA looks like around 5.5x on 2022 estimates. But what do you think the appropriate long-term leverage is for this business?

MARK FIORAVANTI: We're targeting 4.5%.

COLIN V. REED: Yes, it's no different to the way we think about Ryman. The good news is we have a partner that has a lot of capital, and we have a partner that has as higher expectations for growth as we do. And so we will navigate leverage as we deploy more and more capital into this business.

OPERATOR: Our next question comes from Chris Woronka from Deutsche Bank.

CHRIS JON WORONKA, RESEARCH ANALYST, DEUTSCHE BANK AG, RESEARCH DIVISION: Congratulations on getting this across the finish line. First question was kind of on focus of the Opry Entertainment business now that you've got this done. Because I know historically, right, it's been kind of centered around Nashville and then kind of expanding into the Ole Red locations. So does having a partner like this kind of get you more of a national and broader focus beyond just some of the traditional venues that you've operated?

COLIN V. REED: You -- Chris, Colin. I'll give this a go and then I'll let my, let the team here weigh in on this.

This is a very, very -- the way you've described it, I suppose, is somewhat accurate. But the way we think about it is the customer that we are trying to build the relationship with lives all across this country and also lives in other countries across the world.

Scott Bailey, our President, has talked about -- President of OEG has talked about through the pandemic, we're streaming to upwards of 100 countries every week. The Opry goes out to -- through streaming to approximately 100 countries.

So the thing that excites me about this relationship, hitching our wagon to an organization that has the tentacles that this organization has is that it will, in our opinion, if we do this right, we'll speed up the communication process with these consumers, that they're all across this nation and all across the planet. And that's what we're ultimately focused on.

The work that we've been doing recently with Ole Red, Block 21 in Austin, Texas is essentially putting facilities in markets that we know that this consumer either visits or lives in. Las Vegas will be a hell of a deal for us because there probably is 20 million country lifestyle consumers out of the 45 million that frequent Las Vegas every year. It will give us this ability to touch these consumers.

The thing with this organization with Atairos and their affiliation with NBCUniversal will allow us to penetrate these customers far more so and speed up this relationship building, bringing the artist community into the lives of these consumers wherever they live. That's the thing that excites us about this deal.

And by the way, we believe -- I believe this passionately, that if we do this right and we build these relationships with these customers, it is also going to increase the amount of consumers that frequent the city of Nashville and frequent the city of Austin, Texas. So this is not just a deal that benefits our shareholders, Atairos, NBCUniversal. I think it's going to have a profound impact on the communities in which we do business.

CHRIS JON WORONKA: Yes, Colin, that's really good perspective. And then I guess the second, the follow-up, the other thing this does, right, is kind of it delevers your overall business, but especially the hospitality business. So how do we -- I know we're talking more about this deal today. But how do you frame it in the context of this opening up more doors for you, do things on the hotel side as well.

COLIN V. REED: Yes. I'll -- I don't want to be doing all the talking here, I've got a world-class team sitting around this table. But let me answer this question, and then I'll start opening to our colleagues.

Look, we're not going to get into the detail, but our business is rapidly recovering. Our business is -- we're very excited about our hotel business and the way it is recovering and the way the consumer is reacting to these world-class assets of ours.

We have very strong views about ways we can grow these assets further, make them even more, the lawyers hate me using this word, dominant in the markets in which they do business in. We know SoundWaves has really done a world-class job through COVID and has had enormous positive impact on Opry land through COVID. And so we have aspirations to maybe do more SoundWaves-type facilities.

So we're very excited about our hotel business. All this does is bring more capital in line here.

And the other part of it is downstream, when we identify the next Block 21 that we want to do, the next \$250 million, next \$300 million, it won't be exclusively our capital. We have now a partner with very deep pockets that wants to deploy capital and grow this business.

So I think this deal is going to be not only good for our entertainment business, not only good for the communities, not only good for the artists, but it's going to allow us to probably accelerate the growth of our hotel business as well.

Anyone else want to lay on that one?

MARK FIORAVANTI: Anything else, Chris?

COLIN V. REED: He's gone.

OPERATOR: Our next question come from Rose Smedes from Citi.

SMEDES ROSE, RESEARCH ANALYST, CITIGROUP INC. EXCHANGE RESEARCH: It's Smedes. I was just wondering if you could talk a little bit about some of the metrics you need to achieve to get the additional \$30 million investment?

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes. It's simply profitability measures in '23 and '24 that are associated with the long-range plan that was used in the valuation work of the deal. So we have an LRP. And if we execute against that LRP in '23 or '24, then it would trigger that additional value.

COLIN V. REED: The practical part of it is that because of the capital that we were in the process of deploying, building an Ole Red at the airport, building here in Nashville, building an Ole Red in Las Vegas, doing all the things that we want to do at Block 21, in our discussions with our partners, it was -- these businesses are going to ramp up. And so we came to an agreement that the value of the business would be greater if the projects that we have identified come to fruition in a way we think they will. That's how this thing is, we structured this way.

SMEDES ROSE: Okay. And then I just wanted to ask, Colin, as OEG now, I mean, opportunities will accelerate investment and you will be spending more time there. So is it fair to say that Mark will be taking on more responsibility in terms of the hotel side of the business? Or how should we just think about how everyone kind of spending the bulk of their time?

COLIN V. REED: Yes, I read your report this morning with the headline, is this the precursor to succession? And I think you've -- when we were together at the -- great conference down in Fort Lauderdale, we touched on this subject, and I think I made the comment that we've been working on succession in this company for the last decade, and that's just the way good Boards operate. And so as I look around this room, these are folks that we have penciled in to carry the torch of this company for the long term.

And so I have, over the last 20 years, spent quite a bit of my time building a relationship with many of the folks that we deal with on the entertainment side, the artists. Yesterday, I spent a good part of my time talking directly to world-class artists directly, not just their management teams, about this.

So I feel like the opportunity for growth in the entertainment business, the net is going to be much wider than the -- what I would call the opportunity for growth in the hotel business. I don't -- you're not going to see us in the hotel business go by 5, 6, 7, 300-room hotels at \$1 million a key in places like Key West, we're not going to go do that. We're going to continue to work on the strategy that we have been very, very clear about in our hotel business for the last decade.

And that's -- our hotel strategy growth I think is far simpler but will be good from a growth perspective, far simpler, than the complex set of issues that we have to navigate on the entertainment side because I think the net on the entertainment side is much wider. How we deal with Circle, how we deal with more Theaters, more Ole Reds, how we build out the whole digital side of this business.

And so I suspect in my 8 to 10 hours a day, I suspect I'll be engage more so in the entertainment side. But we've got a really good team of people that run this business. And I expect and the company expects, the Board expects the strategy to sort of come from the bowels of our entertainment business.

So I know I'm rambling here a bit, but I think the growth opportunities for our company over the next 12 to 24 months are enormous. Mark and I will be spending our time where we identify growth as an opportunity.

MICHAEL JASON BILERMAN, MD, HEAD OF THE US REAL ESTATE & LODGING RESEARCH AND SENIOR REAL ESTATE ANALYST, CITIGROUP INC., RESEARCH DIVISION: Colin, It's Michael Bilerman, here with Smedes. I just had a question. As you talked a little bit about at the outset of settling then on this partnership and finding a partner who would take the care and be committed and have the expertise, the resources, have the globality, but you talked about obviously accommodating your needs as a REIT, both from a control perspective, that you also want to maintain control of this business but dealing with a lot of the income and asset tests.

As you think about the value, and it sounded like there were some partners or buyers that wanted to buy this thing outright, how did those values compare to the 1.4 or 1.5 of an earn-out and contingency as to say a premia today for it?

COLIN V. REED: No, no, look, so I'm going to give you -- I can -- I'll give you a one-liner answer. And that is these values -- the ones that took it seriously, the values were all in the same ZIP code, period, end of the story.

But -- but this wasn't just about the value of the business. It's -- who's got the muscle and the strategic horsepower that can drive this, that can drive this business forward with us. It is also -- I guarantee you, the valuation was sort of my third, fourth on the list of things we wanted to test. Because this business of ours, it relies, Smedes, relies on the relationship that it has built over 96 years with the members of the -- of the music industry.

And so if somebody came in here and said, "Hey, the number is 1.6 and that organization could potentially blow up that relationship because they don't give a" -- I was going to use a little bit of profanity.

MICHAEL JASON BILERMAN: I know where you were going with it.

COLIN V. REED: They don't give a damn about it. We're not going to do that in this community. We're not going to do that.

So this was a very complicated series of interviews that we did with all of these organizations. And the folks from Atairos and NBCUniversal, I think, convinced us, the management team, and convinced our Board that when you add all these things up, when you look at their capabilities, you look at the value, and you look at just the integrity of these people, this was by far the best dance partner for us.

MICHAEL JASON BILERMAN: Yes, I know it sounds like they bring a lot to the table. And the last question we had was just, you talked a little bit about their right to move up to that 49% level and that there's a floor on valuation and a methodology to calculate that value. Does Ryman have any repurchase rights on the stake that you're selling? And does that have any calculations or floors with that? What are your ability to buy it back effectively? I know you got into a marriage, and I have been talking about divorce, but I was just wondering what's the reciprocal in the event it doesn't turn out the way you wanted it to.

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes, we don't -- I mean, we don't have a specific buyback right? The way that the deal is structured, currently, we've retained the ability to cause a liquidity event, whether that's an IPO, a spin, a sale, et cetera. And in different circumstances, we would have the ability, if we would determine not to undertake a liquidity event, to buy them out at a return and a prenegotiated return. But we don't have specific rights that in a year, we determined, this isn't working, that we can buy them out at a specific price.

COLIN V. REED: No, but it would have to sit down. That's exactly right. But yes, I -- since I've lived in this country for 34 years, 35 years now, I've been fortunate enough to be involved in many different deals working with Mike Rose's, Chairman of Holiday Corp. And I've got to tell you, this is one of the more complicated deals. But we -- and this deal wasn't done over some dinner. This took hours and hours and hours of discussion.

And I honestly go into this feeling that the folks on the other side, world-class quality people. And my view is just like our relationship with our friends at Gray Television. And I feel like that if we get to a point where there is a difference of opinion, a dispute, I feel like we'll be able to resolve those issues. And in the event that we feel like the marriage shouldn't go forward, I feel like that we'll be able to deal with this in a way that's acceptable to our shareholders. So that was my answer.

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes, the only thing I would add is that it was important to us that they have real equity risk and not -- just not be structured as a preferred instrument where they have preferred exits or guaranteed returns.

And keep in mind that we are the majority shareholder, we will control the Board. And while they have, including in terms of major decisions, we continue to control the liquidity events and ultimately manage the business.

OPERATOR: Next question comes from Shaun Kelley from Bank of America.

SHAUN CLISBY KELLEY, MD IN AMERICAS EQUITY RESEARCH & RESEARCH ANALYST, BOFA SECURITIES, RESEARCH DIVISION: Colin, maybe just to stick with the structuring question because we're kind of on that topic. Just to dig a little deeper, is there anything in the process or in your ownership here, be it tax basis or whatnot, that actually precludes or makes it penalizing to do sort of an outright acquisition here when we think about structuring minority investment going up to 49%? Was there -- I would think there's probably a reason that you didn't want to maybe trigger that change of control. What is that? Or what governing factors might have been incorporated into your thought process?

COLIN V. REED: Well, I mean, first and foremost -- first and foremost, the fact that we're a real estate investment trust and this is -- these are nonqualifying assets makes it -- there are some things that we can do and some things we can't do. And one of the things we can't do is we can't go and sell 75% or 100% of this business for the value that we think it's worth today. We can't do that. It blows the REIT up. And that -- the tax consequences of that are things that we don't want to talk about or think about. It is problematic.

And so the way we've structured this with a partner like Atairos, we're comfortable -- we're comfortable at some point if they own 49%, we want to make sure that as long as this business is under our umbrella, that we're doing -- we're doing all the right things to grow this business in a way that maintains the relationship we have with the music industry.

So we've agreed to allow them to buy up to a maximum of 49%. We've also agreed downstream, Mark, you may want to touch on this, we've agreed in year 4, year 5 that they can call for an IPO of this business. And at some point, we will separate the business. We've talked about this. I don't know for -- I don't know, 3, 5 years now.

So we feel like this structure gives us all the wiggle room we need to do this in a way that allows us to navigate the complexities of this REIT structure.

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes. To Colin's point, the REIT structure does create some liquidity constraints, both for us as well as our partner. And so as Colin mentioned, in the event of a sale or an IPO, we have provided them with certain return guarantees because of the potential for liquidity impact due to our REIT compliance. If we would do a spin, then they don't have those return guarantees because the liquidity issue of the REIT goes away.

And it's also, as Colin mentioned, they do have, after year 4, the right to request an IPO and then we have the ability to execute against that. Or again, they can put it to us at a -- put their investment back to us at a specified return.

And the only other thing I would mention is that we talked about their ability to purchase options in '23, '24 and '25. If they execute that purchase option, then those minimum return and put rights go away.

COLIN V. REED: Yes, that's right.

SHAUN CLISBY KELLEY: Just a little deeper. And then my other question is just as we think about the financial run rate here, I think you provided some incremental information here. So we think about the \$80 million to \$88 million for 2022. Obviously, super healthy growth over pre-COVID levels. So can you just help us think about what you're seeing on the organic growth piece of the business? And then there are some capital needs, I think, here as you build out Ole Red in particular, but probably some other features in the business. So you can obviously think about capital needs for '22 and '23. So first one was organic growth and the second one will be some of the capital needs going forward.

COLIN V. REED: Do you want to tackle...

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes. I mean there is -- there has been and there continues to be strong organic growth in the business. We have made considerable investments both pre and during COVID in things like yield management, our ticketing -- new ticketing systems and how we manage tickets in our venues, our food and beverage offerings that help drive per caps. We've also improved our -- if you look at our run rate of events over time, we've increased utilization at our existing assets. You obviously have the continued ramp-up in Orlando, Ole Red opened in Orlando during the pandemic. And so that business, as that market comes back and conventioners come back to that market, we'll see that business ramp.

And then as Colin mentioned, we have -- we've got Las Vegas and BNA under construction. And that really speaks to capital. We do have those 2 projects that are under development.

But the greatest capital need in this business, Shaun, is -- will be Block 21 in that closing, both the equity check and then the improvements that we have planned there for the venue as well as the hotel.

COLIN V. REED: The other part of all of this, of course, is when you look at the amount of hotel rooms that have been built or are under construction in this market over the last couple of years, what is going on right now, you look at that, [W] that just has traded for \$950,000 a key, we -- everyone expects this market here in Nashville just to continue to see more and more visitors. And I think that will happen. And that, of course, will be good for our business as well.

OPERATOR: Our next question comes from Jay Kornreich from SMBC Nikko.

JAY BRADLEY KORNREICH, RESEARCH ANALYST, SMBC NIKKO SECURITIES AMERICA, INC., RESEARCH DIVISION: I guess as you've been continuously investing into this entertainment platform over the years and it's performed quite well, from a timing perspective, what made you interested in selling a stake at this point in the platform's growth instead of continue to grow before looking in for an equity partner?

COLIN V. REED: So there was many reasons, many reasons. Number one, we've just gone through COVID. And whether we like it or not, 2020 probably cost us \$600 million, \$700 million with the shutting of all of our businesses. And our balance sheet went out of whack, like everybody else in the hospitality business. We have a responsibility to deal with that. So that's number one.

Number two, we have been inundated with every -- every investment banker that has been dealing with SPACs coming to us and saying, "Hey, this is a beautiful business to SPAC." We just didn't like the idea we're giving away 10% of the business to somebody that just brings money and no real expertise.

We've also had strategics come at us. And we've witnessed what has gone on in just the investment community's appetite for live music businesses. If you look at the multiple expansion that Live Nation has gone through over the course of the last 12 to 24 months through COVID, that there's been a real

appreciation for what these folks do. And that also has sort of shone a light on our business. So we felt that we're doing this at a reasonably good time for many different reasons.

But at the end of the day, you just heard from half a dozen of the sell-side analysts that have asked questions on this call this morning and not one of these folks had evaluation on this business anywhere like this. And so it was the confluence of all of these things that -- and frankly, we've been working on this issue for 12 months. Because like it or not, if this business continues to grow, it could have caused a structural problem. If it continues to grow in the form it was in, it could have caused a structural problem within the REIT at some point in time. We'll have to deal with it at some point.

So we decided that this was a really good time for the reasons I've just articulated. And quite candidly, I'm very pleased with the valuation. I'm very pleased with the partner that we've selected. And I think we can grow the living daylights out of this business and create a lot of value.

JAY BRADLEY KORNREICH: Yes, that makes a lot of sense and a great perspective. And I guess just a follow-up on just that last comment. As you've been expressing commitment to the entertainment business and continuing to grow it, I guess on the flip side is, as Atairos can increase its ownership to 49%, I guess does this transaction really demonstrate maybe more of a shift to the hospitality business and more pure-play strategy? Or do you really intend to keep a historical level of focus on the entertainment business going forward?

COLIN V. REED: We're -- no change on the entertainment business. We are going to continue to apply the focus that we've applied over the last few years as we've grown this baby. And we're going to continue to apply that same degree of focus prospectively.

But I think with a partner now like Atairos/NBCUniversal, the opportunity for growth becomes a little wider and a little more exciting.

MARK FIORAVANTI: Yes. The only thing I would add to that is that a pure-play strategy has always been our strategy. I think we've articulated since we converted to a REIT that ultimately we thought that the opportunity here to maximize value for shareholders was to have 2 separate businesses, 1 being entertainment and 1 being the hospitality REIT. And we're still on that path. This is just the next chapter as we move towards that as an ultimate.

COLIN V. REED: Yes. And we've been very clear. Historically, we've said one of the things -- one of the attributes of this business, well, several, that we need to demonstrate, number one, that it has scale. It is a business that could generate \$100 million of EBITDA. It's got the scale to stand on its own 2 feet.

And it's got a growth curve, it's got a growth curve that is really exciting to the investment community. And we believe doing what we've done, this interim step just accelerates those 2, we believe, important features that we're going to need in order to allow this business to stand on its own 2 feet.

Thanks, buddy. All right. So I think -- do we have...

TODD SIEFERT, SVP CORPORATE FINANCE & TREASURER, RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES, INC.: See if anybody has anymore questions.

COLIN V. REED: We'll see if there's any more questions and -- question. Gretchen, if not, we'll terminate the call.

OPERATOR: No more questions at this time.

COLIN V. REED: Excellent. All right. Well, thank you, everyone, and appreciate your time this morning and upward and onward. Thank you very much indeed.

OPERATOR: This does conclude today's program. Thank you for your participation. You may disconnect at this time. Have a great day.

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Atairos, NBCUniversal Join Grand Ole Opry

by Chris Nolter

235 words

5 April 2022

The Deal

DEALNEW

English

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Atairos Group Inc. and Comcast Corp.'s (CMSA) NBCUniversal Inc. are purchasing a 30% stake in the parent of the Grand Ole Opry from Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc. (RHP), the parties said April 4.

The deal values Opry Entertainment Group, which includes assets including the iconic country music venue, at about \$1.42 billion. Atairos, the private equity firm founded by former Comcast CEO Michael J. Angelakis, could make an additional \$30 million **investment** that would push the valuation to about \$1.52 billion.

Ryman said it received unsolicited interest in Opry in June 2021. "In the third and fourth quarter of last year, we spent time in discussions with about 10 different organizations who had expressed serious interest in partnering with us," chairman and CEO Colin Reed told investors during a Tuesday investor call.

J.P. Morgan Chase Bank NA and Morgan Stanley Senior Funding Inc. are providing financing for the deal.

Morgan Stanley is Ryman's financial adviser. A Bass, Berry & Sims plc led by F. Mitchell Walker, Jr., Lori B. Morgan and Eric J. Knox are Ryman's legal counsel while Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP attorneys David Polster Trevor Allen provide tax advice.

Moelis & Co. LLC bankers Navid Mahmoodzadegan, Augusto Sasso, Alex Rubin, Michael Chan, Matthew Janukowicz and Michael Gamache are Atairos' financial adviser, with William Chudd of Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP providing legal counsel.

Document DEALNEW020220413ei4500002

Peacock Builds Out Exec Team With CMO, Programming Hires From Netflix and Hulu

Mollie Cahillane

405 words

5 April 2022

Adweek

ADWE

English

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NBCUniversal is building out Peacock's executive leadership team with the help from its rival streamers, naming a chief marketing officer and evp of programming, both newly established roles at the **platform**.

Top line

The company tapped Shannon Willett as Peacock's first chief marketing officer, and Brian Henderson as evp, programming. Both will report to Peacock president Kelly Campbell, who [arrived from Hulu last October](#).

Between the lines

Willett will oversee all global marketing for Peacock, and most recently served as Netflix's vp of global marketing, strategy and operations.

Henderson will lead Peacock's global content strategy and work with content leaders across the company to drive acquisition, usage and retention. He comes over from Hulu, where he held the role of svp, SVOD content, programming and partnerships.

"We are thrilled to welcome Shannon and Brian, two exceptional leaders that will play vital roles in making Peacock a must-have streaming service and round out our executive leadership team," said Campbell in a statement. "Shannon is a fantastic strategic marketer with an incredible portfolio of brand-defining, best-in-class global campaigns, and her expertise will be critical to Peacock's next phase of growth. And as a pioneer in the evolution of streaming content, Brian will be invaluable as we continue to expand our content offering and establish Peacock as the top general entertainment streaming service in the market."

Bottom line

The hires come as NBCUniversal [shifts its focus for Peacock](#), working now to drive subscribers to its paid premium tiers rather than the streamer's free tier.

Peacock's paid Premium tiers cost [either \\$5 a month or \\$10 a month](#) for the ad-free offering, and according to the company, the "vast majority" of subscribers are opting for the ad-supported premium tier.

Peacock last reported 24.5 million monthly active accounts, and Comcast CEO Brian Roberts said that Peacock has over 9 million paid subscribers, with an additional 7 million coming from bundles with the company's Xfinity service and other distributors such as Cox.

<section class="section section--teaser section--teaser_partners section--teaser_partners--horizontal px-0 py-4">

NBCUniversal Ends Hulu Content Sharing Deal, Shows Will Be Exclusive to Peacock

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Document ADWE000020220406ei4500004



BRIEF-Comcast Launches Eros Now Streaming App On X1 And Flex Devices

43 words

5 April 2022

21:42

Reuters News

LBA

English

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April 5 (Reuters) - Eros STX Global Corp:

* COMCAST LAUNCHES EROS NOW STREAMING APP ON X1 AND FLEX DEVICES Source text for Eikon: Further company coverage:

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Comcast Launches Eros Now Streaming App on X1 and Flex **Devices**

754 words

5 April 2022

21:17

Business Wire

BWR

English

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Comcast customers now have access to thousands of topflight Indian entertainment **content** from Eros Now

MUMBAI, India--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 05, 2022--

Comcast launches Eros Now app, a leading over-the-top (OTT) South Asian entertainment platform owned by Eros STX Global Corporation (NYSE: ESGC), on its X1 and Flex platforms.

The service replaces the Eros Now SVOD product, offering Xfinity customers the ability to stream high-definition, ad-free titles including Blockbuster Bollywood films, Original comedy and drama series and movies, and Indian cinema classics. Eros Now's robust catalog, with over 12,000 titles, feature a breadth of South Asian language content in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and other regional languages.

"We are excited to bring Xfinity subscribers even more great international entertainment through our partnership with Eros Now. We are committed to expanding our offering of thousands of hours of premium South Asian movies, originals and music in high-definition and multiple languages, as well as making it more easily accessible to our customers who can simply say 'Eros Now' into the Xfinity voice remote," said Keesha Boyd, Executive Director, Multicultural Video & Entertainment, Xfinity Consumer Services.

"We are excited to offer the most extensive repository of Indian movies and Original series to Comcast's X1 and Flex platforms subscribers. The US is the largest market for us outside India. With this partnership, Eros Now will further consolidate its position as a preferred platform for the consumption of Indian content," said Ali Hussein, Chief Executive Officer, Eros Now.

Xfinity customers can subscribe to the Eros Now app via their X1 TV Box or Xfinity Flex streaming TV Box, now available for only \$4.99/month, following the steps included [HERE](#).

Some of the highlights available to stream on Eros Now this spring include Bollywood blockbusters, like Bajirao Mastani, Devdas, Golmaal 3, Cocktail, Haathi Mere Saathi, and original series and movies such as Flesh, Metro Park (seasons 1 and 2), Barun Rai and the House on the Cliff, Switchh, Halahal, amongst others. In addition, consumers can also watch the upcoming show - Caves, a supernatural thriller that changes the lives of five best friends who embark on an adventure trip to a haunted cave.

About Eros Now

Eros Now, a division of Eros STX Global Corporation, is the world's leading Indian OTT platform with over 19 million premium paid subscribers, 20.9 million base paid subscribers and 224 million registered users from over 150 countries across the world, as of March 31, 2021. It offers endless entertainment hosting one of the largest movie libraries (over 12,000 digital titles), as well as premium original episodic series, music videos, unmatched in quantity and quality. Eros Now also has a deep library of short-form content, totaling over 4,400 short-form videos including trailers and original short exclusive interviews. To date Eros Now has successfully premiered over 180 films in 13 languages including Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Telugu, Punjabi and more. Eros Now was named as the 'Best OTT Platform of the Year 2019' at British Asian Media Awards. The platform has also won awards for original content and marketing at the SCREENXX 2020.

About IMD

IMD is an NBCUniversal company, part of NBCU International Networks, and a leading distributor of multicultural content representing over 50 linear and on demand networks from Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Working with linear and non-linear platforms, IMD brings popular programming from the leading international brands to multicultural consumers around the world.

About Comcast

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

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Ryman Hospitality Properties to sell minority stake in Opry Entertainment Group

Meg Wrather

252 words

5 April 2022

Nashville Business Journal

NSHBSJ

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties announced Monday that it is selling a minority stake of its entertainment group.

Investment firm Atairos and NBCUniversal will acquire a 30% stake in OEG Attractions Holdings LLC, a subsidiary of Ryman, according to a press release.

The initial \$293 million investment will be made up of \$278 million from Atairos and \$15 million from NBCUniversal. The deal values OEG at \$1.4 billion and is expected to close in the second quarter of 2022.

"Back in June 2021, given the unsolicited interest we had received, we embarked on a formal process to identify a strategic partner that shares our vision for growing OEG to a position where it can operate independently of our core hospitality business," Colin Reed, Ryman's chairman and CEO, said in the release. "We view this partnership as a significant opportunity to strengthen these beloved institutions and cement their influence on American music culture."

Opry Entertainment Group (OEG) includes the Grand Ole Opry, Ryman Auditorium, Ole Red, a 50% investment in Circle TV network and more.

Atairos partners Alex Evans and Jackson Phillips will join OEG's board of directors once the deal closes, joining four Ryman directors, according to the release.

Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc. (NYSE: RHP) is one of Nashville's largest public companies with \$524.48 million in 2020 revenue, according to Business Journal research.

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Document NSHBSJ0020220405ei4500001

Comcast Begins Rollout of New Supersonic WiFi

681 words

5 April 2022

17:00

Business Wire

BWR

English

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Enabled by Xfinity's New WiFi 6E Gateway, Supersonic WiFi Delivers Gigabit Speeds to Power the Ever-Increasing Number of **Devices** in Consumers' Homes

PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 05, 2022--

Today Comcast announced that Supersonic WiFi, enabled by its newest WiFi 6E gateway, is now available to Xfinity Internet Gigabit and Ultrafast customers across the U.S. Supersonic WiFi is capable of delivering speeds faster than 1 Gbps, 3X more capacity, and the speeds of the future -- symmetrical Gigabit speeds -- to support hundreds of connected devices simultaneously.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220405005890/en/>

(Photo: Business Wire)

"Our Supersonic WiFi is made to do anything so our customers can do everything they want online, and our latest gateway enables key features like speeds faster than a gig to power a house full of devices -- all at once," said Sophia Ahmad, EVP and CMO, Comcast Cable.

Xfinity Internet customers connected nearly 1 billion devices in their homes in 2021 alone, a 12X increase from just a few years ago, increasing the need for faster speeds and more capacity. Comcast's most powerful device to date, the new gateway is a giant leap forward in both key connectivity areas, with three WiFi bands -- 2.4 GHz, 5 GHz, and a new, 6 GHz band. Together, these WiFi bands reduce interference and increase bandwidth in the home by 3X to support the massive influx of connected devices used by consumers today.

In addition to the fastest gig-speeds over WiFi, Xfinity Internet comes with:

- Ultimate Security: Help keep loved ones safe and secure online with xFi Advanced Security, included at no extra cost. Advanced Security helps protect customers' devices from billions of cyberthreats a year, and customers can add xFi Complete to extend that security on the go.
- Unprecedented Control: Download the xFi app to access a dashboard for all the devices connected to the home network with built in capabilities to pause access, set up parental controls or automate screen time rules. In 2021 alone, more than 1 million Xfinity households used xFi parental controls, with customers pausing/unpausing WiFi access nearly 100 million times.
- Wall-to-Wall Coverage: The newest Gateway provides a more reliable connection for all connected devices. And with xFi Complete, get wall-to-wall WiFi coverage throughout the home, with an xFi Pod included if recommended.
- Unbeatable Entertainment: Get a free Flex 4K streaming TV device to enjoy streaming apps in one place and a voice remote to navigate between them seamlessly. Plus, thousands of hours of free entertainment content available to Internet customers for no additional cost.
- IoT for Smart Homes of the Future: Zigbee compatible, the new Gateway acts as a central connector for IoT and home automation devices like

smart lights, plugs and locks, and more.

Xfinity's Unbeatable Internet also features xFi Complete, which provides customers access to a new Tech Upgrade program that will provide them with an updated gateway after three years and Advanced Security on the Go that protects customers' mobile devices anywhere, anytime.

About Comcast Corporation

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

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Comcast launches Eros Now app on X1 and Flex devices

indiantelevision.com Team

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5 April 2022

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ATINTV

English

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Mumbai: Global media and technology company Comcast has announced the launch of Eros STX Global Corp's OTT platform Eros Now on its X1 and Flex platforms.

The service replaces Eros Now SVOD product offering Xfinity customers the ability to stream high-definition, ad-free titles including films and original series. Eros Now's catalogue with over 12000 titles features a range of South Asian language content in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, and other regional languages.

"We are excited to bring Xfinity subscribers even more great international entertainment through our partnership with Eros Now. We are committed to expanding our offering of thousands of hours of premium South Asian movies, originals and music in high definition and multiple languages, as well as making it more easily accessible to our customers who can simply say 'Eros Now' into the Xfinity voice remote," said Xfinity Consumer Services executive director - multicultural video & entertainment Keesha Boyd.

Eros Now CEO Ali Hussein added, "The US is the largest market for us outside India. With this partnership, Eros Now will further consolidate its position as a preferred platform for the consumption of Indian content."

Xfinity customers can subscribe to the Eros Now app via their X1 TV Box or Xfinity Flex streaming TV Box, available for \$4.99/month.

Document ATINTV0020220405ei450005t

Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc. - Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal - Form 8-K

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1,755 words

5 April 2022

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Filings

SAEXC

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal - Form 8-K

Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - (April 4, 2022) - Ryman Hospitality Properties (NYSE: RHP) ("RHP"), a leading lodging and hospitality real estate investment trust that specializes in upscale convention center resorts and country music entertainment experiences, and Atairos, an independent strategic investment company focused on supporting growth-oriented businesses, today announced that Atairos, along with their long-term strategic partner NBCUniversal, will acquire a 30% minority ownership stake in RHP's subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings LLC, which directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group ("OEG"). Atairos' investment values OEG at \$1.415 billion, inclusive of OEG's previously announced acquisition of Block 21 (which remains subject to certain closing conditions and is expected to close prior to June 1, 2022). Atairos has agreed to make an additional \$30 million investment in OEG, contingent on certain performance targets being achieved, which would bring OEG's valuation to \$1.515 billion. The initial \$1.415 billion valuation includes a recapitalization of OEG with a new \$300 million Term Loan B and the assumption of a \$137 million CMBS facility for Block 21 upon consummation of that transaction. Atairos' and NBCUniversal's initial 30% equity investment in OEG will be approximately \$293 million, of which Atairos is directly investing approximately \$278 million and NBCUniversal will directly invest up to approximately \$15 million.

Colin Reed, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ryman Hospitality Properties, said, "Over the last decade we have shared our excitement about the bright future of our entertainment business and the significant value creation opportunities that exist as we extend our reach nationwide and transition OEG to an integrated country lifestyle platform.

Back in June 2021, given the unsolicited interest we had received, we embarked on a formal process to identify a strategic partner that shares our vision for growing OEG to a position where it can operate independently of our core hospitality business while enabling our shareholders to participate in the significant upside for OEG that lies ahead.

Atairos and NBCUniversal have a great appreciation for the legendary assets under our stewardship and we are aligned on protecting and nurturing them for future generations of music lovers to enjoy. We view this partnership as a significant opportunity to strengthen these beloved institutions and cement their influence on American music culture. We remain focused on creating sustainable long-term value for our shareholders as we seek new ways to connect artists and fans through one-of-a-kind experiences."

Michael Angelakis, Chairman and CEO of Atairos, said, "OEG's dynamic collection of entertainment venues, digital content and iconic country music brands provide a strong foundation for continued growth as a fully-integrated country lifestyle platform. We are excited to partner with the RHP and OEG teams to explore new content distribution strategies and support their ambition of becoming the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content."

David Pietrycha, Executive Vice President, Strategy and Business Development at NBCUniversal, added, "We are excited to invest in OEG alongside our strategic partner Atairos. We look forward to exploring opportunities to leverage our media, technology and content creation expertise to help OEG accelerate its plans and bring its iconic brands, as well as artists and storied cities, to music lovers worldwide."

Additional Transaction Details

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Upon completion of the transaction, RHP will retain a controlling 70% interest in OEG. Colin Reed will serve as Executive Chairman of OEG in addition to his responsibilities as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of RHP. In connection with the investment, Atairos will enter into an LLC agreement with RHP and OEG upon the closing of the investment, pursuant to which, among other things, Atairos Partners Alex Evans and Jackson Phillips will join OEG's Board of Directors, which will be comprised of four RHP Directors and two Atairos Directors.

The transaction, which is subject to customary conditions, is expected to close in Q2 2022. Upon closing, RHP expects to receive gross transaction proceeds of approximately \$593 million, comprised of the Atairos and NBCUniversal investment and borrowings from a new \$300 million Term Loan B facility secured by OEG assets. RHP expects to use these proceeds to pay transaction expenses, fully repay its \$300 million Term Loan A and substantially all the borrowings outstanding under its revolving credit facility, thereby reducing leverage and creating balance sheet flexibility to allow RHP to pursue continued reinvestment in its businesses.

Advisors

Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC is serving as financial advisor, Bass, Berry & Sims PLC is serving as legal advisor, and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP is serving as tax counsel to RHP. Moelis & Company LLC is serving as financial advisor and Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP is serving as legal advisor to Atairos. The financing commitment for this transaction has been secured from JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. and Morgan Stanley Senior Funding, Inc.

A Note to Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Shareholders:

For additional information regarding this acquisition, visit <http://ir.rymanhp.com> and click on Presentations and Transcripts, where RHP has posted an investor supplement providing a transaction overview, which introduces Atairos and describes the announced strategic investment. Please note that our website is provided as an inactive textual reference and the information on our website is not incorporated by reference in this release.

Ryman Hospitality Properties will hold a conference call to discuss this transaction Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 10 a.m. ET. To participate in the conference call, please dial 888-632-3384 and use Conference ID: 6355412. The call will be available for replay through April 12, 2022, and by dialing 800-938-0996, a Conference ID is not required. This call is also being webcast and can be accessed at Ryman Hospitality Properties' Investor Relations website at <http://ir.rymanhp.com>.

About Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc.

Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. (NYSE: RHP) is a leading lodging and hospitality real estate investment trust that specializes in upscale convention center resorts and country music entertainment experiences. RHP's Opry Entertainment Group includes a growing collection of iconic and emerging country music brands we operate, including the Grand Ole Opry; Ryman Auditorium, WSM 650 AM; Ole Red and a 50% interest in Circle, a country lifestyle media network RHP owns in a joint venture with Gray Television; as well as other Nashville-area attractions managed by Marriott. RHP operates Opry Entertainment Group as part of a taxable REIT subsidiary. RHP's core holdings, Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, and Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center are five of the top 10 largest non-gaming convention center hotels in the United States based on total indoor meeting space. These convention center resorts operate under the Gaylord Hotels brand and are managed by Marriott International. RHP also owns two adjacent ancillary hotels and a small number of attractions managed by Marriott International for a combined total of 10,412 rooms and more than 2.8 million square feet of total indoor and outdoor meeting space in top convention and leisure destinations across the country. Visit RymanHP.com for more information.

About Atairos

Atairos is an independent, private company focused on supporting growth-oriented businesses across a wide range of industries. Atairos provides a unique combination of active strategic partnership and patient long-term capital to high-potential companies and their management teams. Atairos was launched in 2016 and has approximately \$6 billion of equity capital. Atairos has offices in New York City, Philadelphia and London. For more information, please visit www.atairos.com

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains statements as to RHP's beliefs and expectations of the outcome of future events that are forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. You can identify these statements by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. Examples

of these statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the pending acquisition of Block 21, the proposed investment by Atairos and NBCUniversal in OEG, and intended benefits of the proposed investment in OEG. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the statements made. These include the risks and uncertainties associated with the occurrence of any event, change or other circumstance that could delay the closing of the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG, or result in the termination of the agreement for the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG. Other factors that could cause results to differ are described in the filings made from time to time by RHP with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and include the risk factors and other risks and uncertainties described in RHP's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021, and its Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and subsequent filings. RHP does not undertake any obligation to release publicly any revisions to forward-looking statements made by it to reflect events or circumstances occurring after the date hereof or the occurrence of unanticipated events.

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US Ryman Hospitality to sell minority stake in entertainment venues ops

186 words

5 April 2022

12:40

SeeNews Deals

SEDEL

English

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April 5 (SeeNews) - US lodging and hospitality real estate **investment** trust Ryman Hospitality Properties (NYSE:RHP) has agreed to sell a 30% stake in its entertainment venues operations in a deal that values the business at USD 1.415 billion (EUR 1.286bn).

The stake will be acquired by local **investment** firm Atairos, along with its long-term strategic partner -- US telecoms giant Comcast's media conglomerate NBCUniversal, a press release said on Monday.

The transaction concerns an ownership stake in RHP's subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings LLC, which directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group (OEG).

Atairos and NBCUniversal's initial equity investment in OEG will be about USD 293 million, of which Atairos is directly investing about USD 278 million and NBCUniversal will directly invest up to about USD 15 million.

OEG operates a portfolio of entertainment venues, including the world-famous country music brand Grand Ole Opry, the Ryman Auditorium, WSM Radio, the Blake Shelton-inspired Ole Red brand and Circle TV Network.

(USD 1 = EUR 0.909)

Document SEDEL00020220405ei45000dx

Comcast works to assist women-owned businesses

Jessica Perry

1,063 words

4 April 2022

NJBIZ

BNNJ

ISSN:15404161

English

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Ashley Taylor heard about Comcast RISE from a friend who is also a woman business owner advice she has since paid forward herself, after being chosen as a technology makeover recipient by the initiative. Now, she's applying again in the latest cohort. This window which opened on Jan. 16 and closes on June 17 is different from those that have come before, though: It's the first since the program was expanded to include all women-owned businesses.

Comcast RISE stands for Representation, **Investment**, Strength and Empowerment, and since it launched in November 2020, more than 6,700 small businesses owned by people of color have benefitted from its distributed \$60 million in grants, marketing and technology services. As it happens, nearly 70% of those small businesses have been owned by women of color. That fact prompted Comcast to take a harder look at the challenges women business owners face, and then, ultimately, to open eligibility for RISE to all women-owned businesses.

There are three additional services businesses can apply for, beyond the tech makeover Taylor received: marketing strategy consulting, a media campaign, or a media campaign that also includes production of a commercial for your business. This time around, Taylor is eyeing the media/commercial and marketing packages - "The more eyes on your business, it's always helpful," she said. But the first time around she wasn't as certain.

"At first I didn't know what package I needed, or I wanted, or I could use at all. That was being small-minded for my business," she said. But following her first experience with the program, her viewpoint has shifted. "I'm kind of glad the tech package was the first one because it allowed me to kind of centralize my thoughts and focus for what I would need to move forward," she said. "And sometimes if you get the big ask before you're ready for it, it jacks you up so I'm kind glad it went the way it did."

The way it went

Taylor is one of nearly 150 New Jerseyans to win a package from Comcast RISE. Her business is Creative Motion Arts Center in Voorhees, where she offers professional and artistic training in theater, performing arts and dance, that it is affordable to the community. Her tech makeover included a year of complimentary internet and cybersecurity services, along with three iPads, two laptops and a desktop computer. Though she already had internet service, Taylor said getting a reprieve from paying for it was great. "[I]n a small business, you know every penny is counting, so that break of not paying for internet is amazing," she said, adding that the timing was beneficial, as well, due to the pandemic.

As far as cybersecurity goes, Taylor, like many small business owners, didn't think it was really something she needed to be concerned about before she had a system in place. Now, she's checking weekly and monthly reports to review the activity. "I'm like, this is really interesting," she said. "And that's the other thing about kind of broadening my mind, because at first I was not concerned with internet security, but after I realized all that it did, I said 'actually this is really great.'" Since she's been able to access information on web traffic regarding her business, Taylor also has a newfound appreciation for her website.

"The more business-minded you get you understand, like you need the visits to your website to drive the sales and all of that works together."

The physical equipment she received, though, really packed a punch. Taylor described the impact as huge. She no longer must use her personal devices leaving her phone unattended to play music in a classroom and gone are her days of paper registration and sign-ups. Now, she can use the iPad (which can be wiped clean). And it felt good to take a green turn by going paperless, she said. The equipment allowed her to expand her offerings with virtual classes.

Beyond the benefits Taylor received, Comcast allows tech makeover recipients to add additional services to their package, which could include adding a calling feature to their voice services like an 800 number or a hunt group or WiFi Pro, the company's product for controlling public versus private WiFi.

If Taylor's experience is any indication, though, devices aren't the only takeaways from Comcast RISE. At first, she said she was a little intimidated by the application, because of the ways it made her think about her enterprise. She said as an entrepreneur embarking with a small business that latter phrase can seem limiting. "Because you think small. You think, 'It's just me. I'm just teaching these classes at the rec center.' [Y]ou don't want to think of it as a big deal, and really, the questions on the application had me to think of myself as a big deal. And I think that was honestly a turning point for me as a business owner," she said. "Because, yes my business is small now, but it's not always going to be small, so I have to think about it as a big business, even though it's currently small."

And she's certainly thinking big: Taylor says she's started two other businesses since becoming a Comcast RISE recipient. "I think it really opened my eyes to my own possibilities and business possibilities," she said. "[I]t definitely opened my eyes to the 'more' that's available and to think different as a business owner." Taylor said being a Comcast RISE recipient has also opened doors for her. And she's spreading the word the same way it was spread to her so that others can have a chance at the experience. "It makes it more attainable when someone like a real person you can say got the prize," she said. "[B]eing able to say like, 'Hey, no I actually won this, they actually sent me what they said they were going to send me; it's legit.'"

"Then they say, 'maybe I should apply, if she got it, then maybe I can do it.' "

Comcast RISE opens applications quarterly, selecting approximately 560 businesses each time on a rolling basis.

Document BNNJ000020220408ei440000k



Business -

Grand Ole Opry Owner Sells Stake for \$293M to Comcast-Backed Fund, NBCUniversal

Alex Weprin

482 words

4 April 2022

Hollywood Reporter

HLYW

English

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Nashville's Grand Ole Opry is getting new corporate partners in Philadelphia and New York.

Atairos, an **investment** fund backed by cable giant Comcast and led by its former CFO Michael Angelakis, is teaming with Comcast-owned NBCUniversal to acquire a 30 percent stake in Opry Entertainment Group, a subsidiary of the real estate **investment** firm Ryman Hospitality Properties.

OEG owns the Grand Ole Opry (as well as the Opry's AM radio station), Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, the music venue Ole Red, and the lifestyle network Circle, which OEG owns in partnership with local TV giant Gray Television. OEG also owns the Opry's archive, which includes six decades worth of live recordings, totaling more than 11,500 hours.

Under the terms of the deal, Atairos and NBCUniversal will contribute \$293 million, with the bulk of that (\$278 million) coming from Atairos, and the rest coming from NBCUniversal. OEG will also receive a \$300 million Term Loan B, giving it total proceeds of \$593 million. OEG will be valued at \$1.415 billion in the deal, with Atairos also agreeing to invest another \$30 million at a \$1.5 billion valuation if certain performance goals are met.

Ryman chairman and CEO Colin Reed said in a statement that the company received "unsolicited interest" last year, leading it to hire bankers to look for "a strategic partner that shares our vision for growing OEG to a position where it can operate independently of our core hospitality business."

The company believes it has found that partner in Atairos and NBCU, with the company telling investors in an accompanying Powerpoint deck that the partners will bring "strategic and industry relationships" to the table. Ryman told investors in the deck that it would be "leveraging Atairos and Comcast's resources and connectivity," citing Saturday Night Live, The Voice, and Peacock as potential partners.

"Atairos and NBCUniversal have a great appreciation for the legendary assets under our stewardship and we are aligned on protecting and nurturing them for future generations of music lovers to enjoy," Reed added in a statement. "We view this partnership as a significant opportunity to strengthen these beloved institutions and cement their influence on American music culture."

For the investors, OEG's assets are also a content play, not only providing a platform to develop music-related content, but giving the company's a foothold in country music's world capital.

"OEG's dynamic collection of entertainment venues, digital content and iconic country music brands provide a strong foundation for continued growth as a fully-integrated country lifestyle platform," Angelakis said in a statement announcing the deal. "We are excited to partner with the RHP and OEG teams to explore new content distribution strategies and support their ambition of becoming the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content."

Document HLYW000020220405ei4400001

DEADLINE

Breaking News -

NBCUniversal And Investment Partner Pay \$293M For 30% Stake In Grand Ole Opry And Related Country Music Properties

Dade Hayes

497 words

4 April 2022

Deadline

DLINE

English

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NBCUniversal and investment partner Atairos have paid \$293 million for a 30% stake in famed country music brand the Grand Ole Opry and a cluster of related Nashville-based live entertainment and assets.

The Opry's home, Ryman Auditorium, is known for hosting the Country Music Awards. It is a cornerstone of Opry Entertainment Group, the division of Ryman Hospitality Properties receiving the investment from NBCU. Along with the Ryman and the Opry itself, a nearly century-old country music showcase, properties include a smaller collection of music venues called Ole Red, radio station WSM-AM and a 50% interest in country lifestyle media network Circle. The network is a joint venture with Gray Television, a major station group owner. The weekly "Grand Ole Opry" stage show streams on Circle.

Atairos is shouldering almost the entire cost of acquiring the stake, putting in \$278 million, compared with a direct investment of \$15 million by NBCU. The transaction, which is expected to close during the current quarter, values Opry Entertainment at \$1.415 billion. That amount will rise to \$1.515 billion, according to the deal terms, once an additional \$30 million is kicked in by Atairos, contingent on certain performance targets being hit. OEG will also be recapitalized via a \$300 million term loan, on top of the 30% stake sale.

"Over the last decade we have shared our excitement about the bright future of our entertainment business and the significant value creation opportunities that exist as we extend our reach nationwide and transition OEG to an integrated country lifestyle platform," Ryman Hospitality CEO Colin Reed said in the deal announcement.

After receiving unsolicited interest in June 2021, Ryman began a formal strategic process to consider its options. Covid has altered the calculus for many live-event venues, which have finally returned to relatively normal operations after two years marked by significant interruptions and a slowdown in travel and leisure spending.

Atairos and NBCUniversal "have a great appreciation for the legendary assets under our stewardship," Reed added, "and we are aligned on protecting and nurturing them for future generations of music lovers to enjoy. We view this partnership as a significant opportunity to strengthen these beloved institutions and cement their influence on American music culture."

Atairos CEO Michael Angelakis said the Opryland portfolio offers "a strong foundation for continued growth as a fully-integrated country lifestyle platform. We are excited to partner with the RHP and OEG teams to explore new content distribution strategies and support their ambition of becoming the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content."

David Pietrycha, EVP Strategy and Business Development at NBCU, said the company looks forward to exploring "opportunities to leverage our media, technology and content creation expertise to help OEG accelerate its plans and bring its iconic brands, as well as artists and storied cities, to music lovers worldwide."

Document DLINE00020220405ei4400003

News; Domestic
ALL IN for April 4, 2022, MSNBC

Chris Hayes
8,025 words
4 April 2022
MSNBC: All in with Chris Hayes
CHAYES
English

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[20:00:00]

JOY REID, MSNBC HOST: But the rate of uninsured people in those counties is twice as high as in wealthier areas, a critical issue as federal **funding** for COVID dries up. The program that reimburses providers for testing and treating the uninsured stopped taking claims last month. It will stop accepting new claims for vaccinating the uninsured this week. The more you know.

And that's "THE REIDOUT." ALL IN WITH CHRIS HAYES starts now.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHRIS HAYES, MSNBC HOST (voiceover): Tonight on ALL IN.

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: This guy is brutal. And what's happening is outrageous.

HAYES: The world sees what a retreating Russian army left behind.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: That's a real crime. And Russia should be punished for this.

HAYES: Tonight, the new U.S. assessment of the latest Russian offensive. What we know about what happened to Bucha and the American right roots on autocrats as another strong man chokes off democracy.

TUCKER CARLSON, HOST, FOX NEWS: Why would we take Ukraine side? Why wouldn't we have Russia side? I don't -- I'm totally confused.

HAYES: Then, the criminal referral for Navarro and Scavino move forward and is a potential Trump criminal referral necessary for Justice?

Plus, today's big vote on Ketanji Brown Jackson for Supreme Court. And meet the new applicant for Leader of the House Republican MAGA caucus.

SARAH PALIN (R-AK), CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE: No more of this vanilla milquetoast namby-pamby, wussy-pussy stuff that's been going on.

HAYES: When ALL IN starts right now.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES (on camera): Good evening from New York. I'm Chris Hayes. It is only two days since the Ukrainian military was able to retake the Kyiv suburb of Bucha after the Russians retreated. And the name of that town is now already infamous and synonymous with war crimes.

There's no way to tell this story without showing you the visual evidence of what is happening and has happened on the ground and Bucha, so this is a warning, you're going to see some disturbing images in this reporting.

When the Russian troops moved through the town on their way to apparently try to capture Kyiv, but after they're met with stiff resistance, they just stayed in Bucha for weeks unable to get to Kyiv and ultimately retreating. The images of the atrocities they appear to have committed started coming out immediately after Ukrainian troops move back into the area on Saturday.

Ukrainian Defense Ministry released this video showing the bodies of what they say are civilians lying in the street. The Associated Press took these photos of at least nine people in civilian clothes, who appear to have been killed at close range. At least two had their hands tied behind their backs.

The mayor of Bucha told reporters that residents had buried nearly 300 people in mass graves. You can see what appears to be a 45 foot long trench near church and this satellite photo from Maxar Technologies. Remember, the Ukrainian parliament from Bucha recorded this video by the mass graves.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Hello to everybody. My name is Oleksiy Goncharenko, a member of the parliament from Bucha, which is town satellite of Kyiv. And you see behind me the common grave for more than 20 people, local citizens who were killed by Russian troops here. And that is one of the graves, there are more here. And that is local church of Bucha. That is an evidence -- one of many evidences of Bucha massacre. That's a war crime. And Russian should be punished for this. It's done by Russian oil and gas. It's just when you see Russian oil and guess, remember these.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Sky News reporter Deborah Haynes has been an absolutely invaluable source for reporting on the ground inside Ukraine. In her latest reporting, she visited Bucha in the wake of Russia's retreat and saw the horrors left behind firsthand.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DEBORAH HAYNES, REPORTER, SKY NEWS: The broken body of a woman evidence of the terror that swept through this town and others north of the capital before Russian forces suddenly pulled back. The brother of Kyiv's mayor documented what he saw.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is not special operation. This is not military objects. This is civilians. That been shot in the head with a tied hands behind their back. This is a genocide of the Ukrainian population.

HAYNES: Ukraine says hundreds of bodies have been found some hastily buried. It's accused Russia of being worse than Islamic State though Moscow has denied responsibility.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Now, Russia has denied responsibility for these killings, claiming while the town was controlled by the Russian of military forces, not a single local resident has suffered from any violent action -- that's quite a categorical denial -- and that "the photos and video footage from Bucha are another hoax, a stage production, going as far as requesting the U.N. Security Council convened to discuss what it called a provocation by Ukrainian radicals in Bucha."

The New York Times analyzed satellite photos of Bucha by Maxar Technologies, and they found evidence that at least 11 bodies of civilians seen in those videos, the ones that were recorded by the Ukrainian soldiers as they went in and released, had been on the street in the satellite images since March 11, OK. Russian forces were occupying Bucha until their retreat on March 30th. That means those bodies of dead Ukrainians, town residents of Bucha were in those streets as the Russians controlled it for 19 days.

Earlier today, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Bucha calling what he saw their war crimes, a message echoed by President Joe Biden.

[20:05:38]

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: You may remember, I got criticized for calling Putin a war criminal. Well, the truth of the matter, you saw what happened in Bucha. This warrants him he is a war criminal. But we have to gather the information, we have to continue to provide Ukraine with the weapons they need to continue the fight, and we have to gather all the detail so this could be an actual -- have a war-crime trial.

This guy is brutal. And what's happening to Bucha is outrageous, and everyone has seen it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you agree that it's genocide?

BIDEN: No, I think it is a war crime.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Sir, are you going to do more sanctions on Russia?

BIDEN: I'm seeking more sanctions, yes, I'll have time to announce that too.

(CROSSTALK)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Can you actually hold Putin accountable though? You called him a war criminal.

BIDEN: He should be held accountable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Now, for those who watched Russia's brutal tactics, first in Chechnya and then Syria over a span of several years, it's a reminder of the utter depravity of their tactics in those wars. The nature of Putin's regime on the battlefield was evident in both of those venues. As horrible as these atrocities are, they are not, in that respect, surprising.

Which is why there's just no moral excuse for the odious apologetics we have heard from the American right. And I'm not just talking about oh, we need negotiation, there's a way out of the settlement, all of which I think is perfectly legitimate to argue for. It's the sort of visceral siding with Putin, the admiration of him, including what Donald Trump said about Vladimir Putin just the days before the invasion.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I went in yesterday, and there was a television screen. And I said, this is genius. Putin declares a big portion of the Ukraine -- of Ukraine. Putin declares it as independent. Oh, that's wonderful. So, Putin is now saying it's independent, a large section of Ukraine. I said, how smart is that?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: So smart, genius. That's the leader of the Republican Party calling Putin a genius as he prepares to commit war crimes. And those bodies on the streets, those ones in the mass graves, that's what that genius looks like in reality. It looks like bodies on the side of the road, hands tied behind their back, and bullets in their head.

And of course, whatever Donald Trump says is going to get blasted out by the loudest mouthpiece on Trump TV.

CARLSON: Why do I care about what's going on in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia? And I'm serious. Like, why do I care?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I tell you why.

CARLSON: And why shouldn't I root for Russia. Because I am.

Hold on, why would we take Ukraine side and not Russia sides?

It might be worth asking yourself since it is getting pretty serious. What is this really about? Why do I hate Putin so much? Has Putin ever called me a racist? Has he threatened to get me fired for disagreeing with him? Has he shipped every middle-class job in my town to Russia?

HAYES: Yes. Why would anyone bear any animus whatsoever towards Vladimir Putin? It's a great rhetorical question. As he stacked the bodies of Syrians like cordwood for years. Vladimir Putin showed us what kind of leader he was years ago, what his military was capable of. It is way too late to act surprise now.

Alexander Vindman is a retired United States Army lieutenant colonel who serves as the Director for European affairs of the U.S. National Security Council. Michael Newton is a professor of Vanderbilt University Law School. He served as Senior Advisor at the State Department, ambassador at large for war crimes issues. And they both join me now.

Lieutenant Colonel, let me let me ask you first about your reaction to this. Again, there's a pattern here. There's a history here. It is nonetheless, those images that they came out of Bucha on Saturday, I think you felt this way and everyone horrifying and shocking.

ALEXANDER VINDMAN, FORMER DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL: It is absolutely horrifying. And this is why there was -- it should have been such a greater press to try to see if we could first avoid this war because we knew the level of barbarism that Putin and his regime would apply to Ukraine.

And now, everything we can to help Ukraine end this war. This war is likely to play out over the course of months. What we saw in Bucha and Irpin and other locations, we forgot about Mary Opal and the bombing of the maternity ward earlier on the war, these are things that are going to unfold, and they're going to increase as Russia gets frustrated.

Mariupol still is held out for six weeks, but it's going to get pressed with considerably more combat power. And right now, the president has said the exact right thing. We need to give him Ukraine, everything we need -- they need, rather, to win this war, but that's not happening. Otherwise, we will have many more of these types of catastrophic events.

And eventually, the American public and the rest of the western world is going to get fed up. And that's going to drive a probably an overreaction. So, this is all foreseeable. And we could have -- should take action to avoid this from becoming a protracted war with more of these types of incidents.

[20:10:39]

HAYES: I want to read a little bit, Michael, of some of the New York Times reporting on this. And again, there's -- you know, when you first see these images, I think it's a good idea to sort of take things slowly, a grain of salt, there's this fog of war, and evaluate. But we've now had multiple time for reporters, human rights observers to come in and getting more and more confirmation.

This is the Times reporting. 13 of the bodies are men whose hands have been tied and have been shot at close range in the head. A coroner said he did not know the circumstances of their death, but believed, based on their apparently recent death, they were prisoners killed before the Russian army withdrew. They were civilians, he said, showing cell phone pictures of dead men in civilian clothes with their hands bound behind their backs and one case in the front.

You know, the term war crimes, I think, has a rhetorical meaning and then it has a technical international legal meaning. What do you, as someone who works in this space, what is your reaction to that term in application to what we are seeing and seeing reported in the streets of Bucha?

Well, if one accepts the prevailing narrative which is that Vladimir Putin launched this illegal war of aggression as a way of aggrandizing Russian power and Russian prestige and rebuilding a Russian Empire, etcetera, there's hardly anything more corrosive to that.

MICHAEL NEWTON, PROFESSOR, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL: You know, as a political term, it's incredibly powerful and has the opportunity to galvanize the entire world as we're beginning to see. But as a legal term, and as a prosecutor myself, I mean, I think it's very important that we develop the body of evidence.

And when the Russians begin to lie as they are you are doing, we present them in evidence. We be transparent and we say, if you want to apologize, apologize, but come negotiate. Look at the evidence with us. We will prove to the entire world beyond a reasonable doubt that these are war crimes, or in some cases crimes against humanity. There's no question of that.

Now, the real question is, which individual's both political or military bear individual criminal responsibility for these kinds of offenses? That's the real challenge lying ahead.

HAYES: Yes, just to follow up on that. We should be clear, I mean, these were -- these were acts that were committed by actual individuals by Russian soldiers under the command of Russian officers, under the command of the general who's commanding the Russian army. I mean, how important is building that body of evidence?

NEWTON: Well, it's vitally important. And I've been working for a long time with courageous Ukrainian human rights defenders on the ground. This is not new. Russians have been violating the law of occupation for a long time in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine. And now, you're just seeing, I liked your word, the brutality of what they really do on the ground.

But that's a far cry from building a cohesive criminal case which is a composite that this is a common heritage of mankind and we have to work together with all countries, with all comers to develop a comprehensive body of evidence that can be used in any court in the world. That's why it's important to remember you, of course, you got the International Criminal Court, but you also have domestic courts all around the world that have jurisdiction, and first and foremost, the courts of Ukraine and have jurisdiction.

We have to have a composite body of evidence that can be used in any court anywhere in the world that wants to prosecute a particular offender and can get personal jurisdiction over them.

HAYES: You know, there's something very sick and so darkly cynical and almost nihilistic to me, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, about this as propaganda. I mean, obviously, if you're the Russian forces, you know if you're leaving bodies in the streets, you know, if you're retreating with people's hands bound and bullets in the back of their head.

So, to do that is to leave a message, is to -- is to make a statement and then to immediately deny it. I mean, you could not do that or you could do it and say yes, you know, behold our wrath and cower before us. But this combination of leaving it out for it to be found and immediately denying it, which is a sort of common trope here, is pretty enraging.

And on the public opinion front I think is going to increase the pressure across Europe to cut off oil and gas which is personally what you heard from that Ukrainian Member of Parliament.

VINDMAN: I think that's right. But it shows a general kind of callousness for human life. The repression of 20 years, increasing repression of 22 years of Putin rule has bred this kind of mentality to the population. It's a callousness that throws and spends tens of thousands of Russian soldiers for no gain, just to withdraw and reform for another offensive.

[20:15:10]

And it's something -- if certainly, they're callous with their soldiers' lives, they're going to be callous with the civilians lives. So, it's something that's -- it's a rot within the authoritarian world, within the authoritarian regime, within Russia that is indicative of really a broader struggle between good and evil.

And I'm not sure if there was forethought and signaling in terms of leaving the bodies out they left under pressure to a certain extent. I think it was just a general callousness for one thing. But certainly, there were leadership -- there was leadership involved. The mass graves require engineers -- engineer assets or higher level assets, either at a battalion or brigade level. So, they're already at that level. You have kind of a mid to senior-level officers involved.

And these things are occurring kind of not just in one location, but throughout the country. So, certainly, there's an underwriting of this kind of warfare for Russia. It's within their concept of warfare, end the war as quickly as possible using every means possible including brutality, because from their perspective, that is somehow humane. It's a foreign concept to us.

HAYES: Alexander Vindman and Mike Newton, thank you both. I really appreciate it. Still to come, while the right is backing off its praise of Vladimir Putin a bit, they haven't stopped supporting one of his allies. Next, what to make the right-wing factions celebrating the win of the authoritarian leader who essentially rigged the basics of democracy in order to stay in power, after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[20:20:00]

HAYES: Evidence of potential war crimes committed against Ukraine has, I think, put a damper on the faction of American conservatives who have celebrated Russian President Vladimir Putin, though who knows how long that will last, there is however a much larger faction celebrating one of Putin's key allies in Europe, the hard-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Orban has just handily won reelection sending him to his fourth consecutive term with his party holding onto a supermajority in Parliament. A victory that surely thrilled the likes of Tucker Carlson who has praised the budding autocrats policies or Arizona Congressman Paul Gosar last seen at a white nationalist conference zooming in who congratulated Orban on Twitter, or Georgia Congressman Margarita Greene who just came out and said it. Orban is leading Hungary the right way and we need this in America.

So, what is Viktor Orban doing in Hungary that these folks think we need an America? Well, he's the architect of what he himself is called an illiberal democracy. He's used the tools of government to reshape Hungary's judicial branch, eliminate nearly all independent media and aggressively gerrymander parliamentary districts. The result is now functionally one-party state. And when American conservatives say Hungary is a model for U.S., we should take that extremely seriously.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat is a professor of history in New York University. She writes all about this phenomenon in her book *Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present*. Her newsletter, *Lucid*, is on Substack and is about the perils democracy faces.

Ruth, you spent a lot of time studying Orban and I suppose last night's election wasn't surprising in terms of the results. How do you disaggregate this in the kind of rigged non-competitive democracy that he's

created what the people's will is, right? Because the Orban fans are like, look, he got a huge -- he won another huge victory. This is what Hungarians want. This is this -- this is it. This democracy in action.

RUTH BEN-GHIAT, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY: Yes, that's true. Now, there were two things going on here that were kind of say, contingent. One is that for the first time the opposition united against him six parties. But part of that calculation backfired because part of that big opposition was the Jobbik Party, which was a far-right party trying to be more central. And voters of Jobbik defected to Orban's party or even to a really hard right, almost neo-fascist party.

And this is what happens when you have polarization and there's no center. So, they lost votes in that. And then there's the war. Orban was very smart, one could say, in saying we're going to be about Hungarian interests and trying to have this juggling act to see neutral. And that played well because you know, they're on the border and it was very unsettling.

But that said, the system has evolved over 10 years or -- you know, he's been there since 2010, 12 years, so that it's very difficult for the opposition to win. And one reason is media. He has domesticated the media to an extent where it's very hard for the opposition to get equal time. In fact, the European election security agency sent a record number of monitors. And they included there wasn't a level playing field because the media didn't have the same access.

And then there's gerrymandering and other election trickery to make more, you know, districts favorable to his party, things that are familiar with -- to people who follow the GOP. And all of this pays off. And so, the results were similar to 2018 and similar to 2014.

So, he's built the system which gives him not guaranteed success, but makes it difficult for others to prevail.

HAYES: He has been -- it was interesting. Zelenskyy called him out for the stance he take -- he's taken which has been more tepid towards Ukraine than certainly the Polish -- the nation of Poland, which is right there across the border which also has a pretty right-wing government, we should note, which has been much more sort of on Ukraine side opposed to Russian aggression.

Hungary has taken a much more kind of neutral stance, or at least has hedge its bets a bit. And Orban has been a real kind of ally of Putin for years. I mean, there's a real connection there, right?

[20:25:28]

BEN-GHIAT: Oh, totally. After the annexation of Crimea, he refused -- you know, he was very against E.U. sanctions. And right before the war started, he declared that 2021 had been the best year ever for Hungarian-Russian relations. And of course, he was against putting any kind of sanctions on Russian energy, because Hungary is very dependent on that.

But that too, he played to his advantage with voters because he said, we don't want to get involved in this because gas and oil prices will go up and voters like that, apparently.

HAYES: I want to just play some of the -- I mean, there's a lot of praise for him that comes in right. At one point, CPAC was saying they're going to go to Budapest to celebrate. And here's a little bit of the sampling. And just your thoughts on what it means to have the American right explicitly saying, look, this is our model.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

STEVE BANNON, FORMER WHITE HOUSE CHIEF STRATEGIST: People are over Orban. They're all over sometimes Salvini. And I'm a huge admirer of these individuals. I think they've just done a tremendous job.

TRUMP: Viktor Orban has done a tremendous job in so many different ways. highly respected, respected all over Europe. Probably like me, a little bit controversial, but that's OK. That's OK. You've done a good job and you've kept your country safe.

CARLSON: He thinks families are more important than banks. He believes countries need borders for saying these things out loud, Orban has been vilified.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: The sort of celebration of Orban strikes me as chilling because, you know, he really has kind of figured out ways to use the rules of the game to essentially rig democracy such that it is functionally no longer competitive in Hungary.

BEN-GHIAT: Oh, absolutely. And the GOP lawmakers, you know, falling over themselves to congratulate him. They're like kids looking at a toy store saying, I want that. I want electoral autocracy. And that's, of

course, what they're pursuing. And then there's, you know, they're also ideologues too are all over his anti-LGBTQ, you know, policies, his pro-family policies.

And you know, what they never mentioned, you know, Tucker Carlson says, oh, he's defending white Christians and he's, you know, the defender of tradition. But they don't mention that 300 churches have been closed in Hungary because the heads of those churches were not aligned with Orban.

So, Orban, he's prevailing right now because he's the non-Putin. He's not anti-Putin, but he's the non-Putin. He's the palatable autocrat. And so, that is working in this atmosphere with what Putin is doing with crimes and everything. He seems OK.

HAYES: Ruth Ben-Ghiat, thank you so much for your time tonight.

Coming up, what does it mean the January 6 Committee is signaling there may be no criminal referral for Donald Trump. I'll ask a committee member about the end game strategy to the investigation after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HAYES: We're expecting the full House representatives to vote sometime next week whether to hold two former Trump aides in contempt of Congress. This after the House Rules Committee voted nine to four along party lines today to advance contempt resolutions for Peter Navarro and Dan Scavino over their refusal to cooperate in the investigation into the insurrection.

As for the ringleader of the insurrection after a ruling last week in which a federal judge said the evidence before him showed that Donald Trump likely committed crimes, the question is whether there will be a criminal referral from the January 6 Committee for the ex-president, what legal and political ramifications that would involve.

There are signs that committee name may not be ready to take that step. Committee Member Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren told Politico, "A referral doesn't mean anything, has no legal weight whatsoever. And I'm pretty sure the department justice has read last week's opinions so they don't need to tell -- need us to tell them it exists."

Congresswoman Elaine Luria is Democrat of Virginia who serves on the January 6 Committee and she joins me now. First, let me just start on that and ask if you -- if you agree broadly with your colleagues reading on the situation.

REP. ELAINE LURIA (D-VA): Well, Chris, thanks for having me back. You know, I would say that I don't agree with what, you know, some of my colleagues have said about this. And I think it's a lot more important to do what's right than it is to worry about the political ramifications.

And, you know, this committee, our purposes legislative and oversight. But if in the course of our investigation, we find that criminal activity has occurred, you know, I think it's our responsibility to refer that to the Department of Justice. Even if they already know, even if 10 other charges or sets of circumstances have made that determination, I think it's within the responsibility of our committee if we should find that evidence that we do refer it.

HAYES: Yes, I want to -- I want to read this quote because I think that I've seen some analysis in both directions. And it sounds like what you're saying is, look, if the merits determine that, then you should say it, right? This was quoted in the -- in the piece in Politico. Former criminal referral from Congress in this situation could backfire. The Justice Department's charging decision should not be influenced by political pressure. That's how this might look of referral could make it harder for the Department of prosecute. What do you think about that?

[20:35:10]

LURIA: You know, I think that the purpose of this committee is to lay out the facts. And if in those facts, we find evidence that criminal acts, that crimes occurred, I think we have to include that in our report. And I think that we have to forward that to the Department of Justice because they're the ones that have to deal with crimes.

HAYES: Two big issues coming up. There's the -- there'll be the vote on Navarro and Scavino on whether the Department of Justice moves ahead on those -- on charges there. But there's also the question of hearings and whether there'll be sort of primetime televised hearings. I wonder if you can give us a sense of what the committee's members or your member -- your thinking is on that.

LURIA: Well, Chris, you know, I think that this is a really important issue. It's fundamental to our democracy and protecting our institutions of government. I think it's important that every American has the opportunity to

hear the work of this committee, the facts that we've uncovered, and we would like to lay those out in a way that reaches the most people possible.

So, the hearings will definitely be televised. The exact timing and schedule is something that we're still working on as we continue interviewing witnesses. But you know, our goal is for this information to reach every American.

HAYES: What are the stakes -- I mean, what do you view as -- what would be success for you in this investigation when it's all said and done? How are you defining success as a lawmaker, as a citizen?

LURIA: You know, I want to know the facts. And I think that, you know, the committee is doing a very intensive investigation, following a lot of different paths to reach the truth about what happened on January 6, leading up to January 6. And the purpose of the committee as a committee in Congress is to provide recommendations to prevent something like this from happening in the future.

So, you know, I think that the work of laying out the facts is the first step. But then the legislative work of determining, you know, what recommendations we can make, what type of laws can protect our government, our election in the future is very important as well. So, I think both of those elements are key to the success of this committee.

HAYES: I mean, I'm being only slightly tongue in cheek here. But isn't part of making -- I mean, electing Donald Trump president again would be very dangerous and go a long way towards possibly reproducing the conditions this would happen again. I mean, that -- it seems like there's no getting around that fundamental fact. Whatever structural factors there were or whatever, oversight there was on the day and why we're in police more prepared, like, fundamentally, the most powerful person in the country in the world was intent on subverting American democracy, and this was the result.

LURIA: You know, I agree with that assessment. But you know, that's up to the voters and you know, after we've had the opportunity to lay out all these facts for them to understand, you know, what went into essentially an attempted coup to overthrow the government to steal the election and to disrupt the proceedings that certify the electoral count, and then resulted in violence that led to death and destruction of property. You know, if people can watch that and would then choose to vote for him or someone who shared his values in the future, you know, I think that's very concerning as well.

HAYES: Well, and there's also the question of the Republican Party more broadly, which does seem has, in certain ways, managed to kind of wriggle out from the taint of this, you know, awful, awful thing that the leader of their party did, and would do again in a heartbeat, and is currently plotting.

LURIA: You know, certainly, there are those in the Republican Party who have embraced this, and they continue to double down. They're very clear. Others have had a lot of courage like Liz Cheney, Adam Kinzinger, who served with us on that committee, those who did vote in the second impeachment.

And, you know, I think as an American, I would hope that, you know, there were more people in the Republican Party serving in office today who could look at the facts of what happened and uphold their constitutional duty to implement our laws not to undermine them.

HAYES: Yes. I think there will be a moment to sort of focus a beam of attention during these hearings, if and when they were to happen. We look forward to seeing how that plays out. Congresswoman Elaine Luria, thank you very much.

Still to come, Sarah Palin is back and running for Congress. How the one-time candidate for VP walked so MAGA party could run, in just ahead. Plus, Ketanji Brown Jackson finds Republican support in the Senate. We'll tell you that tally and what it means for her confirmation vote after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[20:40:00]

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE (D-RI): Last week, Judge Jackson set the gold standard for patience and courtesy from a Supreme Court nominee.

SEN. JON OSSOFF (D-GA): Throughout her career, she has not just favorably impressed, but demonstrated superb and exceptional professionalism and capabilities.

SEN. CORY BOOKER (D-NJ): How qualified you have to be double Harvard? How qualified you have to be clerking at all levels of the federal judiciary? How qualified do you have to be three times confirmed by the Senate in a bipartisan manner?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: It was a historic day in the Senate Judiciary Committee as senators considered Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson the first black woman nominated at the Supreme Court. The vote in that committee went along party line, 11 Democrats in support to all 11 Republicans voting against, which then forced Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to hold a floor vote to get the Brown Jackson nomination out of committee.

And guess what, three Republicans actually joined that vote somewhat of a surprising number, Mitt Romney, Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski, which is a good sign for the final passage vote that should come on a Friday. We expect it to be 53 votes in approval.

And that said, today, South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham admitted that if Republicans were in control the Senate, listen to this, Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination would have never even gotten a vote.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC): If we get back the Senate, and we're in charge of this body, and there's judicial openings, we will tell our colleagues on the other side, but if we're in charge she would not have been before this committee. You're going to have somebody more moderate than this.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Well, Merrick Garland is pretty moderate and he didn't get it hearing either. What he's saying there just so people realize is the quiet part out loud, right? They won't even hold a hearing for a Democratic president's nominee, a stark moment from a Republican Party that has become accustomed to pulling all manners of stunts to maintain their political power.

In fact, Graham had a front-row seat riding shotgun on the Street Talk Express for it feels now like the moon landing of modern Republicans' stunt politics.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What insight into Russian actions for particularly in the last couple of weeks does the proximity of the state give you?

PALIN: They're next door neighbors and you can actually see Russia from land here in Alaska.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Yes, Sarah Palin says she wants back into electoral politics, next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[20:50:00]

HAYES: The longest-serving Republican in the U.S. House of Representatives died a little more than two weeks ago. And now, more than 50 candidates are running to fill the seat of the late Congressman Don Young of Alaska. One of those 50 is a familiar face, former half-term governor and failed vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

Last night, she perhaps unsurprisingly got Donald Trump's complete and total endorsement. And it feels like the Republican Party has come full circle here. Back in 2008, when the John McCain campaign was scrambling to find a running mate, the team landed on Sarah Palin, the little known even by the campaign first-term governor of Alaska was a huge hit first, until she became more known.

We all discovered Palin was a candidate, well, seemingly entirely disinterested in the realities of governing. She lacked basic knowledge about foreign policy or even how Washington functioned. But she made up for it with right-wing populist rhetoric and a willingness to take an overtly racist tone towards then-candidate Barack Obama.

The Republican base loved it even when Palin had moments like this one with Katie Couric.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KATIE COURIC, JOURNALIST: When it comes to establishing your worldview, I was curious what newspapers and magazines did you regularly read before you were tapped for this to stay informed and to understand world --

PALIN: I've read most of them, again, with a great appreciation for the press, for the media --

COURIC: But like what specifically, I'm curious that you --

PALIN: All of them, any of them that have been in front of me over all these years.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: As my next guest notes, the fact that Palin was obviously unfit for office was kind of why the base like her so much. She made the right people angry. She started to draw larger crowds than McCain himself in rallies that looked a lot like the ones Trump would hold eight years later.

After losing in '08, Palin resigned as Alaska's Governor before her term was up, not to run for president in 2012 as many speculated, but to focus full time on posting on social media and a reality show which he used to reach her base outside of traditional news outlets, a tactic that would help Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016.

Now, the Palin model failed as it was, a proud lack of political knowledge mixed with attention-grabbing antics, also set the mold for today's Republican troll caucus, the likes of Marjory Taylor Greene, Madison Cawthorn, Lauren Colbert, and Ted Cruz.

And now 15 years later, after creating the genre, Palin is back trying to make a run to join them. She's already started the audition process.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PALIN: We need people who have cojones. We need people, like Donald Trump, who has nothing, nothing to lose. Like me, we got nothing to lose. And no more of this vanilla milk toast, namby-pamby, wussy-pussy stuff that's been going on.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HAYES: Jeremy Peters is a reporter for The New York Times who traces the link between Sarah Palin in 2008 and Donald Trump in 2016 in his new book *Insurgency: How Republicans Lost Their Party And Got Everything They Ever Wanted*.

And there are a lot of similarities and really a straight line from Palin to Trump. You do wonder though, like, it's one of these can you go home again kind of moments whether the shifting of the politics in the direction of Trump and sort of Matt Gaetz, Lauren Boebert figures means it's easier for her and whether this is sort of a natural fit, or maybe it's hard to pull off?

JEREMY PETERS, NATIONAL POLITICAL REPORTER, THE NEW YORK TIMES: Well, that was kind of the thing I wondered when I was reporting this book is like, was Sarah Palin the canary in the coal mine or was she kind of an anomaly? And it turns out, she's not an anomaly. Sarah Palin is the Republican Party.

And I think that you don't need to go very far back into Republican Party history to understand why she clicks with voters. She has always been somebody who has been seen as one of you, right? When she was in Alaska, she clicked with voters because people saw themselves in her. She was a mom. She had five kids. She was -- she talked like them. She didn't have like, a lot of elitist areas about her.

And really, that's what Republican voters saw in Donald Trump eventually. I think that what happened to her is another story when, you know, as she became the 20 -- 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee. She kind of lost her way a bit. But she is now back on stage. And I think that she's somebody who needs to be taken very seriously as a contender for this congressional seat.

[20:55:41]

HAYES: But there's -- I mean, there's some distinctions there, right? So, like, what's interesting about her is that she is -- you know, she was not -- she wasn't faking it, right, as governor of Alaska. Like, she was from where she was from, she had sort of worked her way through like first running for local office. I mean, Donald Trump was like a multi, multi, multimillionaire like never set foot outside of New York, right?

So, what's interesting is like Sarah Palin and Donald Trump were sort of tapping into the same thing, but it wasn't just like, you can't chalk it up to like lack of pretension, or folksiness. Particularly now, she's sitting there giving that interview in a house who's sitting room is like, larger than the block I live in Brooklyn.

Like -- and I think, you know, you document this here, right, that there's something going on here. Journalists covering Palin's rallies kept documenting the vitriol that was erupting from her crowds. Some of it is so ugly the Secret Service had to look into one incident as a precaution. Reports documented people shouting Obama Bin Ladin, treason, off with his head.

Now we've got, you know, the sort of ritual two-minute hate that happens at the Trump rallies where they all jeer. Like, hating the right people and being hated by the right people seems to be the defining thing she tapped into that has become so definitional for a lot of the Republican Party.

PETERS: That's exactly right, Chris. And that was always her appeal in Alaska as far back as 2004 when she was not quite Governor yet and not a major figure. She clicked with people because somebody called her and her fellow denizens of the Wasilla Valley, valley trash, right?

It was -- it was an early version of the deplorables. And she wore that as a badge of honor, not as something that like, oh, how dare you say this about me? They appropriated it. Then they took this as a badge of honor. And it worked for them just like it did with Trump supporters because they felt as if the mainstream Republican Party was looking down on them and not representing them.

And that's what ultimately Trumpism is, right? Trumpism is not an ideology. There are no fixed set of policies. It is about making people believe that a set of elites look down on them. It's very populist, as you know. And that is what she ultimately tapped into and has been very good ever since then at perpetuating.

HAYES: Yes, I mean, it's interesting. Because she left politics, right? I mean, she did the reverse Donald Trump, right? So, Trump is a reality star -- he's a celebrity first, and he sort of is able to convert that into a political campaign. And I think that allowed him to pull this thing off that is very hard to pull off and very hard to replicate actually.

Palin went the opposite way, right? She was sort of became a celebrity through politics. She then monetize that. She left -- I mean, she didn't even serve her own terms. She left. She made a lot of money in a reality show. She was, you know, sort of became this kind of celebrity figure. Now, she wants to go back into politics.

And I think it's interesting when you compare to Gaetz, Boebert, Cawthorn, Marjory Taylor Greene, right, these are people who are getting elected in super, super safe seats, in you know, deep red seats, where they win a primary and then they romp. A lot -- it's a lot more complicated. It's a statewide election. It's got a very complicated system. It's an interesting test case of how feasible this model is statewide.

PETERS: Well, it's also an incredibly important seat. Like, one of the things that probably most people don't appreciate is that this is a lone congressional seat in the entire state. There are only a handful of states in the country that have one congressional representative. That seat is more powerful than the senator's.

So, more powerful than Lisa Murkowski, more powerful than Dan Sullivan. Like, that's a big deal. So, I think there are going to be a lot of guns out for her there that she's going to have to look out. You know, I don't know what ultimately ends up happening in this race, but she has come to this moment understanding what Trumpism is in a lot of ways better than Donald Trump did. Let's not forget that Trump sought her out in 2007 --

HAYES: And he got an endorsement early.

PETERS: -- because he knew how powerful and how popular she was. And that's where we are right now. It's come full circle, Chris.

HAYES: All right, Jeremy Peters, thank you very much.

That is ALL IN on this Monday night. "THE RACHEL MADDOW SHOW" with Ali Velshi starts right now. Good evening, Ali.

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News - Music

'Grand Ole Opry' Owner Sells Minority Stake to Atairos and NBCUniversal for Nearly \$300 Million

Cynthia Littleton

1,121 words

4 April 2022

Variety

VARTY

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties, the Nashville-based parent company of the Grand Ole Opry, has struck a deal to sell a 30% stake in its entertainment operations to **investment** firm Atairos and NBCUniversal.

The transaction values Ryman Hospitality's Opry Entertainment Group unit at about \$1.4 billion in total. Atairos and NBCUniversal will invest approximately \$293 million in Opry Entertainment Group (OEG), which consists of the weekly "Grand Ole Opry" stage show and media rights, Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium, the legendary Nashville radio station WSM-AM and a 50% stake in TV channel Circle, the streaming home of "Grand Ole Opry." The pact calls for Atairos to invest another \$30 million in OEG down the road if certain performance targets are met.

The deal amounts to a sky-high valuation of 17 to 18 times OEG's projected 2022 adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, appreciation and amortization of \$80 million-\$88 million. And that is a sign of the feverish M&A marketplace for sui generis IP assets. From its debut in 1925 on WSM, "Grand Ole Opry's" role in establishing country music as an American art form cannot be overstated. OEG's vault includes 11,000 hours of "Grand Ole Opry" content, among other shows that adhere to what Ryman executives call the "country lifestyle" audience.

Circle launched in 2020 as a joint venture with Atlanta-based Gray Television. The channel has broad national distribution as a digital multicast network and as an ad-supporting streaming channel carried by Peacock, Roku and Samsung TV Plus, among others. It's also carried as a traditional cable channel carried by select MVPDs.

The agreement with Atairos, which is headed by former Comcast chief financial officer Michael Angelakis, and NBCUniversal came about after Ryman Hospitality executives began fielding call after call of prospective buyers for the assets.

Colin Reed, Ryman Hospitality chairman and CEO, said the company was not interested in an outright sale, but knew that there was more to be done in media.

"We knew there were lots of organizations out there that can help bring the expertise to the table that we lack to help us grow," Reed told Variety.

Ryman Hospitality's core business is running large hotels and convention centers. But through its ownership of the Ryman Auditorium, executives realized the company was able to craft unique offerings for artists and fans alike. Ryman Hospitality was also motivated to change the structure of the OEG group because the parent firm operates as a real estate investment trust (or a REIT), which use far different accounting standards for recognizing revenue and earnings than media companies. Now, OEG will have more flexibility to operate as a traditional entertainment venture.

"We are very focused on ways in which we can accelerate the connection between the artist and the consumer," Reed said. "We wanted to find a partner that shared the same vision for this company to be a global leader in country lifestyle and live entertainment."

The OEG assets involved in the deal also encompass Ole Red, Ryman Hospitality's growing line of restaurant and clubs run as a joint venture with country superstar Blake Shelton. At present there are five Ole Red locations, including outposts in Nashville and Orlando, Fla. Also in the deal is Block 21, an entertainment and retail complex in Austin, Tex., that Ryman Hospitality is in the process of acquiring for about \$260 million.

"OEG's dynamic collection of entertainment venues, digital content and iconic country music brands provide a strong foundation for continued growth as a fully-integrated country lifestyle platform," said Atairos chairman-CEO Angelakis. "We are excited to partner with the [Ryman Hospitality] and OEG teams to explore

new content distribution strategies and support their ambition of becoming the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content.”

Ryman Hospitality chief Reed will serve as executive chairman of OEG in addition to remaining chairman and CEO of Ryman Hospitality. Atairos partners Alex Evans and Jackson Phillips will join OEG’s board of directors, which will be comprised of four Ryman Hospitality directors and two Atairos reps. Atairos is a partner with NBCUniversal and receives much of its investment capital from NBCUniversal parent Comcast. Atairos is putting in \$278 million while NBCU will invest up to \$15 million.

“We look forward to exploring opportunities to leverage our media, technology and content creation expertise to help OEG accelerate its plans and bring its iconic brands, as well as artists and storied cities, to music lovers worldwide,” said David Pietrycha, executive VP of strategy and business development for NBCUniversal.

Ryman Hospitality began the process of searching for a strategic partner last year. Executives had a series of rapid-fire meetings with suitors over a three-month period. In time it became clear that Atairos and NBCU were in the pole position in terms of bringing enormous strategic advantages to a company that is tiny in the scheme of Big Media these days. Comcast’s ownership of the Sky satellite platform in the U.K. and Europe could be a huge boon to Circle and other assets. The U.K. in particular is a prime target for OEG’s country lifestyle target demo.

“They see potential for continued growth,” said Mark Fioravanti, president of Ryman Hospitality. “The fact is we’re focused on a segment of the consumer that is dramatically underserved. The brands we have are irreplaceable. They’re synonymous with country music and important part of music history. All those factors combined led to (Atairos and NBCU’s) viewpoint on the tremendous value we have to unlock.”

Reed emphasized that the influx of capital will be used to expand the content and distribution of Circle and it will also allow OEG to hunt for more star-driven partnerships such as the Ole Red venture with Shelton. In all, Ryman Hospitality will receive gross transaction proceeds of \$593 million, including a new \$300 million loan secured by the OEG assets. The proceeds will be used in part to pay off existing debt to ease pressure on the balance sheet of Ryman Hospitality.

“We’re looking at the potential growth of more theaters to put the artist in the center of brands like Ole Red,” Reed said. “We’re looking for new content that we can put on the Circle platform and to build better distribution and affiliation with advertisers.”

For Ryman Hospitality Properties, Morgan Stanley served as financial advisor; Bass, Berry & Sims PLC served as legal advisor and Skadden Arps served as tax counsel. Moelis & Co. was financial advisor to Atairos while Davis Polk & Wardwell was legal advisor.

Document VARTY00020220404ei44000ru

Ryman Hospitality: Atairos, NBCUniversal Making Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment

By Stephen Nakrosis

203 words

5 April 2022

00:02

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties on Monday said Atairos and its long-term strategic partner, NBCUniversal, will acquire a 30% minority ownership stake in RHP's subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings LLC.

OEG Attractions Holdings directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group, Ryman said. The investment values OEG at \$1.415 billion, according to Ryman.

The initial 30% equity investment will be about \$293 million, Ryman said, adding Atairos will directly invest about \$278 million and NBCUniversal about \$15 million.

Ryman also said Atairos agreed to make an additional \$30 million investment in OEG, contingent on certain performance targets, adding the additional investment would bring OEG's valuation to \$1.515 billion.

Once the deal is completed, Atairos Partners Alex Evans and Jackson Phillips will join OEG's Board of Directors, which will be made up of four RHP Directors and two Atairos Directors, Ryman said.

Opry Entertainment Group's portfolio includes the Grand Ole Opry, The Inn at Opryland and the Gaylord Springs Golf Links.

Write to Stephen Nakrosis at stephen.nakrosis@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

April 04, 2022 19:02 ET (23:02 GMT)

Document DJDN000020220404ei44003ia

BRIEF-Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc Announces Strategic Investment In Opry Entertainment Group By Atairos And Nbcuniversal

251 words

4 April 2022

23:08

Reuters News

LBA

English

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April 4 (Reuters) - Ryman Hospitality Properties Inc :

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES, INC. ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN OPRY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP BY ATAIROS AND NBCUNIVERSAL

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES - ATAIROS ALONG WITH NBCUNIVERSAL, WILL ACQUIRE 30% MINORITY OWNERSHIP STAKE IN CO'S SUBSIDIARY OEG ATTRACTIONS HOLDINGS

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES INC - ATAIROS' INVESTMENT VALUES OEG AT \$1.415 BILLION, INCLUSIVE OF OEG'S PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED ACQUISITION OF BLOCK 21

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES - ATAIROS AGREED TO MAKE ADDITIONAL \$30 MILLION INVESTMENT IN OEG, WHICH WOULD BRING OEG'S VALUATION TO \$1.515 BILLION

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES INC - ATAIROS' AND NBCUNIVERSAL'S INITIAL 30% EQUITY INVESTMENT IN OEG WILL BE ABOUT \$293 MILLION

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES INC - ATAIROS IS DIRECTLY INVESTING ABOUT \$278 MILLION AND NBCUNIVERSAL WILL DIRECTLY INVEST UP TO ABOUT \$15 MILLION

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES INC - UPON COMPLETION OF TRANSACTION, RHP WILL RETAIN A CONTROLLING 70% INTEREST IN OEG

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES - COLIN REED TO SERVE AS EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF OEG IN ADDITION TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF RHP

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES - IN CONNECTION WITH INVESTMENT, ATAIROS WILL ENTER INTO AN LLC AGREEMENT WITH RHP AND OEG UPON CLOSING OF INVESTMENT

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES - PURSUANT TO LLC AGREEMENT ATAIROS PARTNERS ALEX EVANS AND JACKSON PHILLIPS WILL JOIN OEG'S BOARD

* RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES INC - UPON CLOSING, RHP EXPECTS TO RECEIVE GROSS TRANSACTION PROCEEDS OF ABOUT \$593 MILLION Source text for Eikon: Further company coverage:

Released: 2022-4-4T23:08:31.000Z

Document LBA0000020220404ei4403mbq



18:05 EDT Ryman Hospitality announces investment from Atairos, NBCUniversalRyman...

353 words

4 April 2022

Theflyonthewall.com

FLYWAL

English

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18:05 EDT Ryman Hospitality announces investment from Atairos, NBCUniversalRyman Hospitality Properties and Atairos announced that Atairos, along with their long-term strategic partner NBCUniversal, will acquire a 30% minority ownership stake in RHP's subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings, which directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group. Atairos' investment values OEG at \$1.415B, inclusive of OEG's previously announced acquisition of Block 21. Atairos has agreed to make an additional \$30M investment in OEG, contingent on certain performance targets being achieved, which would bring OEG's valuation to \$1.515B. The initial \$1.415B valuation includes a recapitalization of OEG with a new \$300M Term Loan B and the assumption of a \$137M CMBS facility for Block 21 upon consummation of that transaction.

Atairos' and NBCUniversal's initial 30% equity investment in OEG will be approximately \$293M, of which Atairos is directly investing approximately \$278M and NBCUniversal will directly invest up to approximately \$15M. Upon completion of the transaction, RHP will retain a controlling 70% interest in OEG. Colin Reed will serve as Executive Chairman of OEG in addition to his responsibilities as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of RHP. In connection with the investment, Atairos will enter into an LLC agreement with RHP and OEG upon the closing of the investment, pursuant to which, among other things, Atairos Partners Alex Evans and Jackson Phillips will join OEG's Board of Directors, which will be comprised of four RHP Directors and two Atairos Directors. The transaction, which is subject to customary conditions, is expected to close in Q2 2022. Upon closing, RHP expects to receive gross transaction proceeds of approximately \$593M, comprised of the Atairos and NBCUniversal investment and borrowings from a new \$300M Term Loan B facility secured by OEG assets. RHP expects to use these proceeds to pay transaction expenses, fully repay its \$300M Term Loan A and substantially all the borrowings outstanding under its revolving credit facility, thereby reducing leverage and creating balance sheet flexibility to allow RHP to pursue continued reinvestment in its businesses.

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Press Release: Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal

1,832 words

4 April 2022

23:00

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 04, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Ryman Hospitality Properties (NYSE: RHP) ("RHP"), a leading lodging and hospitality real estate investment trust that specializes in upscale convention center resorts and country music entertainment experiences, and Atairos, an independent strategic investment company focused on supporting growth-oriented businesses, today announced that Atairos, along with their long-term strategic partner NBCUniversal, will acquire a 30% minority ownership stake in RHP's subsidiary OEG Attractions Holdings LLC, which directly or indirectly owns the assets that comprise Opry Entertainment Group ("OEG"). Atairos' investment values OEG at \$1.415 billion, inclusive of OEG's previously announced acquisition of Block 21 (which remains subject to certain closing conditions and is expected to close prior to June 1, 2022). Atairos has agreed to make an additional \$30 million investment in OEG, contingent on certain performance targets being achieved, which would bring OEG's valuation to \$1.515 billion. The initial \$1.415 billion valuation includes a recapitalization of OEG with a new \$300 million Term Loan B and the assumption of a \$137 million CMBS facility for Block 21 upon consummation of that transaction. Atairos' and NBCUniversal's initial 30% equity investment in OEG will be approximately \$293 million, of which Atairos is directly investing approximately \$278 million and NBCUniversal will directly invest up to approximately \$15 million.

Colin Reed, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ryman Hospitality Properties, said, "Over the last decade we have shared our excitement about the bright future of our entertainment business and the significant value creation opportunities that exist as we extend our reach nationwide and transition OEG to an integrated country lifestyle platform.

Back in June 2021, given the unsolicited interest we had received, we embarked on a formal process to identify a strategic partner that shares our vision for growing OEG to a position where it can operate independently of our core hospitality business while enabling our shareholders to participate in the significant upside for OEG that lies ahead.

Atairos and NBCUniversal have a great appreciation for the legendary assets under our stewardship and we are aligned on protecting and nurturing them for future generations of music lovers to enjoy. We view this partnership as a significant opportunity to strengthen these beloved institutions and cement their influence on American music culture. We remain focused on creating sustainable long-term value for our shareholders as we seek new ways to connect artists and fans through one-of-a-kind experiences."

Michael Angelakis, Chairman and CEO of Atairos, said, "OEG's dynamic collection of entertainment venues, digital content and iconic country music brands provide a strong foundation for continued growth as a fully-integrated country lifestyle platform. We are excited to partner with the RHP and OEG teams to explore new content distribution strategies and support their ambition of becoming the leading player in country lifestyle live entertainment and media content."

David Pietrycha, Executive Vice President, Strategy and Business Development at NBCUniversal, added, "We are excited to invest in OEG alongside our strategic partner Atairos. We look forward to exploring opportunities to leverage our media, technology and content creation expertise to help OEG accelerate its plans and bring its iconic brands, as well as artists and storied cities, to music lovers worldwide."

Additional Transaction Details

Upon completion of the transaction, RHP will retain a controlling 70% interest in OEG. Colin Reed will serve as Executive Chairman of OEG in addition to his responsibilities as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of RHP. In connection with the investment, Atairos will enter into an LLC agreement with RHP and OEG upon the closing of the investment, pursuant to which, among other things, Atairos Partners Alex Evans and

Jackson Phillips will join OEG's Board of Directors, which will be comprised of four RHP Directors and two Atairos Directors.

The transaction, which is subject to customary conditions, is expected to close in Q2 2022. Upon closing, RHP expects to receive gross transaction proceeds of approximately \$593 million, comprised of the Atairos and NBCUniversal investment and borrowings from a new \$300 million Term Loan B facility secured by OEG assets. RHP expects to use these proceeds to pay transaction expenses, fully repay its \$300 million Term Loan A and substantially all the borrowings outstanding under its revolving credit facility, thereby reducing leverage and creating balance sheet flexibility to allow RHP to pursue continued reinvestment in its businesses.

Advisors

Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC is serving as financial advisor, Bass, Berry & Sims PLC is serving as legal advisor, and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP is serving as tax counsel to RHP. Moelis & Company LLC is serving as financial advisor and Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP is serving as legal advisor to Atairos. The financing commitment for this transaction has been secured from JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. and Morgan Stanley Senior Funding, Inc.

A Note to Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Shareholders:

For additional information regarding this acquisition, visit <http://ir.rymanhp.com> and click on Presentations and Transcripts, where RHP has posted an investor supplement providing a transaction overview, which introduces Atairos and describes the announced strategic investment. Please note that our website is provided as an inactive textual reference and the information on our website is not incorporated by reference in this release.

Ryman Hospitality Properties will hold a conference call to discuss this transaction Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 10 a.m. ET. To participate in the conference call, please dial 888-632-3384 and use Conference ID: 6355412. The call will be available for replay through April 12, 2022, and by dialing 800-938-0996, a Conference ID is not required. This call is also being webcast and can be accessed at Ryman Hospitality Properties' Investor Relations website at <http://ir.rymanhp.com>.

About Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc.

Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. (NYSE: RHP) is a leading lodging and hospitality real estate investment trust that specializes in upscale convention center resorts and country music entertainment experiences. RHP's Opry Entertainment Group includes a growing collection of iconic and emerging country music brands we operate, including the Grand Ole Opry; Ryman Auditorium, WSM 650 AM; Ole Red and a 50% interest in Circle, a country lifestyle media network RHP owns in a joint venture with Gray Television; as well as other Nashville-area attractions managed by Marriott. RHP operates Opry Entertainment Group as part of a taxable REIT subsidiary. RHP's core holdings, Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, and Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center are five of the top 10 largest non-gaming convention center hotels in the United States based on total indoor meeting space. These convention center resorts operate under the Gaylord Hotels brand and are managed by Marriott International. RHP also owns two adjacent ancillary hotels and a small number of attractions managed by Marriott International for a combined total of 10,412 rooms and more than 2.8 million square feet of total indoor and outdoor meeting space in top convention and leisure destinations across the country. Visit RymanHP.com for more information.

About Atairos

Atairos is an independent, private company focused on supporting growth-oriented businesses across a wide range of industries. Atairos provides a unique combination of active strategic partnership and patient long-term capital to high-potential companies and their management teams. Atairos was launched in 2016 and has approximately \$6 billion of equity capital. Atairos has offices in New York City, Philadelphia and London. For more information, please visit www.atairos.com

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains statements as to RHP's beliefs and expectations of the outcome of future events that are forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. You can identify these statements by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. Examples of these statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the pending acquisition of Block 21, the proposed investment by Atairos and NBCUniversal in OEG, and intended benefits of the proposed investment in OEG. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the statements made. These include the risks and uncertainties

associated with the occurrence of any event, change or other circumstance that could delay the closing of the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG, or result in the termination of the agreement for the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG. Other factors that could cause results to differ are described in the filings made from time to time by RHP with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and include the risk factors and other risks and uncertainties described in RHP's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021, and its Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and subsequent filings. RHP does not undertake any obligation to release publicly any revisions to forward-looking statements made by it to reflect events or circumstances occurring after the date hereof or the occurrence of unanticipated events.

Investor Relations Contacts:

Media Contacts:

4 Apr 2022 18:00 ET Press Release: Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. -2-

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4 Apr 2022 18:02 ET *Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal

4 Apr 2022 18:03 ET *Ryman Hospitality: Atairos' Investment Values OEG at \$1.415 B, Inclusive of OEG's Previously Announced Acquisition of Block 21 >RHP

4 Apr 2022 18:03 ET *Ryman Hospitality: Atairos Has Agreed to Make an Additional \$30 M Investment in OEG, Contingent on Certain Performance Targets Being Achieved, Which Would Bring OEG's Valuation to \$1.515 B >RHP

4 Apr 2022 18:03 ET *Ryman Hospitality: Atairos' and NBCUniversal's Initial 30% Equity Investment in OEG Will Be Approximately \$293 M, of Which Atairos Is Directly Investing Approximately \$278 M and NBCUniversal Will Directly Invest Up to Approximately \$15 M >RHP

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April 04, 2022 18:03 ET (22:03 GMT)

Document DJDN000020220404ei44003gf

Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces Strategic Investment in Opry Entertainment Group by Atairos and NBCUniversal

1,683 words

4 April 2022

23:00

GlobeNewswire

PZON

English

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Ryman Hospitality Properties will hold a conference call to discuss this transaction Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 10 a.m. ET. To participate in the conference call, please dial 888-632-3384 and use Conference ID: 6355412. The call will be available for replay through April 12, 2022, and by dialing 800-938-0996, a Conference ID is not required. This call is also being webcast and can be accessed at Ryman Hospitality Properties' Investor Relations website at <http://ir.rymanhp.com>.

About Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc.

Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. (NYSE: RHP) is a leading lodging and hospitality real estate investment trust that specializes in upscale convention center resorts and country music entertainment experiences. RHP's Opry Entertainment Group includes a growing collection of iconic and emerging country music brands we operate, including the Grand Ole Opry; Ryman Auditorium, WSM 650 AM; Ole Red and a 50% interest in Circle, a country lifestyle media network RHP owns in a joint venture with Gray Television; as well as other Nashville-area attractions managed by Marriott. RHP operates Opry Entertainment Group as part of a taxable REIT subsidiary. RHP's core holdings, Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, and Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center are five of the top 10 largest non-gaming convention center hotels in the United States based on total indoor meeting space. These convention center resorts operate under the Gaylord Hotels brand and are managed by Marriott International. RHP also owns two adjacent ancillary hotels and a small number of attractions managed by Marriott International for a combined total of 10,412 rooms and more than 2.8 million square feet of total indoor and outdoor meeting space in top convention and leisure destinations across the country. Visit RymanHP.com for more information.

About Atairos

Atairos is an independent, private company focused on supporting growth-oriented businesses across a wide range of industries. Atairos provides a unique combination of active strategic partnership and patient long-term capital to high-potential companies and their management teams. Atairos was launched in 2016 and has approximately \$6 billion of equity capital. Atairos has offices in New York City, Philadelphia and London. For more information, please visit www.atairos.com

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains statements as to RHP's beliefs and expectations of the outcome of future events that are forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. You can identify these statements by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. Examples of these statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the pending acquisition of Block 21, the proposed investment by Atairos and NBCUniversal in OEG, and intended benefits of the proposed investment in OEG. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the statements made. These include the risks and uncertainties

associated with the occurrence of any event, change or other circumstance that could delay the closing of the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG, or result in the termination of the agreement for the Block 21 acquisition or the proposed investment in OEG. Other factors that could cause results to differ are described in the filings made from time to time by RHP with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and include the risk factors and other risks and uncertainties described in RHP's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021, and its Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and subsequent filings. RHP does not undertake any obligation to release publicly any revisions to forward-looking statements made by it to reflect events or circumstances occurring after the date hereof or the occurrence of unanticipated events.

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Ryman Hospitality Properties, Inc. Announces -2-

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There is strong demand for our **content** in India: NBCUniversal's Hendrik McDermott

Varun Markande

Distributed by Contify.com

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4 April 2022

Indiantelevision.com

ATINTV

English

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OTT streaming service hayu was launched in 2016 in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia targeting major English-speaking markets to advance the unscripted reality genre. The **content** on the service was provided by NBCUniversal, one of the world's leading unscripted production companies, that adds 2000 hours of unscripted **content** every year primarily through their flagship pay TV brands in the United States - Bravo, E!, and Oxygen.

Today, hayu **platform** boasts 10,000 hours of **content** all focused on reality TV. While the **content** library swells predictably each year, the **platform**'s strategy is focused on bringing that **content** to more English speakers across the globe. It does this in three ways, launching in new English-speaking markets, increasing its distribution reach, and onboarding **platform** partners.

In 2017, hayu launched in the Nordic region (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark) and then into the rest of Europe. The service was launched in Canada and Benelux in 2018. The expansion continued to Southeast Asia including the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, and finally India in December 2021.

Leading hayu's charge across the globe is NBCUniversal managing director of direct-to-consumer global Hendrik McDermott, who's been at the media and entertainment company for over 16 years. Based in London, McDermott is responsible for the territorial expansion and P&L including subscriber acquisition, retention, customer lifetime value, and revenue growth. The platform hayu has completed six years since its launch and is currently present in 29 countries.

In an exclusive conversation with IndianTelevision.com, McDermott shares his focused strategy for hayu's international expansion and approach to the Indian market.

Edited Excerpts:

On the launch in India three months ago

Our research showed that there's a huge appetite for reality TV in this country. As we look at our addressable base (English-speaking audiences), 33 per cent of that base are huge fans of reality TV in some shape or form. Out of that group of people, three-quarters are very interested in subscribing to a US content service. That's a very high percentage in our addressable base. So, there is a strong demand for the content that we have in this market.

On monetising unscripted content via subscriptions

We view our platform as a premium service. Our research shows that people are happy to pay for content and they don't want advertising on the service. Our platform is an ad-free service and we do not have advertising on our platform in any of our other markets so it's something that we've stayed true to in India. That's the area (subscription) we hope to grow for now.

On distribution strategy and partnering with Prime Video Channels

Partnerships are a hallmark of our strategy and we're very active in partnership discussions. We are partnered with every kind of platform you can imagine including cable platforms, satellite platforms, OTT platforms, and telcos. In every market that we're present, we have at least one platform partner. We launched with Prime Video Channels here in February but we have a longstanding partnership with Amazon in other markets as well.

The types of integrations that we do differ from market to market. For example, in Canada, which is a cable TV-led market, we partnered with all the cable TV operators and built a bespoke app that sits on their set-top-box. The Nordic markets are much more SVOD-led and so we've done integrations with the other

SVOD platforms. We're open to all kinds of different partnership conversations. We are partners with almost every App Store and Smart TV across Apple, Google, Roku, etc.

In India, I can't speak about specific partners but we are in active conversations for further distribution. The deal with Amazon is a structure where the partner platform ingests our content and we're open to that. We're looking to bundle with different smart TV and telco operators as well.

On a localisation strategy for India

We are an English language service. The content itself is very topical and when our new shows come out it is written about in the newspapers. We prioritise the speed at which the content comes to our platform and therefore our shows air in India on the same day as the US within two hours of broadcast transmission.

In India, we're subtitling some of our content knowing that there is a desire to watch content in local languages. About 4000 hours of content has been subtitled to Hindi.

On beating the competition in the unscripted content space

We bring our US-based shows that feature some of the most popular and famous people in the world. These are franchises like "The Real Housewives" and "The Kardashians." These are premium franchises targeting a specific demographic. We're not a general entertainment service so we're not going to try and address the entire market. Our target audience is young, female, and English-savvy.

Obviously, we'll sell our service to anyone but we do tend to skew more females than males with 90 per cent of our user base outside of India being female. We also understand that this is a mobile-led market but we're trying to keep our platform available to as broad a selection of people as possible. So, we're present on all devices.

On growing the platform in India

The performance metric that we've been looking at is our viewing engagement i.e., how much content is being viewed by people on our platform. I think that's important at the launch phase because we're brand new to the market. Our benchmark in terms of average viewing per person per month varies between 16-20 hours of content. That is broadly speaking the performance of our content in other markets. We're pleased to note that in India the average at the moment is 17 hours per person per month which is within our target performance.

On marketing the service in India

Marketing in India is no different from other markets. When we launch our service, we were very active in building brand awareness since the brand is new to the market. This includes pay TV advertising and out-of-home advertising that we've been active in starting from December. Then we'll shift our tactics towards digital because globally we've seen it is much more common to get people to subscribe to services via digital. You will see our presence on social media channels, influencers, podcasts, and everything else. Once we've invested in building our brand, we can shift our tactics to drive subscriptions via digital.

On making the customer onboarding journey as frictionless as possible

Our service is accessible via numerous touchpoints. We have a whole suite of apps, 13 different apps, and have made it seamless for people to connect with the platform in any way they want. The simplest is the web where there is a basic sign-up flow. In this market, we offer two subscription packages i.e., a three-month package and a 12-month package. Adding more payment options is in our product roadmap for the coming months. Payment modes like Paytm will be enabled over the course of the year.

On driving viewership via connected TVs versus mobile devices

Even in markets where we've had integrations with cable TV platforms, the primary viewing of our content genre is happening on the small screens. This includes mobiles and tablets but also to a certain extent laptop computers. While there is some variation from market to market, this is consistent across the board. In India, we found that about 50 per cent of the viewing is happening on the mobile phone. It also skews towards Android devices over iOS devices. Mobile viewing in this market is broadly speaking higher than we'd see in other markets.

On hayu's upcoming content slate

We recently launched a new franchise called "Below Deck Down Under" that's exclusively on hayu platform. In May, we have a big premiere when the "Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" returns to the platform with season 12. On an annual basis, we add about 2000 hours of content and on any given day four to ten new episodes are coming in from our partners in the US.

PRESS RELEASE: Seattle-Based Nonprofit Enhances Support Services for Women Experiencing Homelessness with Technology from Comcast Business

845 words

4 April 2022

16:05

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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DGAP-News: Comcast Washington Seattle-Based Nonprofit Enhances Support Services for Women Experiencing Homelessness with Technology from Comcast Business 2022-04-04 / 17:05 The issuer is solely responsible for the **content** of this announcement.

Comcast Business today announced that it is providing Seattle-based nonprofit, Dignity for Divas, with its Business VoiceEdge(R) cloud-based voice solution. Its capabilities allow for streamlined communication workflows and better call management, which has helped the nonprofit stay connected to its clients and employees alike, driving forward its mission to provide skills and support to women experiencing homelessness.

Between 2019 and 2020 alone, Washington saw a more than 6% increase in people experiencing homelessness - the third largest increase among all U.S. states. Dignity for Divas founder and director Nikki Gane-Butler started her business after experiencing homelessness herself and recognizing the need in her community for outreach services to women experiencing homelessness.

Gane-Butler started the business in 2012 with a mission to pull people out of the despair in their minds and give them back their dignity. Today, Dignity for Divas serves six cities in Washington state and has expanded its services past street survival kits, offering rehousing support, workshops on topics including financial literacy and meditation, and wellness centers with dedicated practitioners.

With its growing mission, Dignity for Divas up-leveled its operations, moving from Gane-Butler's living room to a 6,000 square foot warehouse space. They also partnered with Comcast Business to install Business VoiceEdge in the new location. The cloud-based voice solution offers a portfolio of hosted voice services supported by one of the largest networks in the country. This tool has allowed Dignity for Divas to set up separate phone lines, including one for its front desk, another for its wellness center, and a mobile line for its Diva transit bus service. Call transferring services and a web portal to manage calls also provide another layer of service management.

'Installing the Comcast Business services has helped give us the legitimacy of a bigger brand. We became the business we knew we could be, and as a result, the community is starting to take more notice of us,' said Gane-Butler. 'Comcast Business has been a true partner in guiding me along this process and has helped me so that I don't feel by myself. Between my budget and accessibility needs, they are truly my best option. I will only work with Comcast Business now and in the future.'

Since installing Business VoiceEdge, Dignity for Divas' productivity has risen. The nonprofit has also seen an uptick in corporate partnerships, which are particularly essential to Dignity for Divas' educational courses.

Longer term, Gane-Butler has a vision to replicate her business model in Washington at a nationwide level, and Business VoiceEdge will help smooth the expansion process. The scalable solution can be easily added to new office locations and turned on quickly, which will allow Dignity for Divas to start providing services right away.

'Businesses like Dignity for Divas are doing hard work every day to make a big impact in our communities, and we recognize their need for reliable, flexible technology solutions that can not only enable, but help elevate, their important missions,' said Rob Brenner, Vice President of Comcast Business for Comcast's Washington Region. 'We are proud to support Dignity for Divas in its mission to bring dignity and positive change to the lives of those who need help most.'

For more information, visit <http://business.comcast.com>.

About Comcast Business

Comcast Business offers a suite of Connectivity, Communications, Networking, Cybersecurity, Wireless, and Managed Solutions to help organizations of different sizes prepare for what's next. Powered by the nation's largest Gig-speed broadband network, and backed by 24/7 customer support, Comcast Business is the nation's largest cable provider to small and mid-size businesses and one of the leading service providers to the Enterprise market. Comcast Business has been consistently recognized by industry analysts and associations as a leader and innovator, and one of the fastest growing providers of Ethernet services. For more information, call 866-429-3085. Follow on Twitter @ComcastBusiness and on other social media networks at <http://business.comcast.com/social>. Contact Details

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PRESS RELEASE: Seattle-Based Nonprofit Enhances Support Services for Women Experiencing Homelessness with Technology from Comcast Business

842 words

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Dow Jones Newswires German

RTDJGE

English

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Ohio Cable Telecommunications Association - Member News: Comcast Expands Affordable Connectivity Program Offers with Faster Internet Essentials Service and Xfinity Mobile

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4 April 2022

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Member News: Comcast Expands Affordable **Connectivity** Program Offers with Faster Internet Essentials Service and Xfinity Mobile

04/04/2022

Comcast is participating in the federal government's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and the \$30/month benefit can be applied to any tier of Xfinity Internet service.

OCTA Member Comcast introduced two new ways for customers to connect through ACP, and both are available to any customer who qualifies in all the company's service areas. Customers can sign up for Internet Essentials Plus, which includes 100 Mbps download speeds, a cable modem, and WiFi router, and is free after the government's ACP credit is applied. Additionally, Xfinity Internet customers participating in ACP now can add mobile service through Xfinity Mobile.

[Read More from Comcast](#)

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News

'You can't get rid of me yet': Psaki REFUSES to confirm reports she is leaving for MSNBC in May, insists there will be no **ethics violations and she has 'recused' herself from decisions as she is grilled by multiple outlets - including NBC**

Geoff Earle, Deputy U.S. Political Editor For Dailymail.com

1,041 words

4 April 2022

00:53

Mail Online

DAMONL

English

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- * Psaki missed Biden's trip to Europe last week after testing positive
- * Comms Dir. Kate Bedingfield filled in this week with briefings
- * She returned to the briefing room Friday following reports she would soon leave
- * Deputy Karine Jean-Pierre also tested positive this week
- * Psaki is in 'exclusive' talks with MSNBC, according to multiple reports
- * She provided TV commentary before taking latest White House job
- * Trump press secretary Kayleigh McEnany jumped to Fox after Trump left office
- * Psaki fielded multiple questions on the topic
- * Among her questioners was NBC's Kristen Welker
- * 'How is this ethical to have these conversations with media outlets?' she asked

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki refused to confirm reports Friday that she is expected to leave the White House next month – and is already in talks with one of the nation's top liberal cable networks for her next gig.

The normally unflappable spokeswoman appeared flustered at times as she sought to bat away questions about the propriety of negotiating with a network even while steering the White House media operation.

'I have done -- have taken the ethics legal requirements, to the highest, very seriously, in any discussions in any considerations of any future employment, just as any White House official would, and I've taken steps beyond that to ensure there's no conflicts,' she said.

NBC's White House correspondent Kristen Welker asked Psaki to explain 'how is this ethical to have these conversations with media outlets' while holding down her job.

'Well, there are a range of stringent ethical and legal requirements that are imposed on everybody in this administration and many administrations past about any conversations you're having with future employers. That is true of any industry you're working in. And I have abided by those, and tried to take steps to go beyond that as well.'

She said anyone in such a position would have conversations with the White House Office of Legal Counsel, although she stopped short of saying that she herself had done so in this case.

Through all the ethical nuance, she declined to say she was leaving, despite the reports.

'You can't get rid of me yet,' she said – implying that there was no done-deal.

Psaki anticipating a grilling during her first time back at the White House podium after a bout of covid-19, Psaki even reached for arguments that might butter up her interlocutors, mentioning that she had tried to answer their questions and even called on people in the back of the room.

'I have nothing to confirm about my length of public service or planned service, or anything about consideration about next plans. I'm very happy to be standing with all of you here today after it felt like a never ending endless time in my basement quarantining away from my family,' she said.

'Believe it or not, I missed you a lot. And my focus every day continues to be speaking on behalf of the President answering your questions, as tough as they may be at many times, as difficult as they may be to answer at many times, and I hope that I meet my own bar of treating everybody with fairness and being equitable,' she said.

'I have always gone over and above the stringent ethical and legal requirements of the Biden administration,' she said.

'I have received rigorous ethics counseling, including or as it relates to any future employment,' she said. 'I've complied with all ethics requirements and gone beyond and taken steps to recuse myself from decisions as appropriate,' she continued.

Psaki has been President Joe Biden's main mouthpiece for more than a year. She stayed off her planned trip to Brussels and Warsaw with the president last week after she revealed she tested positive for COVID-19.

[Axios](#) reported Friday that she is 'in exclusive talks with MSNBC to join the network after she leaves the White House around May.'

That would put her departure beyond the original one year she said she signed on for when she took the high-profile position.

The report includes multiple passages suggesting Psaki was checking ethical boxes during her search – even though she appears poised to go to a top media outlet that commands a seat in the front row of the White House briefing room she presides over.

Her show would be on NBC's streaming platform, Peacock.

Psaki, a former Obama administration official, had an on-air gig at CNN before she joined the Biden White House. She did not have a role in his campaign.

The talks were done 'in close consultation with the White House counsel's office,' according to the report.

A separate report in The Hill also cited the White House lawyers, and mentioned that 'no contracts have been signed yet.'

Psaki has young children and twice tested positive for the coronavirus during her tenure.

[Puck](#) reported in February that she was also being courted by CNN, which launched its own streaming service CNN+ this week.

Communications Director Kate Bedingfield has been briefing reporters this week. Psaki's deputy, Karine Jean-Pierre, also tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from Biden's trip, where she filled in for Psaki and conducted a single in-flight briefing.

Trump press secretary Kayleigh McEnany jumped to Fox after President Donald Trump left office. She revealed her own 'employment agreement' in her termination financial disclosure report.

During her tenure Psaki has tried to brief nearly every business day, and sought to turn down the temperature in the briefing room after Trump's repeated attacks on what he called 'fake news.'

She sometimes delivered sharp answers when tangling with Fox correspondent Peter Doocy.

MSNBC declined to comment when contacted by DailyMail.com.

Symone Sanders, who served as the top spokeswoman for Vice President Kamala Harris, got her own show on MSNBC. It debuts next month.

Document DAMONL0020220401ei41005xy

The Race for New Modern Measurement Currencies

Alexandra Bower

556 words

3 April 2022

Adweek

ADWE

English

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As the media and technology landscape rapidly transforms, measurement struggles to keep up. With the evolving consumer cross-**platform** journey, advertisers are forced to rethink a system of tabulating their audiences by tapping into viewing behavioral shifts that favor mobile and streaming services.

Andrea Zapata, executive vice president of Research, Data, and Insights at WarnerMedia, and Kelly Abcarian, executive vice president of Measurement and Impact at NBCUniversal Advertising and Partnerships, stopped by Adweek's Mediaweek to address current trends and best practices for navigating a new measurement **ecosystem**.

A new generation of audience measurement

In January, NBCUniversal announced [iSpot.tv](#) as its first alternate measurement partner. Meanwhile, WarnerMedia chose three companies to partner with for its measurement tests: iSpot.tv, Comscore, and VideoAmp.

"People come and buy against television for reaching lots of people in a simultaneous fashion, and we've checked that box for a really long time," Zapata explained. "But the power of the innovation that these alternative measurement companies are bringing is not just about a programming reaching lots of people, it's about us being able to prove and demonstrate down the funnel we can reach lots of people, we can reach 'in the market for,' and we can reach one-on-one. It's a full-funnel solution across all of our platforms, and to be able to count it appropriately and accurately, is game-changing."

Zapata said her team chose to test and learn with three different partners because they each bring different things to the table.

"We wanted to make sure we could understand how we could do cross-screen measurement in real-time against not just demographics, but against advanced audiences? And, then how do we think about doing that in a way that's not just using big data, but in a way that's smartly thinking about incorporating panel," she explained.

Abcarian said NBCUniversal is taking a similar approach.

"We've been very excited by the opportunities to really engage with our advertisers across Super Bowl, Olympics, and now Q1," she explained. "We're measuring exactly what the advertisers are asking us to do, which is unified, cross-platform measurement in their exact ads, and we're doing so with a lot of speed -- within 48 hours."

Abcarian said these innovative measurements are helping NBCU find insights to unlock for their brands and advertising moments from key moments.

Solving cross-platform measurement

Abcarian said that for years, advertisers have talked about cross-platform and how to find solutions for advertising. She said there's no need to wait any longer, and brands should act now.

"A bright future awaits us," she said. "One that is faster and more accurate than counts all of their ads and that's enabled by better identify, tied to impact, and enables better planning."

As the marketplace moves toward more data-driven methods of advertising optimization, the panelists agree that choice and diversification of measurement models are vital for the future.

"Alternative measurement solutions are meant to better inform media planning and buying and ensure the full impact of an advertiser's investment is captured," Zapata said. "We're addressing the challenge marketers have with measuring audiences, and advertising impact as media consumption has shifted from traditional linear television to connected TV."



MINT, Industry

Hayu releases new list of shows for April

Lata Jha

357 words

3 April 2022

Mint

HNMINT

English

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New Delhi, April 3 -- NBC Universal-owned hayu, the latest over-the-top (OTT) streaming **platform** to enter India, has released a new list of shows for the month of April. This includes investigative drama Final Moments, Dating No Filter: UK and reality series The Real Housewives of POTOMAC.

The service, which began with 8,000 hours of **content**, will bring 1,000 hours of fresh **content** each year, and target the 18-54 age group with a skew towards women, while increasingly offering Hindi subtitles on its shows.

Media experts said the OTT market may be maturing with such specifically- targeted services, but any new platform will be limited in audience appeal without offering local language content.

The platform is currently present in 29 countries, including the UK, Australia and Ireland, and has been looking for expansion opportunities, but prefers to focus on a single genre, that of American television.

Shows such as Keeping Up With the Kardashians, The Real Housewives, Top Chef, Million Dollar Listing and Family Karma are available on the service, with new episodes being added every day and older seasons being streamed as well.

The platform has a 90% skew towards women, especially those belonging to the 18-54 age group or even those slightly younger. A three-month subscription to hayu costs Rs.349 and an annual membership costs Rs.999.

"We have been carrying out market research in India for over a year now as part of which we spoke to a large number of women and realized that there is a significant base that would consider a US reality TV service," Hendrik McDermott, managing director, direct-to-consumer, global at NBC Universal, said in an earlier interview to Mint. The company will focus on content distribution and not production at the moment, McDermott had said, explaining why there are no plans for local Indian originals yet.

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Document HNMINT0020220403ei43001ba



News

'Show'down with Psaki? **Ethics** concerns over MSNBC 'gig'

Steven Nelson and Callie Patteson

421 words

2 April 2022

New York Post

NYPO

All Editions

18

English

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White House press secretary Jen Psaki was pressed Friday about a report that she will soon leave for MSNBC, raising questions about whether it is ethical for her to remain in the Biden administration.

Psaki declined to discuss her future plans, telling reporters, "You can't get rid of me yet," before adding, "I have nothing to confirm about my length of public service or planned service, or anything about consideration about next plans."

Axios reported Friday morning that Psaki is in exclusive talks with the cable network and has been in close consultation with the White House counsel's office about her pending departure.

At the afternoon briefing, reporters - including NBC News' Kristen Welker - pressed her on how she could remain as President Biden's chief spokesperson while negotiating a salary with a media outlet.

"Is it ethical for you to continue conducting this job while negotiating with the media?" CBS News' Ed O'Keefe asked.

"I have always gone over and above the stringent ethical and legal requirements of the Biden administration and I take that very seriously," she said. "And as a standard for every employee of the White House, I have received rigorous ethics counseling, including as it relates to any future employment."

"I've complied with all ethics requirements and gone beyond and taken steps to recuse myself from the decisions as appropriate. And so I hope that all of you working with us sometime would judge me for my record and how I treat all of you both in the briefing room and otherwise," she added.

"How is it ethical to have these conversations with media outlets while you continue to have a job standing behind that?" Welker asked.

"Well, there are a range of stringent ethical and legal requirements that are imposed on everybody in this administration and many administrations past about any conversations you're having with future employers . . . I have abided by those and tried to take steps to go beyond that as well as the policy of this White House to allow staffers to have discussions even directly with institutions of the impact," Psaki said.

The tentative deal would place Psaki as the host of a show on NBCUniversal's streaming platform Peacock. She would also be a part of MSNBC's live programming, Axios reported.

GOING, GOING ... White House press secretary Jen Psaki is reportedly in talks to leave her post for MSNBC. [Getty Images]

Document NYPO000020220402ei4200011



CE Noticias Financieras English
UN Women partners with NBC Universal

358 words

2 April 2022

CE NoticiasFinancieras

NFINCE

English

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The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and NBCUniversal Latin America will co-produce short-form **content** to promote women's empowerment and equality, according to a statement distributed Friday.

"The objective of this joint effort, the first of these two entities in the region, is to combine the experience and knowledge of UN Women in advancing women's empowerment in Latin America with the production experience and large audience of NBCUniversal Latin America's channels, whose original productions Ojos de mujer, Escuela imparables and Belleza GG, among others, stand out for promoting diversity, equality, inclusion and female empowerment," the text details.

The announcement adds that the creative teams of both entities will collaborate in the production of a series of capsules that will address issues affecting women in recent times including gender equality, women's empowerment and diversity.

"These productions will be reaching millions of homes in Latin America throughout 2022, on NBCUniversal Latin America's portfolio of pay TV channels comprised of UniversalTV, Telemundo Internacional, STUDIO Universal, SYFY and E! Entertainment, in addition to being available on E! On-line Latino, one of the most prestigious entertainment news platforms in the area," she reports.

"For UN Women, this agreement is very important because it means that the media is interested in participating in our mission, but also because it will allow us to reach millions of households in the United States and Latin America with messages aimed at raising awareness and generating a conversation about the things that affect women the most, and about their contribution to overcoming the most urgent problems of our time," said María Noel Vaeza, UN Women Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, in the statement.

"At NBCUniversal, we are committed to promoting a culture of inclusion, equity, awareness and respect among our audience in Latin America," says Gus O'Brien, CEO of NBCUniversal International Networks and Direct to Consumer Latin America. "By partnering with UN Women, we will amplify their messages and encourage dialogue on these issues across a variety of platforms," he said.

Document NFINCE0020220402ei4200568

Travel

Super Nintendo World set for Universal Studios next year

Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

198 words

2 April 2022

Victoria Times Colonist

VTC

Final

C7

English

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An expansion at Universal Studios Hollywood will bring the spinning coins and floating blocks of the "Super Mario Bros." video game to the theme park next year, marking the completion of one in just a handful of theme park expansions in the U.S. since the onset of COVID-19.

Super Nintendo World, a Universal **partnership** with video game developer Nintendo announced in 2016, will include a ride, an interactive area that will probably resemble a scene from the Super Mario video games and themed shopping and dining areas, Universal Studios Hollywood representatives said.

They wouldn't disclose the size of the expansion but said the site will be in the lower lot of the park, replacing several soundstages. The project follows a similar expansion completed last year at Universal Studios Japan.

Universal Studios Hollywood, where the main draw has been movie-themed attractions and backstage set tours, is likely to gain new visitors with the opening of Super Nintendo World, especially from tourists who are ready to travel and spend money again after two years of pandemic restrictions, industry experts said.

Document VTC0000020220402ei4200017

World

US press secretary to leave White House 'within weeks'

OLIVER O'CONNELL IN NEW YORK

541 words

2 April 2022

The Independent

IND

1ST

26

English

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World

US press secretary Jen Psaki is planning to leave the White House this spring for a new role in cable news, according to a report. Ms Psaki is said to be in talks to join MSNBC and appear across a number of shows while also starting her own on the Peacock streaming **platform**. She will not be replacing Rachel Maddow on the 9pm hour on MSNBC as has been speculated.

Ms Psaki has been in close consultation with the White House counsel's office about her departure due to the ethical and legal stipulations about how public employees can seek private sector employment while still in office, according to a report by Axios. Ms Psaki is planning to leave in May, but contracts have yet to be signed. Citing two sources, the report says that some senior officials at the White House are aware of her departure and plans with MSNBC, though no formal announcement has been made internally.

For its part, MSNBC has similarly been working with its compliance lawyers to make sure their conversations didn't violate any federal government regulations. The Independent contacted MSNBC for comment.

Ms Psaki said in the first months of the Biden administration that "it's going to be time for somebody else to have this job in a year from now". Speaking to former Obama administration colleague David Axelrod in an interview on his podcast in May last year she said that it was a great job and would be hard to leave, but she wants to spend time with her children.

Ms Psaki will follow a well-worn path of White House officials, including Mr Axelrod, heading to cable news. He joined CNN, Trump spokesperson Kayleigh McEnany joined Fox News, and Bush official Nicole Wallace hosts a daily two-hour show on MSNBC.

Most recently, Symone Sanders, a former adviser and senior spokesperson for vice president Kamala Harris, joined MSNBC in January. She will host a show on Peacock called Symone at 4pm on weekends and take part in live programming on MSNBC. As to who will replace Ms Psaki at the famous White House press room podium, in her absence due to testing positive for Covid-19, the principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was first to step up before also testing positive.

Ms Jean-Pierre would be the first black woman to serve as the chief White House press secretary, and already made history as the first Black woman to deliver a briefing in decades when she did so last year. In her absence, this week's briefings have been handled by communications director Kate Bedingfield, a Biden world veteran. Her briefings are having the effect, even if unintentional, of appearing as her audition for the role.

Following the departure of Ms Sanders last year, there are a handful of others who could potentially serve as plausible successors to Ms Psaki, like the State Department's Ned Price or even, according to Politico Playbook, a journalist, or first lady Dr Jill Biden's communications director, Elizabeth Alexander. For now, Ms Jean-Pierre and Ms Bedingfield appear the top contenders for the role.

Document IND0000020220402ei420001h

News

Jen Psaki reportedly set to leave White House for MSNBC gig in May

Nikolas Lanum, Alexa Moutevelis and Brandon Gillespie

602 words

1 April 2022

FOX - 6 WITI

WITIFOX

English

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WASHINGTON - White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki is planning to leave her post from within the Biden administration to join MSNBC allegedly in May.

According to Axios media reporter Sara Fischer via Twitter, the papers have not yet been signed, but the offer purportedly would make Psaki the host of a show on Peacock, NBCUniversal's streaming **platform**, while allowing her the opportunity to appear as a voice on various cable shows. It was reported that she will not be replacing Rachel Maddow in the 9 p.m. slot.

Psaki has reportedly told senior officials about her exclusivity deal and planned departure, but has not yet formally told the White House press team, an administration source told Axios, according to a subsequent tweet.

Fox News White House Correspondent Jacqui Heinrich separately confirmed Psaki will leave the White House for MSNBC and reported the network beat out CNN in a bidding war, although the deal hasn't been signed yet.

The White House press secretary's deal is reportedly similar to that of Symone Sanders, a former senior spokesperson for Vice President Kamala Harris and White House adviser. Sanders signed a deal for a show with the network back in January, which will air on MSNBC and will stream Mondays and Tuesdays on Peacock, according to Deadline.

Recently, it was reported that Psaki had been in talks with CNN and other prominent networks.

CNN interim co-president Amy Entelis and CNN+ programming lead Rebecca Kutler traveled to Washington in early February to recruit Psaki, followed by NBC News Chairman Cesar Conde and MSNBC President Rashida Jones, Puck's Dylan Byers first reported on February 23.

According to Axios, MSNBC has been working with its compliance lawyers to ensure conversations with Psaki do not violate government regulations and codes of conduct.

Some on Twitter responded to the Axios report with questions about the ethics of Psaki negotiating a deal while still working at the White House. As Fox News contributor Byron York pointed out, "For past months, WH spokeswoman has been briefing news organizations that were vying to hire her."

Dan McLaughlin from National Review wrote, "Also, under no circumstance should members of the White House press staff be negotiating, *while employed by the White House* with media organizations that cover the White House."

Rory Cooper of the reputation management firm Purple Strategies tweeted, "Now that this is out there, I don't know how you stay on another day and continue taking questions from your new employer."

Others pointed that the potential new job wouldn't be much different from Psaki's current role. Substack writer Jim Treacher joked, "Going from a Democrat-controlled White House to MSNBC is a lateral move," while RealClearInvestigations deputy editor Benjamin Weingarten asked, "Isn't she already doing that [hosting an MSNBC show]?"

It was speculated that Psaki would leave her position for a television opportunity, as White House officials, especially communications staffers, often negotiate and take network jobs upon relinquishment of their duties.

CBS News hired Mick Mulvaney, a former Trump administration official, as an analyst and contributor for the channel earlier this week.

Both Kayleigh McEnany and Nicolle Wallace, two prominent women in Republican administrations, joined cable networks after leaving the White House. McEnany joined Fox News as a co-host and contributor in March 2021, while Wallace has been a host on MSNBC since 2017.

Fox News' Brian Flood and David Rutz contributed to this report.

[Read more on FOX News.](#)

3fb6c04b-Jen Psaki

Document WITIFOX020220403ei4100015

DEADLINE

Breaking News -

Jen Psaki Says She's Complying With **Ethics Guidelines As Reporters Question Her On Move To MSNBC — Update**

Ted Johnson

797 words

1 April 2022

Deadline

DLINE

English

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UPDATE, 12:22 PM PT: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki faced questions of how she could continue in her role while also negotiating with a media outlet.

At the Friday press briefing, CBS News' Ed O'Keefe and NBC News' Kristen Welker asked her about reports that she will soon depart to take a role at MSNBC.

"How can you be an effective briefer if you do in fact have plans to join a media outlet?" Welker asked.

Psaki declined to announce her plans, but said that "I have taken the ethics, legal requirements ...very seriously in any discussions and in any considerations about future employment just as any White House official would. And I have taken steps beyond that to ensure there's no conflicts."

Psaki returned to the briefing after being absent since last week, when she tested positive for Covid.

Welker again press Psaki on the issue.

"How is it ethical to have these conversations with media outlets while continue to have a job standing behind that podium?"

Psaki answered, "Well, there are a range of stringent ethical and legal requirements that are imposed on everybody in this administration and any administrations past about any conversations you are having with future employers. That is true of any industry you are working in, and I have abided by those and have tried to take steps that go beyond that as well."

Psaki did not confirm the reports, but she didn't deny them either. "I'm very happy to be standing with all of you here today after it felt like a neverending endless time in my basement quarantining away from my family. Believe it or not I missed you all a lot."

PREVIOUSLY: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki plans to leave her position and take an on-air role at MSNBC.

A source confirmed Psaki's plans, which include hosting a show on the network's streaming platform on Peacock and appear on the cable news network.

Psaki did not immediately respond to a request for comment. She has been absent from this week's briefings after she tested positive for Covid, but was scheduled to return on Friday.

A White House official said, "We don't have anything to confirm about Jen's length of planned service or any consideration about future plans. Jen is here and working hard every day on behalf of the President to get you the answers to the questions that you have, and that's where her focus is."

Axios first reported the news of Psaki's new gig. No deal has been finalized.

Psaki reportedly had been talking to a number of networks about her next career move following her tenure at the White House. Her departure has been expected: She had said last year that she planned to leave her position in 2022.

She'll follow a line of former White House officials who have pursued on air roles following their tenures. Symone Sanders, who was chief spokesperson for Vice President Kamala Harris, joined MSNBC and also will host a show on its streaming platform, called The Choice on MSNBC. Her show, Symone, also will appear on MSNBC's weekend schedule. Nicolle Wallace, who hosts Deadline: White House on MSNBC, was communications director for President George W. Bush.

CBS News recently announced the hiring of Mick Mulvaney, the former acting chief of staff to Donald Trump, as a paid contributor. Fox News has hired figures such as Kayleigh McEnany, Trump's former press secretary, and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The White House-to-news network revolving door isn't new. George Stephanopoulos, one of the star anchors at ABC News, was previously communications director for President Bill Clinton. John F. Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, later became a foreign affairs correspondent for ABC.

As press secretary, Psaki brought back regular, almost daily briefings, after they disappeared for a point during Trump's term, and she has been known for some of her sharp retorts in responding to some reporters' questions. Particularly notable have been her interactions with Fox News correspondent Peter Doocy. Although they have engaged in some sharp exchanges, they have been far from the acrimony in the briefing room between administration figures and the press during the Trump years.

Before Joe Biden took office, Psaki was a political commentator for CNN.

MSNBC has been building its roster as it builds up its streaming offerings, but it also may have a significant hole to fill on its schedule. Rachel Maddow reportedly wants to scale back the schedule of her primetime show and is currently in the midst of a hiatus.

Document DLINE00020220401ei410008e



Anzu Secures USD20 Million in Venture Funding

145 words

1 April 2022

MarketLine Financial Deals Tracker

FDTRA

English

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Deal In Brief

Anzu.io Inc, an Israel-based in-game advertising **platform**, has secured USD20 million in venture **funding** from NBCUniversal, HTC, Sony Innovation Fund, Bitkraft Ventures, HBSE Ventures, Alumni Ventures Group, The Chicago Cubs, Goal Ventures, and WPP.

Deal Value (US\$ Million)	20
Deal Type	Venture Finance
Sub-Category	Growth Capital/Expansion
Deal Status	Completed: 2022-03-30

Deal Participants

Target (Company)	anzu.io, Inc.
Acquirer 1 (Company)	HTC Corporation
Acquirer 2 (Company)	Chicago Cubs
Acquirer 3 (Company)	NBCUniversal Media, LLC
Acquirer 4 (Company)	WPP plc
Acquirer 5 (Company)	HBSE Ventures

Deal Rationale

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Document FDTRA00020220401ei3v000a1

Comcast Corporation - The Thrill of Formula 1 Races Through Comcast's Global Technology Platform

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116 words

1 April 2022

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LCDVP

English

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News - TV

NBC's 'Dateline,' Once a True-Crime Documentary, Has Become A Massive Content Stack

Brian Steinberg

778 words

31 March 2022

Variety

VARTY

English

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The people who make NBC's "Dateline" are trying to solve another mystery — but this one will likely never be seen on TV.

The show has become known for presenting true-crime stories on NBC's Friday nights, when Lester Holt and correspondents including Andrea Canning, Josh Mankiewicz, Keith Morrison and Dennis Murphy take viewers across difficult emotional terrain. A crime has been committed and the victim's loved ones want justice. Now, in the streaming era, Friday nights are no longer enough.

"You can't just put your show on broadcast and hope the show's going to do a big number," says David Corvo, senior executive producer of "Dateline," in an interview. "You have to accumulate that number over a number of different platforms."

Soon, one of those will be Peacock, where the show's producers expect to launch a new "Dateline" format, one that isn't tied to the rhythms of broadcast TV and will have an almost documentary style to it. The new series will aim to recreate the crucial last day of a victim's life, examining decisions that were made, and the turn of fate that ended up making the difference between life and death.

"We don't have to adhere to limits on minutes," explains Liz Cole, executive producer of "Dateline" and president of NBC News' documentary studio unit, in an interview. "We can have a little bit more freedom with pacing. We can be a little more leisurely at times."

The effort to expand "Dateline" is taking the program into new frontiers, including podcasts, 24/7 streaming channels and even scripted fare, as seen in the recent NBC limited series, "The Thing About Pam," which starred Renee Zellweger. And it comes as many of the backers of the old-school "newsmagazine" format are experimenting. ABC News, for example, has placed more emphasis on two-hour-long episodes of "20/20" in recent years, the better to those programs on Hulu and entice subscribers who might have a yen for movie-length true-crime documentaries. The shows are also vying with a growing slate of streaming selections centered on true crime that are in rotation in the libraries of streamers like HBO Max, Fox Nation and Netflix.

In an era when viewers can often binge their way through old episodes of their favorite programs, "Dateline" can make use of its past work. Since launching in 1992, "Dateline" has amassed more than 2,870 episodes. In a different era, they would all be consigned to some NBC archive where the occasional producer or researcher might seek out a snippet of old footage. In the streaming era, however, a significant number of them can be put back into use through playback on some of the cable networks owned by NBCUniversal; syndication; or a bespoke Peacock streaming channel, where episodes are sometimes curated by topic. Nearly 120 hours of Dateline have aired during any given week this quarter across broadcast, cable and syndication.

Not every broadcast is of use in the current environment. In a different era, "Dateline" was once a multi-story newsmagazine anchored by Stone Phillips and Jane Pauley, among others. Some episodes may have been relevant in the past, but are not so now. But producers are assigned to keep many of the true-crime stories current, says Corvo, adding new elements if a turn in the case depicted should take place, or tweaking such things as music if it is no longer germane.

Video isn't the only path "Dateline" producers are pursuing. Since 2019, the show has created seven different podcasts — some original and some in the form of what is known as a "showcast," or the audio track of an original episode.

No matter the format, however, "Dateline" has some required building blocks. "There is a bit of a soap-opera quality to it, in the best sense of that word," says Corvo. "The stories that do well have a strong community of

family and friends of the victim, so we know what the consequences of the crime are. We feel it and we care about it. For someone to be involved in it more than a procedural, it has to mean something to somebody.”

Meanwhile, the show’s producers will keep on trying to find new ways to get “Dateline” mysteries in front of those who want more cases to crack. “I don’t think the average viewer realizes how much broadcasting has changed,” says Corvo. “We are an example of somehow trying to stay in front of it.”

Document VARTY00020220331ei3v000gp



News - TV

NBCUniversal Developing 'Pinned,' Wrestling Drama Series From Vince McMahon and WWE

J. Kim Murphy

366 words

31 March 2022

Variety

VARTY

English

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NBCUniversal has announced that it is developing "Pinned," a new dramatic scripted series about the world of wrestling.

"Pinned" comes from Universal **Content** Productions and World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. The production is billed as a dramatic series with a logline touting "an adrenalized upstairs-downstairs soap that gives a behind-the-scenes look at a fictional wrestling promotion and the unforgettable characters that populate it."

"Pinned" will offer a look into the world of wrestling culture, documenting the mayhem both within the locker room and the boardroom of wrestling organizations.

Craig O'Neill serves as an executive producer on the series, alongside Tom Rinaldi. World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. chief executive officer Vince McMahon also serves as an executive producer, alongside Kevin Dunn and Chris Kaiser.

NBCUniversal has not announced which platform it intends to launch "Pinned" on, whether one of its broadcast television networks or through its growing streaming platform, Peacock.

"Pinned" is just the latest scripted project that WWE has become involved in. A limited series project that dramatizes WWE boss McMahon's federal steroids trial has gained steam in development, recruiting Micah Fitzerman-Blue and Noah Harpster as writers, executive producers and co-showrunners. The series, titled "The United States of America vs. Vince McMahon," was first announced to be in development in July 2021. WWE and Blumhouse Television will produce.

The series will be the first ever scripted portrayal of McMahon and many legendary WWE stars of the era. Set in the 1990s, the series opens at a time when WWE chairman and CEO McMahon was repeatedly censured by New York Post writer Phil Mushnick. Mushnick's columns eventually drew the attention of the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's office for the Eastern District of New York. McMahon was indicted by the U.S. government for allegedly supplying anabolic steroids to WWE talent, stood trial after refusing to take a plea, and was unanimously acquitted by the jury.

McMahon is an executive producer on the series along with WWE executive producer and chief of global television distribution Kevin Dunn, Jason Blum, McCumber, and Jeremy Gold for Blumhouse TV.

Document VARTY00020220331ei3v000gu



Comcast Wins Red Dot Design Award for XiOne, Its First Global Streaming Device, and New Voice Remote

626 words

31 March 2022

15:00

Business Wire

BWR

English

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Latest technology built on Comcast's global technology **platform** recognized for product design by international competition

PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE) --March 31, 2022--

Comcast today announced XiOne, the company's first global wireless streaming device, and the accompanying voice remote won the prestigious Red Dot Award for Product Design 2022. This honor is awarded by an international jury to products that demonstrate outstanding design each year.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220331005183/en/>

(Photo: Business Wire)

Built on Comcast's global technology platform, the XiOne was designed and developed with the flexibility to be used across Comcast's global operations, including Xfinity, Sky, and its syndication partners. In the United States, the XiOne is currently being offered to Xfinity Flex customers and includes a new voice remote designed with excellent ergonomics, premium finishes, and a low center of gravity that fits comfortably in our customer's hand. The XiOne is also being used across Sky operations in the UK and Europe.

With faster processing and more memory, the XiOne supports all the ways in which customers consume live and on demand video. Its soft, discreet form factor blends into the home without detracting from the TV-viewing experience, and supports the latest technologies including WiFi 6, 4K UHD, HDR, Dolby Vision, and Dolby Atmos.

"Delivering amazing connectivity and entertainment experiences requires making products that customers want to use. I'm thrilled to see our world-class design team recognized for their expert blending of form and function," said Fraser Stirling, Global Chief Product Officer for Comcast and Sky. "We thank the Red Dot jury for recognizing our products for design that is thoughtful, flexible, and built with premium hardware that can be enjoyed by customers across the globe."

The Comcast creative and design team have focused on delivering product designs that support the cleaning, repair, and testing of devices to extend their life beyond single use and away from landfill.

"Our team is committed to designing experiences that are simple, intuitive, and make our customers' lives better," said Tom Loretan, Senior Vice President and Chief Creative Officer at Comcast Cable. "I'm deeply thankful to the Red Dot team for recognizing how that approach shaped the first product built on our global technology platform for all of our customers across Comcast's Xfinity and Sky operations, and our syndication partners."

XiOne is the latest technology developed by Comcast that leverages its global technology platform, bringing the best hardware, software, voice technology, and aggregated search and discovery to the company's suite of entertainment and connectivity products. Comcast's range of devices across Xfinity, Sky, and its syndication partners provide incredible experiences that connect, protect, and entertain customers around the world.

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sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

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Document BWR0000020220331ei3v000d1



Global - TV

British Kids Form Their Own Society in Nature for New Channel 4 Reality Show From 'Bake Off' Producers (EXCLUSIVE)

Manori Ravindran

673 words

30 March 2022

Variety

VARTY

English

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If you picture a "Lord of the Flies"-style summer camp from the "Great British Bake Off" producers, it might look something like their new reality show for U.K. broadcaster Channel 4, "Kids in the Wild."

The six-part series from Love Productions and "Love Island" co-producer Motion **Content** Group is fashioned as a wholesome production that transports a cooped-up pandemic generation "back to an idyllic old-fashioned summer and the carefree abandon of Swallows and Amazons, away from their parents for the first time."

The show will convene a diverse, 20-member group of 9 to 11 year olds from across the country who will spend part of their summer living in nature, without "the shackles" of adult supervision and rules.

An official description for the show, shared with Variety exclusively, reads: "Empowered to make their own decisions and discover their own resourcefulness, we will ask, 'Who are the children of Britain in 2022 and have we underestimated what they are really capable of?'"

Channel 4 wants to get to the bottom of the children's "psychological and physical" responses to being in the wild, as well as their social structures and interactions as they learn how to cook and eat in a camp setting and sleep in communal bunks with kids they don't know.

The broadcaster promises that the young participants will have "extensive adult support" to ensure their safeguarding. Not only will there be adult camp counsellors educating the youth on how to live in nature, but trained chaperones will see to their safety and their parents will also be on site, watching their antics from remote cameras. Halfway through the shoot, the kids can take a break and spend at least one night back home with their families.

Given the uplifting tone of Love Productions' "Bake Off" for Channel 4 (via the BBC), and the broadcaster's track record for gentle rig-based shows like "The Secret Life of Four Year Olds," it's unlikely that "Kids in the Wild" will have the same vibe of, say, "Eden" — Channel 4's ill-fated 2016 reality series that saw adults trying to build a self-sufficient society in a remote part of Scotland for a whole year. (The show was yanked off air after a handful of episodes.)

"Kids in the Wild" will be filmed in a rural area of Britain at the start of school holidays this summer. The children will spend a fortnight in a specially created wilderness camp as part of the production.

Sara Ramsden, executive producer at Love Productions, said: "New and mounting evidence suggests that experiencing adventurous play is effective in reducing childhood anxiety. As this series will break kids away from their screens, we hope it will shed light on the ongoing debate about the influence of phones and social media on children."

Madonna Benjamin, commissioning editor for Channel 4, added: "'Kids in the Wild' will celebrate childhood by giving the children the opportunity to experience a summer of fun, adventure and new discoveries. It will explore how this generation has been deprived of so much freedom and provide a chance for social cohesion they've missed out on. We hope that audiences will gain a privileged insight into just how adaptable and resourceful our children can be."

Martin Oxley, executive producer at Motion Content Group, said: "At the heart of 'Kids in The Wild' is a fascinating and timely exploration of the impact modern life is having on children today, granting them freedom in an idyllic setting to see if they can be set free from the anxieties and pressures that worry parents so much."

"Kids in the Wild" was commissioned for Channel 4 by commissioning editors Anna Miralis and Madonna Benjamin. Executive producers include Love Productions' Ramsden and Motion Content Group's Oxley. The series producer is Sue Medhurst.

(Pictured: "Lord of the Flies" [1993])

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Broadway And Universal Studios Award-Winning Creatives Join RWS Entertainment Group

1,060 words

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English

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Casting and recruitment experts Greg Brown, Ericka Womack and Kendra Lucas join RWS Entertainment Group elevating cruise line and theatrical casting capabilities

NEW YORK, March 30, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- RWS Entertainment Group, the world's exclusive, full-service provider of award-winning guest experiences and attractions, welcomes two powerhouse creative leaders to the team. Jason A. Sparks joins as Senior Director, Theatrical Creative **Content** and Damien Gray joins as Director, Immersive Creative **Content**. Sparks, recently Associate Director for the anticipated Broadway revival of Take Me Out, will add a fresh layer of expertise to creative direction, direction and choreography for RWS theatrical productions. Gray, an expert in creating immersive experiences, brings a rich portfolio of international projects.

Jason A. Sparks

Damien Gray

An award-winning creative director, director and choreographer, Jason A. Sparks has worked in a wide range of mediums, from Broadway musicals and independent short films to award shows and concert dance. He has served as the associate to Warren Carlyle on multiple Tony Award-winning Broadway productions, including Hello, Dolly! with Bette Midler; Kiss Me, Kate; She Loves Me; and After Midnight, as well as choreographing productions for New York City Ballet and the Tony Awards.

Damien Gray is known for his boundary-breaking work for top companies worldwide, including Universal Studios Japan, Universal Beijing Resort and the soon-to-open Ocean Flower Island Resort and theme park in Hainan, China. For Universal Studios and Illumination Entertainment, Gray created the smash concert spectacular, SING ON TOUR, based on the animated hit film SING, which is now playing at the Illumination Theaters in Osaka and Beijing. He also created both Steps in Time, at Disney California Adventure and the long-running hit Animagique, for Walt Disney Studios in Paris. He will infuse RWS experiences with his wild imagination, knowledge of leading-edge technology and love for all things pop culture.

"The level of natural talent and boundary-pushing creativity that Jason and Damien bring to our team is invigorating," said Craig Laurie, Executive Vice President, Creative. "Both are uniquely qualified to bring a vibrant perspective to our productions. With more than thirty years of combined skill, creativity and insight into live and immersive experiences, our clients and their guests will be thrilled with the results."

RWS also welcomes Greg Brown, Vice President, Talent Casting & Recruitment; Ericka Womack, Senior Casting Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers; and Kendra Lucas, Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers.

-- Greg Brown, Vice President, Talent Casting & Recruitment: Previously with Royal Caribbean Group as Manager, Talent Casting, Brown has more than 20 years in the entertainment industry and brings his unique creative output as director, music director, orchestrator, arranger, professor and casting professional. His body of work includes casting for Broadway, concert and performance venues across the globe. With a passion for guiding and training young artists, Brown continues to make an impact on the next generation of arts professionals through his active teaching career and professorship.

-- Ericka Womack, Senior Casting Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers: Previously with Royal Caribbean Cruises, Womack brings experience in all aspects of entertainment performance, choreography,

show creation and management. She is dedicated to working side by side with front-line performers, management and executives.

-- Kendra Lucas, Manager, Performer Casting & Guest Entertainers: Previously a performer for RWS, Lucas now uses her knowledge and experience to help guide RWS productions as part of the casting team. She began her casting career in NYC assisting at various casting offices working on projects including national tours, regional theater productions and musicals on major cruise lines. Lucas has a passion for casting and is committed to making entertainment more equitable, inclusive and diverse.

Over the past two decades, RWS has established a career trajectory for performers and technicians, giving them the opportunity to follow their dreams, develop their skills and showcase their talent on stage and on screen. RWS' 6,500 seasonal roles provide performers and technicians with a memorable summer job, a roadmap to success or the opportunity of a lifetime.

With offices in New York, London and Cincinnati, RWS continues to expand with full-time, seasonal and contract positions: <https://rws.applytojob.com>.

ABOUT RWS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP:

RWS Entertainment Group is a global, Emmy Award-winning entertainment company with headquarters in New York, London and Cincinnati. Together with its subsidiaries, RWS designs, fabricates, installs and operates custom entertainment, live events, attractions, exhibits, destinations, décor and branded experiences. With projects on six of the world's seven continents and all the oceans in between, RWS Entertainment Group allows clients to realize their vision for exceptional experiences at theme parks, attractions, cruise ships, zoos, aquariums, museums, theater venues, casinos, hotels and resorts, botanical gardens, visitor centers, port of call destinations, retail and real estate, municipalities, airports, corporate and branded experiences.

Founded in 2003, RWS operates the largest live production facility in New York City which includes 56,000 square feet of office space, a rehearsal studio complex and performer housing. RWS properties include a Theatrical and Ticketed Experiences division; Binder Casting serving the stage, film and commercial markets; the innovative RWS Fun Crew: Staffing Reimagined; RWS Décor Products; RWS Leased Experiences and JRA, an award-winning creative studio providing master planning, writing and content development, attraction/exhibit planning and design, graphic design, executive media production, art direction and project management.

RWS Entertainment Group has supplied groundbreaking productions for an impressive roster of clients that includes Warner Bros., Lionsgate, The Coca-Cola Company, Apple, Disney, O, the Oprah Magazine, Vera Wang, Disney Cruise Lines, Azamara, MSC Cruises, Virgin Voyages, Hard Rock Resorts, Iberostar Hotels & Resorts, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Europa-Park Resort, Paultons Park, Ferrari World, The Galleria Al Maryah Island, Six Flags, Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, Science Centre Singapore, Space Center Houston, The Denver Zoo, The FRIENDS(TM) Experience by Superfly X, Toyota and many more.

Follow RWS Entertainment Group on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn and JRA on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter.

View original content to download multimedia:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/broadway-and-universal-studios-award-winning-creatives-join-rws-entertainment-group-301513284.html>

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Document PRN0000020220330ei3u0008m

What is Peacock TV Free and everything you can watch with it

Daniel Pateman

708 words

30 March 2022

TechRadar

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English

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Our guide explains how to sign up for a Peacock TV Free plan and everything it offers, including Hollywood movies, live TV, and entire seasons of your favorite shows.

[Peacock TV](#), NBCUniversal's streaming service, offers much more than a week-long free trial to entice subscribers. Instead, its Peacock TV Free plan gives every member access to thousands of hours of excellent **content** – popular series, Hollywood movies, and dozens of “always on” digital channels – with no expiration date and no credit card details required.

It goes without saying that Peacock TV Free is a brilliant (and super affordable) way to get your streaming fix. As we explain in the below guide, it's easy to sign-up to and begin enjoying Peacock's bountiful entertainment archive.

* Read more: our guide to the [best TV streaming services](#)

What is Peacock TV Free and how does it compare to its premium plan?

[Peacock TV Free](#) provides reduced access to Peacock's content library. That means you can stream 40,000 hours of incredible movies and acclaimed TV shows – two-thirds of the total figure – plus 50 curated “always on” channels, and some live news and sports coverage. All you have to do is register for an account. No credit card details required, no [Peacock free trial](#) time constraints; just sign-up, sit back and enjoy.

The Free plan is ad-supported, but then so is the paid Premium option. Luckily, it's a minor inconvenience because interruptions are kept to a max of five minutes per hour of streaming.

If you want more than Peacock TV Free can offer, then upgrade to Peacock Premium. For the [\\$4.99 monthly fee](#), it opens up 20,000 hours more TV and film content than you get with Peacock TV Free. That includes full access to fan-favorites like *The Office*, all Peacock Original series, and new episodes of current NBC shows only a day after broadcast. Plus, lots of live sports like premier league games, WWE content, and special events like the Super Bowl.

How to sign up to Peacock TV Free

- * Visit <https://www.peacocktv.com/>
- * Alternatively, download the app on an Android or iOS device
- * Type your email address into the white text box
- * Click on the “Watch for Free” icon
- * You'll see three Peacock membership option
- * Select the “Sign Up For Peacock” button
- * Enter in your details (no payment details will be requested)
- * Click on the “Create Account” icon
- * Hey presto, you can now start streaming Peacock TV Free...for free!

What can you watch on Peacock TV's free plan?

A mighty amount! You'll get hundreds of NBCUniversal movies and TV series, classic and contemporary, subsidiary and third-party company content, and Spanish-language titles courtesy of Telemundo.

Fans of the cable experience can switch between 50 “always on” digital channels programmed under headings like Out of This World, Classic TV, and Black Cinema, in addition to 24/7 local news streams from cities like New York, LA, Chicago and Miami. Then there’s sports analysis and highlights from the latest games and WWE coverage too.

Should a title on the website display a purple feather icon, you'll need to be a paid subscriber to view it. Below we've listed some of the incredible films and TV shows available to stream when you sign-up to Peacock TV Free now:

TV Series:

- * Parks and Recreation (Seasons 1-2 only)
- * 30 Rock
- * Downton Abbey
- * Friday Night Lights
- * Parenthood
- * [American Song Contest](#)
- * [Chicago P.D.](#)
- * The Office (Seasons 1-5 only)
- * Bates Motel
- * Psych
- * 3rd Rock From The Sun
- * Murder, She Wrote
- * The Munsters
- * Saved by the Bell (OG Series)
- * Everybody Hates Chris
- * Saturday Night Live
- * [The Thing About Pam](#)
- * The Real Housewives of Miami

[Click to view image \(Image credit: NBC\)](#)

Films:

- * Dallas Buyers Club
- * Brokeback Mountain
- * Taken
- * Scarface
- * Being John Malkovich
- * Harriet
- * The Big Lebowski
- * My Girl
- * A League of Their Own
- * 12 Monkeys

* Seven

* Psycho

* Boo! A Madea Halloween

* Train to Busan

* Silent Running

* 17 Again

* I Am Big Bird

* Dazed and Confused

[Remote held up to screen with Peacock TV logo \(Jakub Porzycki/NurPhoto via Getty Images\)](#)

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The New York Times

GUEST ESSAY

Editorial Desk; SECTA

The Friend of Our Enemy Isn't a 'Traitor'

By Peter Beinart

1,152 words

30 March 2022

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It's an old story: In times of war, antiwar voices are labeled disloyal.

This month, the former Democratic representative Tulsi Gabbard appeared on Tucker Carlson's show on Fox News, where they both alleged that the United States was secretly **funding** dangerous biological research laboratories in Ukraine. Prominent politicians and commentators responded by calling them traitors. Senator Mitt Romney declared that "Tulsi Gabbard is parroting false Russian propaganda. Her treasonous lies may well cost lives." Representative Adam Kinzinger suggested that "Tulsi should go to Russia." The former MSNBC host Keith Olbermann insisted that Ms. Gabbard and Mr. Carlson "are Russian assets and there is a war. There's a case for detaining them militarily." On the ABC daytime show "The View," the co-host Whoopi Goldberg observed, "They used to arrest people for doing stuff like this."

Indeed they did. In 1918, the socialist labor leader Eugene Debs was sentenced to 10 years in prison for urging Americans not to fight in World War I. During World War II, the Justice Department indicted 26 Americans who espoused pro-Nazi views, even though none were shown to have conspired with Hitler's regime.

Sometimes the people who challenge American foreign policy are noble. Sometimes they're loathsome. Either way, calling them traitors is almost always wrong. It's wrong morally because rhetorical intimidation can easily become legal persecution. And it's wrong conceptually because domestic dissenters are rarely the marionettes of foreign foes. Ms. Gabbard and Mr. Carlson's isolationist, populist and conspiratorial foreign policy views are quintessentially American. As self-styled dissidents, Ms. Gabbard and Mr. Carlson gain strength by skewering the corruption and insularity of America's foreign policy elite. Their views are often odious, but calling them disloyal is precisely the wrong way to blunt their appeal.

The genesis of Ms. Gabbard's and Mr. Carlson's opinions about Russia and Ukraine isn't the Kremlin. It's the war in Iraq. Ms. Gabbard has said her deployment there in 2004 "changed my life completely, as an individual as well as my perspective on the world." Since then, she's made opposition to U.S. military intervention her ideological North Star. At times that has led her to ignore the atrocities of America's foes, such as when she voted in 2016 against a resolution accusing Syria's government of war crimes. But at other times her anti-interventionist instinct has proved sound. Had the Obama administration heeded her call for a full withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2011, the United States might not have wasted billions of additional dollars on an unwinnable war.

Mr. Carlson has traveled a parallel journey. After working early in his career at The Weekly Standard, which aggressively promoted the Iraq invasion, he felt betrayed by the Washington hawks who he claimed had persuaded him to support it. "I think it's a total nightmare and disaster," he said in a 2004 interview, "and I'm ashamed that I went against my own instincts in supporting it." In the interview, he mentioned that he had called the antiwar conservative Pat Buchanan to apologize for having publicly criticized him. By 2008, when Mr. Carlson was still working at MSNBC, he was speaking at rallies for the isolationist presidential candidate Ron Paul. None of this had anything to do with Vladimir Putin.

Tragically, Mr. Carlson decided Mr. Buchanan was right not only about Iraq. Mr. Carlson became a vocal proponent of Mr. Buchanan's broader worldview, which fused skepticism about military intervention with disdain for nonwhite immigrants. And since Donald Trump's election, Mr. Carlson has become television's most influential purveyor of racist views. He's lavished praise on Hungary's authoritarian, nativist prime minister, Viktor Orban, and claimed that Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's Supreme Court nomination has turned the United States into "Rwanda." Last month he said that Mr. Putin can't be that bad because he doesn't call white people racists.

Mr. Carlson and Ms. Gabbard are the latest in a long line of American politicians and commentators whose disillusioning experience with an ill-fated war mushroomed into paranoia about the interventionist inclinations of the American foreign policy elite. When Mr. Carlson says "the Biden administration may be finally getting the conflict it has longed for" and Ms. Gabbard alleges that some in the Biden administration "actually want Russia to invade Ukraine" because "the military-industrial complex is the one that benefits from this," they are echoing 20th-century isolationists like Senator William Borah of Idaho and the historians Charles Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes, whose bitterness over America's entrance into World War I led them to blame America and Britain, more than Nazi Germany, for the outbreak of World War II.

Mr. Carlson's and Ms. Gabbard's views may be marginal in Washington. But as Mr. Trump's election showed, telling Americans they're being duped by a warmongering, globalist elite can be a potent message. And answering it requires recognizing the way America's foreign policy establishment fuels populist distrust. Washington's military-industrial complex did not orchestrate Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But many of President Biden's top foreign policy aides did spend their years between government service at either consulting firms funded by defense contractors or think tanks funded by defense contractors. Few politicians acknowledge how unethical that is. By contrast, Ms. Gabbard -- who this year claimed that both Democrats and Republicans in Washington are "essentially in the pocket of the military-industrial complex" -- calls the defense industry's political influence a scandal. Many Americans who don't share Mr. Carlson's racial views still find it galling that politicians and pundits who lauded America's wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya can appear on television to promote their latest hawkish stance without being reminded of the disasters those wars became. Mr. Carlson does remind them, often viciously.

Ms. Gabbard and Mr. Carlson have identified a genuine problem: the corruption and lack of accountability that plague American foreign policy. Addressing that problem will sap their appeal. Calling them traitors will only ensure that it grows.

Peter Beinart (@PeterBeinart) is a professor of journalism and political science at the Newmark School of Journalism at the City University of New York. He is also an editor at large of Jewish Currents and writes The Beinart Notebook, a weekly newsletter.

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online news

Comcast Business Debuts Its Most Powerful WiFi Gateway, Transforms the Future of Business Connectivity

459 words

30 March 2022

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Comcast Business today introduced the Comcast Business Gateway, its next-generation Advanced Gateway and the company's first WiFi-6 certified device capable of delivering true multi-gigabit speeds to provide superior WiFi **connectivity** to businesses. Comcast Business's most powerful WiFi device to date, the gateway harnesses the innovation behind Comcast's highly-acclaimed xFi Advanced Gateway - which offers the best in-home WiFi experience - and applies it for today's connected workplace to make next-gen speeds a widespread reality.

"Connectivity is the backbone of business, and as the speed of business accelerates, our customers demand a high-performance technology that can be their workhorse - and their racehorse," said Christian Nascimento, vice president, Product Management & Strategy at Comcast Business. "Designed with love from Philadelphia, Comcast Business's latest gateway enhances business performance through faster and more reliable wireless connectivity, supporting and securing businesses, their customers and employees."

The Comcast Business Gateway is designed to reduce WiFi interference and increase bandwidth to power the most connected businesses of tomorrow. Customer benefits and key features of the next-generation gateway include: Unprecedented range - Designed for high-performance business users to handle more capacity and faster speeds, including 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands and Gig over WiFi to connect up to 150 devices - more than ever before. Instant internet for business - Ultra-low lag time for those moments when response times matter most like unrivaled cloud computing, videoconferencing and file transfers. Static IP features - Enables always-on services for clients and employees, even outside of the business' network, with additional subscriptions. Built-in SecurityEdge - With a SecurityEdge subscription, the gateway automatically protects all connected devices at the gateway level from malware and other cybersecurity threats to help keep all devices within the business protected. Designed with businesses in mind - Features multiple voice ports, a built-in Ethernet switch with two multi-gig ports, eight-hour battery backup for Comcast Business Voice service, and an industrial design that gives a business flexibility by allowing for wall, rack, and desktop mounting. The new gateway reinforces Comcast Business's commitment to providing the best business WiFi experience with the fastest speeds, advanced security protection and broad coverage to elevate and protect today's businesses.

The Comcast Business Gateway was built on Comcast's global technology platform, that enables the company to connect and entertain millions of people to amazing moments and experiences. The new gateway will join the more than 75 million Comcast broadband and streaming devices running on this state-of-the-art platform in the United States and abroad.

The Comcast Business Gateway is now fully available to businesses throughout the Comcast Business footprint.

Document FMETMA0020220330ei3u0000h

Comcast Cable Communications LLC; Patent Issued for Methods and systems for repairing recorded content (USPTO 11269850)

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© Copyright 2022 Information Technology Newsweekly via VerticalNews.com

2022 MAR 29 (VerticalNews) -- By a News Reporter-Staff News Editor at Information Technology Newsweekly -- According to news reporting originating from Alexandria, Virginia, by VerticalNews journalists, a patent by the inventors Hein, James Bradley (King of Prussia, PA, US), O'Malley, Shawn (Glenside, PA, US), Zaucha, Jeremy (West Chester, PA, US), filed on September 29, 2017, was published online on March 8, 2022.

The assignee for this patent, patent number 11269850, is Comcast Cable Communications LLC (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States).

Reporters obtained the following quote from the background information supplied by the inventors: "Recordings, such as recordings scheduled at a digital video recorder (DVR), may be damaged due to errors in content transmission. Additionally, one or more portions of the recording can be missed. For example, transmission of the content item can be time-shifted relative to an intended transmission time, or a user can indicate that content is to be recorded after a beginning of transmission of the content item. These and other shortcomings are addressed by the methods and systems described herein."

In addition to obtaining background information on this patent, VerticalNews editors also obtained the inventors' summary information for this patent: "It is to be understood that both the following general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive. Methods and systems are described for repairing recorded content that includes one or more missing and/or damaged portions.

"A content item may be recorded (e.g., by a user device) and metadata may be generated that describes the recording. After a request for playback of the recorded content item, the user device may transmit the metadata describing the recorded content item to a remote computing device (e.g., a server). The server can compare the received metadata describing the recorded content item to metadata that describes a reference recording of the content item. The comparison can reveal whether the received metadata matches the metadata for the reference recording of the content item.

"After the server determines that the metadata describing the recorded content item does not match the metadata that describes the reference recording of the content item (indicating that at least one segment of the recorded content item is missing and/or damaged), the server can transmit at least a portion of the metadata that describes the reference recording of the content item to the user device. The server can also send at least a portion of the reference recording of the content item to the user device. The portion of the reference recording can correspond to the one or more missing and/or damaged segments of the recorded content.

"The recorded content may be repaired (e.g., by the user device) based on at least a portion of the reference recording of the content item. For example, the user device can insert (e.g., prepend, append, etc.) one or more segments of the reference recording to replace any missing segments of the recorded content. As another example, the user device can overwrite (e.g., replace) a damaged segment of the recorded content item with a corresponding segment of the reference recording of the content item. In this way, the user device can form a repaired content item.

"Metadata may be generated (e.g., by a user device) describing the repaired content item. The user device can compare the metadata describing the repaired content item to metadata describing the reference recording of the content item received from the server. If the user device determines that the metadata describing the repaired content item matches the metadata describing the reference recording of the content item, the user device can cause display (e.g., playback, rendering, etc.) of the repaired content item."

The claims supplied by the inventors are:

"1. A method comprising: receiving metadata associated with a content item, wherein the received metadata comprises checksum data and index data; determining, based on a difference between the checksum data and reference checksum data associated with a reference content item associated with the content item, an issue associated with one or more segments of the content item; determining, based on the index data and reference index data associated with the reference content item, one or more reference segments of the reference content item that correspond to the one or more segments of the content item; and sending, to a user device, at least the one or more reference segments of the reference content item and at least a portion of the received metadata.

"2. The method of claim 1, wherein the index data comprises: a content identifier identifying the content item; and a plurality of indexes, wherein each index of the plurality of indexes indicates an offset from a beginning of the content item.

"3. The method of claim 2, wherein the checksum data comprises: a content checksum verifying data integrity of the content item; and a plurality of index checksums, wherein each index checksum of the plurality of index checksums verifies data integrity of content data beginning at a corresponding one index of the plurality of indexes and ending at a subsequent one index of the plurality of indexes.

"4. The method of claim 1, wherein the checksum data comprises data formed using a MD5 algorithm.

"5. The method of claim 1, wherein determining, based on the difference between the checksum data and the reference checksum data associated with the reference content item associated with the content item, the issue associated with the one or more segments of the content item comprises determining a mismatch between the checksum data and the reference checksum data, wherein the mismatch indicates the one or more segments of the content item are damaged.

"6. The method of claim 1, wherein determining, based on the difference between the checksum data and the reference checksum data associated with the reference content item, the issue associated with the one or more segments of the content item comprises determining an absence of at least a portion of the checksum data, wherein the absence indicates that the one or more segments of the content item are missing.

"7. The method of claim 1, further comprising: determining, based on the issue, the one or more segments of the content item are damaged; and generating a repaired content item by replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged with at least a portion of the reference content item.

"8. A method comprising: sending, to a computing device from a user device, metadata associated with a content item, wherein the metadata comprises checksum data and index data; receiving reference metadata associated with a reference content item associated with the content item, wherein the reference content item comprises a verified copy of the content item; receiving one or more reference segments of the reference content item corresponding to one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing; generating, based on replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing with the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item, a repaired content item; generating repair metadata associated with the repaired content item; determining that at least a portion of the repair metadata matches at least a portion of the reference metadata; and causing output of the repaired content item.

"9. The method of claim 8, wherein the reference metadata comprises reference index data comprising: a content identifier identifying the reference content item; and a plurality of indexes, wherein each index of the plurality of indexes indicates an offset from a beginning of the reference content item.

"10. The method of claim 9, wherein the reference metadata comprises reference checksum data comprising: a content checksum verifying data integrity of the reference content item; and a plurality of index checksums, wherein each index checksum of the plurality of index checksums verifies data integrity of content data beginning at a corresponding one index of the plurality of indexes and ending at a subsequent one index of the plurality of indexes.

"11. The method of claim 10, wherein generating, based on replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing with the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item, the repaired content item comprises: determining an index associated with a corresponding index checksum in the checksum data associated with the content item; and overwriting a segment of the content item starting at the determined index with a reference segment of the reference content item associated with the determined index.

"12. The method of claim 10, wherein generating, based on replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing with the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item, the repaired content item comprises: determining an index of the reference metadata is not present in the index data associated with the content item; and inserting, based on the determined index, a reference segment of the reference content item associated with the determined index into the content item.

"13. The method of claim 8, wherein the checksum data comprises data formed using a MD5 algorithm.

"14. The method of claim 8, wherein the reference metadata comprises reference checksum data and reference index data, wherein the repair metadata comprises repair index data and repair checksum data, and wherein determining that the at least the portion of the repair metadata matches the at least the portion of the reference metadata comprises determining that the repair index data matches the reference index data.

"15. The method of claim 8, wherein receiving one or more reference segments of the reference content item corresponding to the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing comprises receiving an entire reference content item.

"16. A method comprising: storing, by a user device, a content item; receiving a request for playback of the content item; sending, to a computing device, after the request for playback, metadata associated with the content item, wherein the metadata comprises checksum data and index data; receiving reference metadata associated with a reference content item; receiving one or more reference segments of the reference content item corresponding to one or more segments of the content item that are damaged; generating, based on the reference metadata and based on replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged with the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item, a repaired content item; and causing output of the repaired content item at the user device.

"17. The method of claim 16, wherein the index data comprises: a content identifier identifying the content item; and a plurality of indexes, wherein each index of the plurality of indexes indicates an offset from a beginning of the content item.

"18. The method of claim 16, wherein the checksum data comprises: a content checksum verifying data integrity of the content item; and a plurality of index checksums, wherein each index checksum of the plurality of index checksums verifies data integrity of content data.

"19. The method of claim 18, wherein generating, based on replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are damaged or missing with the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item, the repaired content item comprises: determining that an index checksum of the plurality of index checksums of the reference metadata does not match a corresponding index checksum in the checksum data associated with the content item; and overwriting a segment of the content item with a reference segment of the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item associated with the determined index checksum.

"20. The method of claim 18, further comprising: determining an index of the reference metadata is not present in the index data associated with the content item; and inserting, based on the determined index a reference segment of the received one or more reference segments of the reference content item associated with the determined index into the content item.

"21. The method of claim 6, further comprising generating a repaired content item by replacing the one or more segments of the content item that are missing with at least a portion of the reference content item.

"22. The method of claim 1, wherein the issue indicates that the one or more segments of the content item associated with the issue are damaged.

"23. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference content item comprises a verified copy of the content item."

For more information, see this patent: Hein, James Bradley. Methods and systems for repairing recorded content. U.S. Patent Number 11269850, filed September 29, 2017, and published online on March 8, 2022. Patent URL:

<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=%2Fnetacgi%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=11269850.PN.&OS=PN/11269850RS=PN/11269850>

Keywords for this news article include: Business, Information Technology, Information and Data Validation, Comcast Cable Communications LLC.

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Document INTEWK0020220329ei3t000ns

Comcast Cable Communications LLC; Patent Issued for Language-based **content** recommendations using closed captions (USPTO 11270071)

1,946 words

29 March 2022

Information Technology Newsweekly

INTEWK

3905

English

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2022 MAR 29 (VerticalNews) -- By a News Reporter-Staff News Editor at Information Technology Newsweekly -- From Alexandria, Virginia, VerticalNews journalists report that a patent by the inventors Walsh, Richard (Sunnyvale, CA, US), filed on December 28, 2017, was published online on March 8, 2022.

The patent's assignee for patent number 11270071 is Comcast Cable Communications LLC (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States).

News editors obtained the following quote from the background information supplied by the inventors: "Content delivery systems may include a large amount of content. Content may be stored in a variety of locations, such as locally, remotely, or across a network. With a larger and growing amount of content, users may be required to sift through many options to find content of interest."

As a supplement to the background information on this patent, VerticalNews correspondents also obtained the inventors' summary information for this patent: "The following summary is not intended to limit or constrain the detailed description. The following summary merely presents features in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description provided below.

"Systems, apparatuses, and methods are described to provide language-based content recommendations using closed captions so that content delivery systems may provide recommendations for content that are closely aligned with a user's interests. Closed caption data of content that is selected or viewed may be analyzed to generate metrics that may be indicative of the characteristics of the content viewed and, in turn, the viewer. For example, complex aspects of the caption data such as reading level, sentence length, and frequency of occurrences of certain words or phrases, may be analyzed. Other data determined from various sources such as an audio channel associated with the content, user inputs (e.g., remote control, voice commands, other user device inputs), or video of the content also may be analyzed to identify certain characteristics of the content indicative of the viewer. These characteristics may be applied in generating or updating metrics. Metrics may include any type of metric, including language-level metrics described further below, that may relate to linguistic characteristics of content. Metrics may be associated with a user or group of users, or may be associated with content selected or viewed by a user or group of users. For example, metrics may be associated with a user and then used to determine additional content, such as content listings or content assets, that is more likely to be of interest to the user than other content based on determined characteristics of the user. With each subsequent content that is selected or viewed, metrics may be updated based on the subsequent content to provide improved metrics, and thus, provide content recommendations that may be personalized to the user and that are more closely aligned with the user's interests.

"A data stream for a display device may be transmitted by a computing device, where the data stream comprises content and caption data associated with the content. Indications of one or more portions of the content a user may select or view may be received, and metrics may be determined based on the caption data associated with those portions of content. The metrics may be used to determine recommendations for additional content, where the additional content is correlated with the selected or viewed portion of content based on the metrics.

"The above summary is not an exhaustive listing of the novel features described herein, and are not limiting of the claims. These and other features are described in greater detail below."

The claims supplied by the inventors are:

"1. A method comprising: processing, by a computing device, a digital caption stream to determine speaker changes associated with an audio stream of a content item that has been selected by a user for future output, wherein the processing occurs prior to output of the content item; determining, based on the speaker changes and linguistic characteristics of caption streams associated with a plurality of different content items that have

not yet been output to the user, a recommended plurality of content items; and sending an indication of the recommended plurality of content items.

"2. The method of claim 1, wherein the sending the indication of the recommended plurality of content items comprises: sending, to a device associated with the user, a degree of similarity between: the plurality of different content items that have not yet been output to the user; and the content item that has been selected by the user for future output.

"3. The method of claim 1, further comprising: determining, based on the speaker changes and the linguistic characteristics of the caption streams associated with the plurality of different content items that have not yet been output to the user, a degree of similarity between: a portion of each of the recommended plurality of content items; and the content item that has been selected by the user for future output; and wherein the sending the indication comprises sending, based on a determination that the degree of similarity satisfies a threshold, the indication of the recommended plurality of content items.

"4. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the recommended plurality of content items is further based on a similarity between: respective grammatical complexities of the recommended plurality of content items; and grammatical complexity of the content item that has been selected by the user for future output.

"5. The method of claim 1, wherein the recommended plurality of content items comprises a plurality of different television shows or a plurality of different movies.

"6. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the recommended plurality of content items is further based on one or more of grammatical complexity, reading level, or sentence lengths determined based on processing the digital caption stream.

"7. The method of claim 1, further comprising: determining voice data received from the user, wherein the determining the recommended plurality of content items is further based on linguistic characteristics of the voice data.

"8. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining the recommended plurality of content items is further based on a degree of profanity within: the digital caption stream; and voice commands received from the user.

"9. The method of claim 1, wherein the speaker changes are based on a time between different speakers speaking in the digital caption stream.

"10. The method of claim 1, wherein the speaker changes comprise an average frequency of speaker changes within the content item that has been selected by the user for future output.

"11. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the recommended plurality of content items comprises: monitoring speaker changes in caption streams of a plurality of currently-transmitted content streams; and updating, based on the monitoring, the linguistic characteristics.

"12. The method of claim 1, wherein the digital caption stream is encrypted, and wherein processing the digital caption stream comprises decrypting the digital caption stream.

"13. The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving, from a source different from the computing device, the digital caption stream; and decoding the digital caption stream.

"14. The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving a user selection of a recommended content item from the recommended plurality of content items; retrieving the recommended content item; and sending the recommended content item.

"15. A method comprising: determining, by a computing device, a first video program selected by a user for future output; processing, prior to output of the first video program, a digital caption stream associated with the first video program to determine a first grammatical complexity based on a quantity of different speakers; determining a recommended video program having a second grammatical complexity similar to the first grammatical complexity; and sending an indication of the recommended video program.

"16. The method of claim 15, wherein the sending the indication of the recommended video program comprises sending, to a device associated with the user, a degree of similarity between: the second grammatical complexity; and the first grammatical complexity.

"17. The method of claim 15, further comprising: determining a degree of similarity between: grammatical complexity of a portion of the recommended video program; and the first grammatical complexity; and wherein the sending the indication comprises sending, based on a determination that the degree of similarity satisfies a threshold, the indication of the recommended video program.

"18. The method of claim 15, wherein the determining the first grammatical complexity is further based on a reading level of determined based on processing the digital caption stream.

"19. The method of claim 15, further comprising: determining user characteristics based on user commands comprising one or more of: a textual or button input; changing of contents or services; motion sensing of a body movement; or recognition of a facial expression, wherein the determining the recommended video program is based on the user characteristics.

"20. The method of claim 15, wherein the first grammatical complexity is based on a sentence length or a quantity of complex words of voice commands spoken by the user.

"21. The method of claim 15, wherein the first grammatical complexity is further based on an average frequency of speaker changes within the first video program.

"22. A method comprising: determining, by a computing device, a first content item selected by a user for future output; processing, prior to output of the first content item, a digital caption stream associated with the first content item to determine a first reading level based on a time duration during which different speakers speak within a portion of the first content item; determining a recommended content item having a second reading level similar to the first reading level; and sending an indication of the recommended content item.

"23. The method of claim 22, further comprising, sending, to a device associated with the user, a degree of similarity between: the second reading level; and the first reading level.

"24. The method of claim 22, further comprising: determining a degree of similarity between: a reading level of a portion of the recommended content item; and the first reading level; and wherein the sending the indication comprises sending, based on a determination that the degree of similarity satisfies a threshold, the indication of the recommended content item.

"25. The method of claim 22, wherein the determining the first reading level is further based on sentence lengths associated with the portion of the first content item.

"26. The method of claim 22, further comprising: determining an advertisement having a reading level similar to the first reading level; and sending the advertisement for display at a device associated with the user.

"27. The method of claim 22, further comprising: determining that the first content item belongs to a cluster group of content items having reading levels similar to the first reading level, wherein the determining the recommended content item is further based on the reading levels of the cluster group of content items.

"28. The method of claim 22, wherein the first reading level is further based on a quantity of different speakers within the portion of the first content item."

For additional information on this patent, see: Walsh, Richard. Language-based content recommendations using closed captions. U.S. Patent Number 11270071, filed December 28, 2017, and published online on March 8, 2022. Patent URL: <http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=%2Fnetacgi%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&id=50&s1=11270071.PN.&OS=PN/11270071RS=PN/11270071>

Keywords for this news article include: Business, Comcast Cable Communications LLC.

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FreeWheel Launches New CTV Campaign Planning Technology

Jon Lafayette

393 words

29 March 2022

Broadcasting & Cable

BDCTCA

English

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Self-serve **platform** calculates deduplicated reach against linear TV

[FreeWheel](#), Comcast's ad tech company, said it has launched new self-service technology that will let buyers plan connected TV campaigns targeting custom audience segments while calculating their deduplicated reach in relation to linear TV.

The technology also give buyers streamlined access to premium inventor form FreeWheel publishing clients.

Audience segments are based on aggregated Comcast viewership data from millions of homes and FreeWheel's technology is designed to help both buyers and sellers understand the goals of campaigns and enable them to deal with each other, reducing intermediaries and making buys more valuable.

[Also: Comcast's FreeWheel Names Mark McKee General Manager](#)

"Advertisers who understand the benefits of targeted premium video are adding CTV to their linear TV plans to increase reach and improve consumer engagement," said Jon Whitticom, chief product officer at FreeWheel. "The problem historically has been that the two channels were working in siloes, so accessing the right inventory was complicated and opaque. Not anymore; our solution unifies linear and CTV so that advertisers can easily maximize reach across screens with limited waste. This capability represents a huge step forward in better connecting buyers and sellers – something FreeWheel is known for in the industry and that improves the consumers' experience."

[Also: Comcast Advertising Relaunches FreeWheel's AudienceXpress](#)

FreeWheel said the new technology would be immediately useful to political advertisers. It has worked with Comcast's ad sales unit Effectv to get the new tools directly into the hands of political advertisers using the FreeWheel's Strata platform.

"As a result of fragmentation, audience-focused, multi-screen campaign planning is more important than ever," said Dan Sinagoga, head of political sales at Effectv. "These new tools are just what our clients had been waiting – and asking – for. With this launch, we are bringing to bear many strategic assets across Comcast Advertising to address these challenges, and we're excited to support the initial deployments with political advertisers. Nearly \$9 billion will be spent by political campaigns in 2022, and this technology will make each dollar spent more efficient."

FreeWheel said it will be launching other technology initiatives this year designed to help buyers and sellers work with each other in what has become a dynamic and challenging advertising ecosystem. ■

[FreeWheel \(FreeWheel\)](#)

Document BDCTCA0020220329ei3t000gr



FreeWheel Adds Self Service For Unified CTV, Linear Political Campaigns

126 words

29 March 2022

16:06

MediaPost.com

MPC

English

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Comcast's FreeWheel has added self-service capabilities for political advertisers planning unified, audience-based connected TV (CTV) and linear TV buys on its **platform**.

FreeWheel says it plans to make the solution available for non-political advertising sectors sometime after this year.

The self-service mode gives political advertisers using FreeWheel's Strata technology streamlined access to participating publisher partners to build custom audience segments and activate CTV campaigns with deduplicated reach to linear TV.

FreeWheel is the only platform that incorporates segments based on aggregated Comcast viewership data from millions of homes, used to equalize audiences across linear and CTV, according to the company.

Comcast's ad sales division, Effectv, is marketing the solution.

Document MPC0000020220329ei3t0005n

PRESS RELEASE: Comcast Expands Digital Equity Efforts: Installs Comcast Lift Zone at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Olathe Unit

820 words

29 March 2022

14:00

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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DGAP-News: Comcast Greater Kansas City Comcast Expands Digital Equity Efforts: Installs Comcast Lift Zone at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Olathe Unit 2022-03-29 / 15:00 The issuer is solely responsible for the **content** of this announcement.

As part of its ongoing commitment to help connect low-income families and individuals to the Internet so they can fully participate in the digital economy, Comcast today announced the Olathe Unit of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City is now a high-speed Internet enabled Lift Zone. Lift Zones provide free WiFi access in community centers and complement Comcast's Internet Essentials program, which since 2011 has helped connect more than 10 million low-income Americans to the Internet at home, with more than 20,000 in Kansas and Missouri, including Olathe.

The grand opening celebration of Comcast's first Lift Zone in Olathe, located at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Olathe Unit, will be on Tuesday, March 29 at 4:30 p.m. at 520 S. Harrison St. With this opening, there are now three active Lift Zones in the Greater Kansas City Area-two in Independence at the Boys & Girls Clubs and this new addition at the Olathe Unit.

Dignitaries attending the event are Dr. Dred Scott, President and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, LeEtta Felter, Olathe City Council and School Board Member, and Brent McCune, Chair of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Olathe Unit Advisory Board.

'I would like to express my gratitude to the team at Comcast,' remarked Dr. Dred Scott, President and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City. 'Adding the Lift Zones to the Olathe Unit to help our Club members access the Internet is huge. During the pandemic many of our youth were forced to learn from home without having the technology, hardware and infrastructure to support that learning. I want to thank each and every member of the Comcast team that made the Lift Zone initiatives possible within our Clubs. It means so much because of the connection they have with the Club. This relationship and this partnership are much more than a transactional experience.'

"Having WiFi at the Lift Zone in the Olathe Unit is great because I can get my homework done right after school," remarked 5th Grade Olathe Lift Zone Club Member, Aleria H. "When my homework is completed, it allows me to have more free time when I get home. I'm so glad the Club has WiFi!"

'Our partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City is part of our work striving to advance digital equity in communities across the Greater Kansas City area,' said Nicole Jacobson, Director, Technical Operations, Comcast. 'Opening the Lift Zone at their facility in Olathe allows us to support students and their families and provide them with the high-speed broadband they need to stay connected.'

For more information about Internet Essentials, Lift Zones and Comcast's commitment to education and digital equity, please visit <https://corporate.comcast.com/education>. Families and households can apply for the Internet Essentials program at www.internetessentials.com or by phone at 1-855-846-8376 for English or 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

About Comcast Corporation

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group,

NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information. Contact Details

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<https://corporate.comcast.com/> News Source: News Direct

2022-03-29 Dissemination of a Corporate News, transmitted by DGAP - a service of EQS Group AG. The issuer is solely responsible for the content of this announcement. The DGAP Distribution Services include Regulatory Announcements, Financial/Corporate News and Press Releases. Archive at www.dgap.de

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Comcast Greater Kansas City

United States

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1314719 2022-03-29

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March 29, 2022 09:00 ET (13:00 GMT)

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PRESS RELEASE: Comcast Expands Digital Equity Efforts: Installs Comcast Lift Zone at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Olathe Unit

815 words

29 March 2022

14:00

Dow Jones Newswires German

RTDJGE

English

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NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information. Contact Details

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1314719 2022-03-29

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

29-03-22 1300GMT

Document RTDJGE0020220329ei3t000ms



Comcast launches Wi-Fi 6 Business Gateway for multi-gigabit speeds

118 words

29 March 2022

Telecompaper Americas

TELAM

English

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Comcast Business has introduced a new Comcast Business Gateway, the company's first Wi-Fi 6 certified device capable of delivering multi-gigabit speeds.

As the most powerful Wi-Fi device to date for the firm, the gateway harnesses the systems behind Comcast's xFi Advanced Gateway. It reduces Wi-Fi interference and increases bandwidth, and boasts a wider range, connecting up to 150 **devices**. It also features static IP features and built-in SecurityEdge, plus multiple voice ports, a built-in Ethernet switch with two multi-gig ports, eight-hour battery backup for Comcast Business Voice service, and an industrial design for wall, rack, or desktop mounting.

Document TELAM00020220329ei3t0005m

Sky deals: Get TV and broadband for the lowest price EVER

MaxF

517 words

28 March 2022

Expert Reviews

EXPRW

English

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If you're after a straightforward TV and broadband package, this is the Sky deal for you: more the 250 Freeview channels on the Sky Q box and an average 36Mbps/sec broadband connection for £30/mth on an 18-month contract. That's the lowest price it's ever been and, considering that the broadband alone would set you back £28/mth, is an unmissable deal. You'll also get an upload speed of 9Mbps/sec and a guaranteed download speed of 25Mbps/sec, which should be more than enough for working from home or streaming from a couple of **devices**.

But why should you opt for Sky? What sets this offer apart, aside from the impressive broadband, is the Sky Q box, a good-looking device that keeps all of your streaming apps and recordings in one place. You can even control it with your voice, as well as use it to pause or rewind live TV and store 500 hours of your favourite programmes. No wonder we gave it five stars and a coveted Best Buy award in our glowing original review.

There's a catch, though: this deal will expire at midnight on 31 March. That means you should act quickly if you want one of the best set-top boxes on the market and 36Mbps/sec broadband for a rock-bottom price. Note that you'll have to pay a standard setup fee of £30.

[Buy now from Sky](#)

In our most recent review of Sky's broadband offering, we praised the service provider's blistering speeds, solid reliability and excellent customer service results. Our only major quibble was with the company's price hikes, which occur after your contract ends. However, that shouldn't be an issue if you keep an eye on your plan and make the decision to renew or switch in good time.

While a download speed 36Mbps/sec will be enough for users who spend most of their time browsing or streaming, avid gamers or sport aficionados should take a look at one of Sky's other TV and broadband deals, which we've rounded up below. Keep in mind that all of them last for 18 months and come with a larger one-off setup fee of up to £49.

* [Sky TV and Freeview plus 36Mbps/sec broadband for £39/mth](#)

* [Sky TV, Freeview and Netflix plus 36Mbps/sec broadband for £44/mth](#)

* [Sky TV, Freeview and Netflix plus 145Mbps/sec broadband for £50/mth](#)

* [Sky TV, Freeview, Netflix and Sky Sports plus 59Mbps/sec broadband for £67/mth](#)

[Buy now from Sky](#)

That said, the £30/mth deal we've highlighted still represents the best value for money, especially if your internet habits are on the lighter side. Again, just remember to get in there quickly to nab the offer at its lowest-ever price.

Alternatively, you could size up the broadband and TV competition by visiting our dedicated roundup or find the best broadband-only deal for you via our regularly updated list.

Document EXPRW00020220328ei3s00003



Comcast Business debuts WiFi-6 business gateway

164 words

28 March 2022

Optical Networks Daily

OBSERV

English

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Comcast Business introduced its first WiFi-6 certified gateway capable of delivering true multi-gigabit speeds.

The Comcast Business Gateway can connect up to 150 **devices**. It features multiple voice ports, a built-in Ethernet switch with two multi-gig ports, eight-hour battery backup for Comcast Business Voice service, and an industrial design that gives a business flexibility by allowing for wall, rack, and desktop mounting. It automatically protects all connected **devices** at the gateway level from malware and other **cybersecurity** threats to help keep all **devices** within the business protected.

"Connectivity is the backbone of business, and as the speed of business accelerates, our customers demand a high-performance technology that can be their workhorse – and their racehorse," said Christian Nascimento, vice president, Product Management & Strategy at Comcast Business. "Designed with love from Philadelphia, Comcast Business's latest gateway enhances business performance through faster and more reliable wireless connectivity, supporting and securing businesses, their customers and employees."

Document OBSERV0020220329ei3s00006

News

Comcast to offer free internet after federal program

Ben Gilliam

262 words

28 March 2022

CBS - 11 WJHL

CBSWJH

English

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (WJHL) - Comcast customers may qualify to save on their internet bills or connect for free after the company joined a new federal program.

The Affordable **Connectivity** Program (ACP), which went into effect on December 31, 2021, provides a \$30 discount to each eligible household for every monthly broadband bill they pay. If a household is on qualifying Tribal land, they stand to receive \$75 off.

For local Comcast Xfinity customers, that can mean a completely free monthly bill for those that participate in Internet Essentials Plus. According to a press release from Comcast, their participation in the program means that qualifying households previously paying \$29.95 a month will now have access to 100 Mbps download speeds and all equipment needed to connect for free with ACP discounts.

The discounts apply to households that:

- * Earn 200% or less than the Federal Poverty Guideline;
- * Participate in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- * Participate in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- * Participate in the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- * Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- * Meet the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income internet program.

The ACP is part of a federal effort to bridge the Digital Divide and ensure that all Americans have access to high-speed communication.

Document CBSWJH0020220329ei3s00038

Press Release: Comcast Business Debuts Its Most Powerful WiFi Gateway, Transforms the Future of Business Connectivity

807 words

28 March 2022

15:01

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Comcast Business Debuts Its Most Powerful WiFi Gateway, Transforms the Future of Business Connectivity

New Comcast Business Gateway delivers faster speeds, improved protection and best-in-class WiFi coverage, allowing customers to move gigabits of data with ease

PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--March 28, 2022--

Comcast Business today introduced the Comcast Business Gateway, its next-generation Advanced Gateway and the company's first WiFi-6 certified device capable of delivering true multi-gigabit speeds to provide superior WiFi connectivity to businesses. Comcast Business's most powerful WiFi device to date, the gateway harnesses the innovation behind Comcast's highly-acclaimed xFi Advanced Gateway -- which offers the best in-home WiFi experience -- and applies it for today's connected workplace to make next-gen speeds a widespread reality.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220328005251/en/>

Comcast Business Gateway (Photo: Business Wire)

"Connectivity is the backbone of business, and as the speed of business accelerates, our customers demand a high-performance technology that can be their workhorse -- and their racehorse," said Christian Nascimento, vice president, Product Management & Strategy at Comcast Business. "Designed with love from Philadelphia, Comcast Business's latest gateway enhances business performance through faster and more reliable wireless connectivity, supporting and securing businesses, their customers and employees."

The Comcast Business Gateway is designed to reduce WiFi interference and increase bandwidth to power the most connected businesses of tomorrow. Customer benefits and key features of the next-generation gateway include:

- Unprecedented range -- Designed for high-performance business users to handle more capacity and faster speeds, including 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands and Gig over WiFi to connect up to 150 devices -- more than ever before.
- Instant internet for business -- Ultra-low lag time for those moments when response times matter most like unrivaled cloud computing, videoconferencing and file transfers.
- Static IP features -- Enables always-on services for clients and employees, even outside of the business' network, with additional subscriptions.
- Built-in SecurityEdge -- With a SecurityEdge subscription, the gateway automatically protects all connected devices at the gateway level from malware and other cybersecurity threats to help keep all devices within the business protected.
- Designed with businesses in mind -- Features multiple voice ports, a built-in Ethernet switch with two multi-gig ports, eight-hour battery backup for

Comcast Business Voice service, and an industrial design that gives a business flexibility by allowing for wall, rack, and desktop mounting.

The new gateway reinforces Comcast Business's commitment to providing the best business WiFi experience with the fastest speeds, advanced security protection and broad coverage to elevate and protect today's businesses.

The Comcast Business Gateway was built on Comcast's global technology platform, that enables the company to connect and entertain millions of people to amazing moments and experiences. The new gateway will join the more than 75 million Comcast broadband and streaming devices running on this state-of-the-art platform in the United States and abroad.

The Comcast Business Gateway is now fully available to businesses throughout the Comcast Business footprint.

About Comcast Business

Comcast Business offers a suite of Connectivity, Communications, Networking, Cybersecurity, Wireless, and Managed Solutions to help organizations of different sizes prepare for what's next. Powered by the nation's largest Gig-speed broadband network, and backed by 24/7 customer support, Comcast Business is the nation's largest cable provider to small and mid-size businesses and one of the leading service providers to the Enterprise market. Comcast Business has been consistently recognized by industry analysts and associations as a leader and innovator, and one of the fastest growing providers of Ethernet services.

For more information, call 866-429-3085. Follow on Twitter @ComcastBusiness and on other social media networks at <http://business.comcast.com/social>.

About Comcast Corporation

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, multiple cable networks, Peacock, NBCUniversal News Group, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

View source version on businesswire.com: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220328005251/en/>

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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Comcast Business Debuts Its Most Powerful WiFi Gateway, Transforms the Future of Business Connectivity

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Business Wire

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SOURCE:

Comcast Corporation

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(END)

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Sky Mobile starts sales of Oppo Find X5 phones

65 words

28 March 2022

Telecompaper Europe

TELEUR

English

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UK MVNO Sky Mobile announced it is offering the new Find X5 series of smartphones from Oppo. All three **devices** are available to purchase online, in-store, or over the phone, starting from GBP 18 per month. For a limited time, the Lite model comes with free Enco Free 2 earphones and the Oppo Band free.

Document TELEUR0020220328ei3s00003

WARNING: Streaming Sky TV illegally just landed four people lengthy jail terms

David Snelling
594 words
26 March 2022
08:55
express.co.uk
EXCO
English
Copyright 2022

FOUR people in the UK are facing lengthy jail sentences after they were found guilty of streaming **content** from Sky and BT without permission.

The crackdown on illegal streaming continues to intensify with four UK residents now facing lengthy jail terms for distributing **content** via the web. A total of 10 years was handed down to the three men and one woman following an investigation by Hampshire County Council Trading Standards. The charges were all in connection with the illegal streaming of copyright-protected material with most of the **content** coming from premium platforms such as Sky and BT.

Related articles

Streaming has become hugely popular in recent years with consumers often buying devices that come pre-loaded with software that allows them to watch sports and movies for free.

Some illegal firms even offer swathes of premium content for a monthly fee that's far cheaper than subscribing directly to Sky, Virgin Media or BT.

It can be financially rewarding for those distributing the material with one of the individuals in this latest case thought to have made over £300,000 from the venture whilst another made around £80,000.

The four individuals were sentenced on Friday 18 March 2022, at Southampton Crown Court with one now facing five years behind bars. Although this case specifically targeted those who were distributing the streams, consumers who watch via these free platforms also need to be aware of the dangers.

READ MORE: Don't open this Facebook Messenger message! 'Look what I found' scam is back

According to FACT, illegal streaming can lead to a huge range of problems yet three out of five people in the UK are unaware that illegal streaming can expose users to fraud, identity theft and malware. Recent Research from FACT found that one in three people admitted that they have experienced fraud, been hacked or have been exposed to online scams as a result of illegal streaming. "It's important that individuals understand the dangers to themselves and their devices, as well as the legal implications of piracy," the firm told Express.co.uk.

Speaking after the case, Councillor Edward Heron, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs, said: "Our trading standards officers are active in many areas, and often work in collaboration with other agencies, pooling expertise and skills to detect and pursue those who seek to defraud Hampshire residents.

"This successful prosecution in collaboration with FACT has helped to ensure that legitimate providers of digital content are supported, and crucially, that consumers are protected from downloading unregulated content. Illegal distribution of content presents significant risks – including children being easily exposed to explicit or age-inappropriate content, as well as people being exposed to malicious software and their data being misused. Other dangers might include electrical safety if adapted streaming devices don't meet important required standards."

And Kieron Sharp, Chief Executive of FACT, added: "I would like to thank Hampshire County Council Trading Standards for taking on this case following an initial investigation by FACT, assisted by National Trading Standards. The individuals sentenced were involved in running a criminal enterprise that generated substantial profits with no regard for the rights of content owners. FACT continues to pursue those operating illegal streaming services who risk criminal convictions and forfeiture of assets."

Related articles Time to cancel Netflix? YouTube is now letting you stream free movies Angry at Sky and BT price hikes? This rival has a very cheap solution

Document EXCO000020220326ei3q003ml

Comcast Cable Communications Management LLC; Patent Issued for Validation of content (USPTO 11272265)

1,783 words

25 March 2022

Entertainment Newsweekly

ENTWK

486

English

© Copyright 2022 Entertainment Newsweekly via VerticalNews.com

2022 APR 1 (VerticalNews) -- By a News Reporter-Staff News Editor at Entertainment Newsweekly -- A patent by the inventors Adams, Glenn (Boulder, CO, US), filed on January 13, 2020, was published online on March 8, 2022, according to news reporting originating from Alexandria, Virginia, by VerticalNews correspondents.

Patent number 11272265 is assigned to Comcast Cable Communications Management LLC (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States).

The following quote was obtained by the news editors from the background information supplied by the inventors: "Interactive television (iTV) is currently available in varying forms and there is perhaps no single, universally accepted definition for this term. Most, however, would agree that iTV systems combine, in some form or other, the passive viewing experience of traditional TV viewing with the interactive nature of external data and content sources such as the World Wide Web. Thus, in different implementations, iTV might allow viewers (perhaps more appropriately termed subscribers) to review local news headlines or weather forecasts while watching their favorite television shows, to chat with other viewers about the latest plot twists, and/or to search for an obtain enhanced content regarding a currently televised program. Many cable and satellite TV providers have deployed iTV systems that allow subscribers to order products seen in commercials or video on demand presentations with the click of a remote control button. And certainly all iTV systems have a version of an interactive program guide that allows subscribers to learn about and select desired programming.

"A specific service offered within the iTV landscape is enhanced TV (ETV) broadcasting that provides interactive content linked to video programming. A user can request information on products within ads, access additional program information such as sports statistics, or otherwise interact with a television broadcast such as a game or reality based show. This functionality is achieved through the execution and transmission of an ETV application and corresponding data sent in the broadcast channel or other mechanism along with the video broadcast.

"These and other iTV services are deployed as a set of applications over the service provider's network. Such applications are received at the subscriber's premises via a set-top box or similar device, where they are interpreted (compiled), executed and the corresponding data is displayed on a television.

"Many applications may be presented to end users via a common user interface and order/transaction entry and tracking system. However, each application has specific integration, management and distribution issues that arise depending on the environment that the network operators choose to deploy and significant problems are experienced by application providers and distributors in deploying and managing their ETV applications as a result. Stated differently, application providers and distributors face problems in developing and managing their ETV applications because there exists a proliferation of technologies and standards for the delivery of ETV applications and different network operators have chosen to deploy different combinations of these technologies. For example, ETV application providers must cope with networks that have been cobbled together with different technologies such as:"

In addition to the background information obtained for this patent, VerticalNews journalists also obtained the inventors' summary information for this patent: "In one embodiment, the present invention provides for converting a binary encoded multimedia data into an XML file, and validating the XML file according to a predetermined XML or other schemas. Following validation, the binary information may be subject to further processing. The binary encoded multimedia data may exist in a streaming format, such as an MPEG-2 transport stream, or an AVC broadcast stream. Validating the XML file may involve validating broadcast video elementary stream formats, validating PMT information; or validating the XML file according to one or more MPEG protocols, MHP protocols, or CableLabs OpenCable(TM) protocols (or other communication protocols) and/or one or more predefined standards such as those promulgated by or for DVB (including but not limited to DVB-T or DVB-H), ATSC, SCTE, ANSI, IETF, ISO, or SMPTE. Such validation may occur at a computer system remote from where the binary information is stored and/or converted to XML.

"In a further embodiment, the present invention permits the conversion of a collection of well-formed, but possibly semantically invalid, binary encoded multimedia data components or packages as well as the binary encoded announcement, signaling, and interchange protocols used in their transmission into one or more well-formed XML files. Such XML files may then be validated according to one or more pre-defined XML schemas, or similar schema languages such as RELAX NG schemas, in order to verify that the data and protocol structures and substructures adhere to prior defined semantic constraints."

The claims supplied by the inventors are:

"1. A method comprising: generating, based on encoded video, markup language content, wherein the encoded video comprises video data that is associated with one or more formatting rules; determining, based on validation of the markup language content according to a first schema based on the one or more formatting rules, that the encoded video adheres to the one or more formatting rules; based on the determining that the encoded video adheres to the one or more formatting rules, generating an instance of a widget associated with the encoded video; and sending, to one or more devices, the instance of the widget.

"2. The method of claim 1, further comprising: generating, based on the validation of the markup language content, a second schema; and processing, based on the second schema, the instance of the widget.

"3. The method of claim 1, wherein the instance of the widget is associated with a presentation semantic.

"4. The method of claim 1, wherein the widget is a button widget or an input text field widget.

"5. The method of claim 1, wherein the widget is a hidden field widget or a timer widget.

"6. The method of claim 1, further comprising: determining an action applied to the instance of the widget; generating, based on the action and based on the validation of the markup language content, a second instance of the widget; and sending, to one or more devices, the second instance of the widget.

"7. The method of claim 1, wherein the validation of the markup language content occurs at a first computing device and the generating the instance of the widget occurs at a second computing device different from the first computing device.

"8. The method of claim 1, wherein the markup language content comprises extensible markup language (XML) content.

"9. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining comprises: determining that a data value of the video data is within a data value range.

"10. The method of claim 1, wherein the first schema comprises a RELAX NG schema.

"11. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more formatting rules comprise a version of an enhanced television binary interchange format (EBIF).

"12. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more formatting rules comprise a version of Motion Pictures Expert Group (MPEG), comprise a version of Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB), or are associated with OPENCABLE.

"13. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the one or more devices is a set-top box.

"14. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating the markup language content comprises converting the video data to the markup language content.

"15. The method of claim 1, wherein the encoded video comprises binary encoded video data.

"16. A method comprising: generating, based on first encoded video, extensible markup language (XML) content, wherein the first encoded video comprises video data that is formatted according to one or more formatting rules; validating, according to a first XML schema, the XML content, resulting in validated XML content that adheres to the one or more formatting rules; generating, based on the validated XML content, second encoded video; and generating, based on the second encoded video, an instance of a widget.

"17. The method of claim 16, further comprising: sending, to an authoring station, the instance of the widget; determining an action applied to the instance of the widget; generating, based on the action and based on the second encoded video, a second instance of the widget; and sending, to the authoring station, the second instance of the widget.

"18. The method of claim 16, wherein the validating the XML content occurs at a first computing device and the generating the instance of the widget occurs at a second computing device different from the first computing device.

"19. The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more formatting rules comprise a version of an enhanced television binary interchange format (EBIF).

"20. The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more formatting rules comprise a version of Motion Pictures Expert Group (MPEG), comprise a version of Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB), or are associated with OPENCABLE.

"21. A method comprising: generating, based on encoded video, markup language content, wherein the encoded video comprises video data that is formatted according to a version of a multimedia format; validating, according to a first schema, the markup language content, resulting in validated markup language content; generating, based on the validated markup language content, a second schema; generating, based on the second schema, an instance of a widget; and sending, to one or more devices, the instance of the widget.

"22. The method of claim 21, further comprising: processing, based on the second schema, the instance of the widget.

"23. The method of claim 21, further comprising: determining an action applied to the instance of the widget; generating, based on the action and based on the second schema, a second instance of the widget; and sending, to one or more devices, the second instance of the widget.

"24. The method of claim 21, wherein the version of the multimedia format comprises a version of an enhanced television binary interchange format (EBIF).

"25. The method of claim 21, wherein the version of the multimedia format comprises a version of Motion Pictures Expert Group (MPEG), comprises a version of Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB), or is associated with OPENCABLE."

URL and more information on this patent, see: Adams, Glenn. Validation of content. U.S. Patent Number 11272265, filed January 13, 2020, and published online on March 8, 2022. Patent URL: <http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=%2Fnetahtml%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&=50&s1=11272265.PN.&OS=PN/11272265RS=PN/11272265>

Keywords for this news article include: Business, Television, Comcast Cable Communications Management LLC.

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Comcast makes xGitGuard tool available as open source software

123 words

25 March 2022

Telecompaper World

TELWOR

English

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Comcast has made the xGitGuard tool available as open source software. The tool was developed by Comcast to protect authentication secrets from being uploaded inadvertently to GitHub. It has been used internally at Comcast since 2020 by a range of teams including software development and product security.

The xGitGuard tool uses AI with natural language processing and has a 6-step process - search GitHub, filter results, detect/extract secrets, developer ID, validate secrets and submit for remediation. GitHub is an open-source community resource for developers. The newly open-sourced tool from Comcast will help them protect sensitive data. It was developed by Dr Bahman Rashidi, Comcast Cable's Director of **Cybersecurity & Privacy** Engineering Research.

Document TELWOR0020220325ei3p00031



Comcast makes xGitGuard tool available as open source software

123 words

25 March 2022

Telecompaper Americas

TELAM

English

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Document TELAM00020220325ei3p0005q

Local Business News

Comcast Adds Services To Affordable **Connectivity** Program

Staff Writer

188 words

24 March 2022

The Greeneville Sun

GRNVLS

English

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Comcast announced this week it is expanding participation in the government's Affordable **Connectivity** Program with two new ways customers can use the federal program's \$30-per-month benefit.

Customers who qualify for the benefit can apply the money to any tier of Xfinity Internet service, Comcast said in a news release. The company's Internet Essentials Plus, which includes 100 Mbps download speeds, a cable modem, and WiFi router, is free after the government's Affordable **Connectivity** Program credit is applied, according to the news release.

Additionally, Xfinity Internet customers participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program now can add mobile service through Xfinity Mobile.

New and existing Xfinity Internet or Internet Essentials customers can visit www.xfinity.com/acp or call 844-389-4681 for more information, to determine eligibility and sign up, the company said in its news release.

Customers can also call Comcast's dedicated Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment and Support Center 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. daily. The center has multi-lingual capabilities to assist anyone interested in the program.

Document GRNVLS0020220325ei3o00006

Comcast Is Open Sourcing Its xGitGuard Security Software

Laveesh Kocher

Distributed by Contify.com

297 words

24 March 2022

Open Source FOR You

ATLINX

English

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Comcast has announced that their xGitGuard software is now open source. Dr. Bahman Rashidi, Director of Comcast Cable's **Cybersecurity & Privacy** Engineering Research team, created the application in-house to "address the global issue of potential authentication secrets being inadvertently uploaded to GitHub." The xGitGuard technology, according to Comcast, allows customers to scan GitHub "at scale and identify proprietary authentication secrets, such as passwords, API keys, and tokens." GitHub and other open source databases serve as repositories for developers to exchange existing code and **content**. They could, however, unintentionally or actively host proprietary data that was not intended to be shared.

To protect enterprises from being harmed, xGitGuard uses one of two models: one for recognising passwords and the other for detecting API tokens and keys, according to Comcast. xGitGuard, according to the business, is powered by a "six-step process" that combines artificial intelligence and natural language processing. Searching GitHub at scale, filtering results, detecting and extracting secret content, identifying the developer, validating secret content, and then sending the problematic content for remediation are all part of the process. Comcast has been using xGitGuard internally since 2020, with several teams utilising its skills to protect the company's digital assets. It has been effectively used by the cable provider's Product Security Incident Response Team (PSIRT) to discover and remediate internal code. "An invaluable tool for supporting [its] secure development lifecycle," Comcast says of xGitGuard. It now hopes that if external developers have access to the source code, the newly open source technology will be strengthened and "continue to evolve." Developers and technicians interested in the xGitGuard utility can find further information in the papers uploaded on the project's public GitHub page.

Document ATLINX0020220325ei3o00005

Freeview upgrade brings popular Sky channel to your TV for FREE

David Snelling
496 words
24 March 2022
08:03
express.co.uk
EXCO
English
Copyright 2022

FREEVIEW users are being treated to a blockbuster upgrade next week that brings the popular W channel to the **platform** for the very first time.

There's a big update coming to Freeview next week that will allow users to tune into the hugely popular W channel without paying a penny for the privilege. Until now, this **content**-packed **platform** has only been available from premium providers such as Sky and Virgin Media, but that all changes from March 28 with it finally coming to Freeview.

Related articles

That means anyone who has this free-to-watch service in their homes will be able to tune into shows such as Stacey Dooley Sleeps Over, MasterChef USA, Australia and Canada, and Inside the Ambulance.

W, which is owned by UKTV, is also promising a swathe of brand new upcoming shows including Alex Jones: Making Babies, Rochelle Humes: Interior Designer in the Making, Nurses on the Ward and Dating With My Mates.

The new content will go live on Monday, March 28 and will be available to view via Freeview channel 25.

READ MORE: Freeview reveals important news and its TV rivals won't like it one bit

"We are thoroughly delighted to be bringing W's brilliant original content featuring some of the best-known talent in the UK alongside heroes of everyday society, to a much wider audience wherever they want to watch or stream," said W's channel director, Adam Collings.

"We're looking forward to showcasing the genuine human moments embodying W's new mantra 'Life Unfiltered' and can't wait to share W's rich mix of shows filled with joy, tears and laughter with our new a free-to-air audience."

There's no word on whether users will need to re-tune their devices to get the W channel but most of these changes happen automatically so there should be no need to start digging into the settings menu.

To watch Freeview you simply need a compatible smart TV or a Freeview-ready set-top box with all content coming straight into your home via a standard aerial.

There are no subscription fees to pay and you don't have to sign up to any long-term or expensive contracts.

Along with this new channel, Freeview recently announced a new partnership with LG which means all TVs made by Korean technology firm will feature Freeview out-of-the-box for years to come.

To boost things further, the two companies are promising that they will continue to innovate the service and improve the experience for users, which should mean some big upgrades are inbound that'll make streaming shows even better.

Related articles Best Sky TV Deals : Sky Glass and Sky Q Offers Master Your Sky Q Box: 9 Essential Tricks Everyone Needs To Know TalkTalk reveals new 4K TV box with Sky Q features for £4 a month

Document EXCO000020220324ei3o002ux

PRESS RELEASE: CORRECTING and REPLACING COMCAST TO INVEST USD22 MILLION TO EXPAND ITS NETWORK TO 18,000+ HOMES & BUSINESSES IN EAGLE MOUNTAIN, UTAH

1,206 words

24 March 2022

00:26

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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DGAP-News: Comcast Utah CORRECTING and REPLACING COMCAST TO INVEST USD22 MILLION TO EXPAND ITS NETWORK TO 18,000+ HOMES & BUSINESSES IN EAGLE MOUNTAIN, UTAH 2022-03-24 / 01:26 The issuer is solely responsible for the **content** of this announcement.

This release issued on March 22, 2022 is being replaced with the following corrected version due to multiple revisions.

The updated release reads: COMCAST TO INVEST USD22 MILLION TO EXPAND ITS NETWORK TO 18,000+ HOMES & BUSINESSES IN EAGLE MOUNTAIN, UTAH

Comcast today announced it will expand service to more than 18,000 homes and businesses in Eagle Mountain City over the next four years. Comcast will invest more than USD22 million, without the use of any public funds, to bring the entire suite of Xfinity services to the Eagle Mountain community. Internet options will range from USD9.95 per month with Comcast's Internet Essentials program, to super-fast 1-Gigabit broadband service.

'Giving our residents another choice for cable and internet services improves the quality of life for our residents,' said Tom Westmoreland, Eagle Mountain mayor. 'We look forward to welcoming Comcast into our community.'

This expansion will provide qualifying families and individuals with access to Comcast's affordable Internet Essentials program, the nation's largest and most successful broadband adoption initiative. Since 2011, Internet Essentials has connected 160,000 low-income Utahns to the power of the internet at home - many for the first time.

'As one of the fastest growing cities in Utah, we are eager for opportunities that will lend to successful businesses and thriving neighborhoods,' said Tyler Savage, Chairman, Eagle Mountain Chamber of Commerce. 'Comcast will be a powerful presence that our community can rely on in pursuit of these endeavors. We look forward to working closely with Comcast as our city continues to grow and become more prosperous.'

Beginning in early 2023, residents in Eagle Mountain will have access to the entire Xfinity product suite, including Xfinity Internet, Xfinity Mobile, Xfinity X1 cable, Xfinity Home security and Internet Essentials. Residential customers will also be able to use more than 19 million hotspots across the country, an award-winning voice remote, and a streaming service offering more than 15,000 hours of content.

Once completed, businesses will have access to the full suite of Comcast Business services including Ethernet, Internet, advanced voice solutions, and video services, including WiFi, Voice, TV, and managed enterprise solutions for businesses of all sizes. Comcast Business' comprehensive portfolio of products and services help meet the day-to-day demands for large amounts of bandwidth, linking multiple sites or branch locations, or connecting offices to third-party data centers.

"We are committed to supporting Utah's growth plans by building infrastructure and bringing high-speed broadband to meet the state's next-generation capacity needs," said Bryan Thomas, vice president, Network Engineering, Comcast Mountain West Region. 'Our network expansion in Eagle Mountain is the latest example of the significant investments we've already made in the state. Since 2019, we've invested USD881 million in technology and infrastructure capital expenditures, taxes and fees, employee wages and benefits, and charitable giving.'

Comcast is also proud to participate in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which is a federal program that provides those who qualify up to USD30/month credit towards their Internet service for the duration of the program. Eligible customers can apply their ACP credit to any tier of Xfinity Internet service, and Comcast's Internet Essentials customers can effectively get service for free after the credit is applied. New and existing Xfinity Internet or Internet Essentials customers can visit www.xfinity.com/free or call 844-389-4681 for more information, to determine eligibility, and sign up.

About Comcast Corporation

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company that connects people to moments that matter. We are principally focused on broadband, aggregation, and streaming with over 57 million customer relationships across the United States and Europe. We deliver broadband, wireless, and video through our Xfinity, Comcast Business, and Sky brands; create, distribute, and stream leading entertainment, sports, and news through Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Universal Studio Group, Sky Studios, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, Peacock, NBC News, NBC Sports, Sky News, and Sky Sports; and provide memorable experiences at Universal Parks and Resorts in the United States and Asia. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

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About Comcast Business

Comcast Business offers Ethernet, Internet, Wi-Fi, Voice, TV and Managed Enterprise Solutions to help organizations of all sizes transform their business. Powered by an advanced network, and backed by 24/7 customer support, Comcast Business is one of the largest contributors to the growth of Comcast Cable. Comcast Business is the nation's largest cable provider to small and mid-size businesses and has emerged as a force in the Enterprise market; recognized over the last two years by leading industry associations as one of the fastest growing providers of Ethernet services. For more information, call 866- 429-3085. Follow on Twitter @ComcastBusiness and on other social media networks at [http:// business.comcast.com/social](http://business.comcast.com/social).

About Effectv

Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, helps local, regional and national advertisers use the best of digital with the power of TV to grow their business. It provides multi-screen marketing solutions to make advertising campaigns more effective and easier to execute. Headquartered in New York with offices throughout the country Effectv has a presence in 66 markets with more than 30 million households with video service. For more information, visit www.effectv.com. Contact Details

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