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moment

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Newer, smaller over-the-top video services have a huge hurdle to overcome as they try to reach the top of the SVOD pile: consumers who are barely aware that OTT services beyond Netflix, Hulu and Amazon even exist.



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At a panel session here during the OTT Executive Summit, consumers who made up the summit's "trender" participants indicated that they rarely discovered new streaming apps or content outside of the services they were already accustomed to using. And although most of the panel expressed interest in niche streaming services that were described to them, they had not heard of many of the services mentioned -- even though some have been operating for months.

That even extended to Sling TV, Dish Network's linear MVPD service. Only one consumer panelist had heard of the offering. "My husband mentioned that Sling is now available with Apple TV, and he's considering it, mainly because it has some sports packages," said Andrea, a mother of four who recently completely cut the cord.

When it came to news -- whether streamed or viewed on pay-TV or over the air -- some of the millennial-aged panelists said they rarely watch even traditional

broadcast news, and instead are getting their information through social media feeds or other means. "I rarely watch live news anymore because it's all fed to me via Facebook," said Alicia, a cord-cutter and mother of two.

Ian, a millennial who recently moved to New York, agreed. "I hate watching news in the morning ... everything is sent directly to you on Facebook or any major site you go to," he said. That might be bad news for NewsON, a streaming app that launched back in November on Roku, iOS and Android devices and aggregates live streams from 138 local TV stations in 97 U.S. broadcast markets. "It is a very tough challenge to get the word out to consumers with so many options for them to consider," NewsON head of marketing Derek Van Nostran told *FierceOnlineVideo*.

[gambling, daily fantasy sports but not club, bar video terminals](#)

[Allentown Morning Call Ryan Costello resigns from role as GOP convention delegate](#)

Solving that dilemma of getting found, recognized, and most importantly, viewed by consumers is a strategic challenge for OTT providers of all sizes. "Our best avenue for promotion is from our partner stations through on-air mentions, promos and digital banners," van Nostran said. "Our other promotional efforts include paid media buys through digital channels including Facebook and Google and we use social media, PR and our own assets to get the word out."

Other niche providers are getting creative, leveraging viral videos and even engaging target communities to get the buy-in they need. For example, TV4 Entertainment, which aims to identify underserved and underrepresented communities, engages with both its creators and its viewers. "Everyone behind and in front of the camera is 100 percent dedicated to our vertical. We learned that the hard way," said George Blue, president of client partnerships and advertising sales. TV4 also creates joint ventures with production companies with whom it wants to launch a channel -- such as Undisputed Network, which covers the boxing community. "It's almost easier to start when you have a passionate community already," he said.

PBS, on the other hand, has had to develop its PBS Anywhere service with both its audience and its member stations in mind. "PBS is less revenue motivated than other OTT providers; we have to keep the audience and our member stations in mind and serve both," said Don Wilcox, VP of digital marketing and services, in the panel session.

Grabbing the attention of young-adult viewers has been a challenge for PBS Anywhere; the app was eventually pulled from Xbox because of lack of interest among console users. "Xbox is dead to us," Wilcox joked. "We were not getting viewership." However, the app is getting good traction on Roku, and PBS is aiming at smart TVs as another venue for the app.

Furthermore, viewership and engagement are catching on. Wilcox noted that about 6 percent of the PBS audience watches online. And while the OTT audience in general is perceived as young, "there's a huge segment of the audience that are cord shavers by necessity," he said. "The measurement is almost barbell-shaped." — **FierceOnlineVideo**

The Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to Chairman Tom Wheeler's proposal to break cable companies' hold on the set-top box market, following a joint counteroffer from cable providers and AT&T, and a nod from their rival Google.

"Chairman Wheeler has repeatedly said he is interested in a constructive dialogue," Kim Hart, an FCC spokeswoman, said in an email Wednesday. "He welcomes the feedback to his proposal to give consumers new options for accessing the content they pay for, and he looks forward to engaging in continued conversations to inform the final rules."

Google, an early backer of Wheeler's White House-backed proposal to give households alternatives to the cable box, in a statement Tuesday called the cable-AT&T proposal a "constructive effort." The National Cable & Telecommunications Association trade group and DirecTV owner AT&T in meetings last week with FCC officials offered to let subscribers watch shows on third-party devices through internet apps that conform to an industrywide standard, according to filings.

The FCC proposal advanced on an initial vote in February, with Wheeler saying subscribers "essentially have no choices" but to pay \$231 yearly to rent boxes from cable and satellite TV providers. The FCC said it wants to pave the way for new software and devices, and the White House called the proposal a step to save families money.

AT&T and cable providers led by Comcast decried what they called a technology mandate that would force them to give away valuable programming to Google and other competitors, who could strip shows out of program bundles and surround them with advertisements. Hollywood studios said the loss of control over shows would facilitate piracy.

Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, a member of the Democratic majority whose vote Wheeler likely needs to pass the measure, said in an emailed statement Wednesday that the "the original proposal has real flaws." "We need to find another way forward," Rosenworcel said. "So I'm glad that efforts are underway to hash out alternatives to provide consumers with more choice and more competition at lower cost." – **Bloomberg**

Some Donald Trump stories beg for further comment.

I don't mean his quick canning of campaign manager Corey Lewandowski. I don't mean bad fund-raising . . . Wait, what happened to self-funding with "I'm really rich" billions and billions?

Nope. I mean a recent report in Vanity Fair that Trump's interested in his own cable news channel. Oh, mama, talk about breaking news.

If Trump's not the next president, could Trump be the next Ted Turner? Two things come to mind. First, I imagine a whole network. Trump doing news would be big and wall-to-wall. (Get it? *Wall to wall*. Sorry.) So it needs a proper name. Something simple, such as DTN (Donald Trump News) or TTT (Trump, Trump, Trump) might work.

Then it needs a slogan. Detractors might suggest "Unfair and Unbalanced" (meaning him). But I like, "This is TTT, making TV great again." And shows. You'd need shows to compete with the noise on Fox and MSNBC. So, opposite Fox's *On the Record* with Greta Van Susteren, Trump can offer *On the Border* with Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Those watching MSNBC's *Hardball* with Chris Matthews might be tempted to switch to *Meatball* with Chris Christie. If you like *Hannity* on Fox, you'll love *Hillary* on TTT, a daily recounting of Whitewater, email scandals, and presidential infidelity.

Watch *All In* with Chris Hayes on MSNBC? Catch *All Out* with Ted Cruz, about rousting Muslim neighborhoods. And then, as a friend suggests, *Weather With Miss Universe* at the top of every hour.

A winner, right? A natural for The Donald. And maybe the plan all along. I say that because the second thought I had harks back to January and a possibly prescient satire piece that ran in the New Yorker. Written by Douglas McGrath, it suggested that Trump's presidential effort was aimed at getting twice the money from NBC to stay on *The Apprentice*.

It portrayed Trump as in the race solely to reburnish his brand and, having done so, to find ways to get forced out, because "running for President is bull----. What kind of loser would do this?" The plan was to spew offensive statements - Mexicans are rapists, John McCain's no war hero, Carly Fiorina has a hatchet face, etc. - riling the politically correct.

In the piece, Trump tells an aide that nobody wants a heartless president, but insults are exactly the ticket for a guy who says "You're fired" for a living. Of course, the plan backfires, Trump rises, and the piece ends with Trump bemoaning, "We have a serious problem . . . I might win." It registered with me. I always was ready to believe that Trump never wanted the White House, just a giant ego-feed: huge reward, no responsibility.

Now I wonder whether this cable TV thing is the real reason behind the run. His campaign found an untapped audience willing to trade civility for "telling it like it is," even if the telling is offered with overt or dog-whistled racism and misogyny. And having set the stage on so many stages, then watching others get rich off his ratings draw, perhaps Trump's ready to bump it up to a higher constant platform. And isn't an already polarized America the perfect place to push polarization?

The Trump camp denied the Vanity Fair story, but that camp denies lots of things. And right after the magazine asked about a cable news venture, Trump tweeted, "The press is so totally biased that we have no choice but to take our tough but fair and smart message directly to the people!" So stay tuned. Trump TV could be huuuge. – **Philadelphia Daily News; and in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Trump University touches PA**



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