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Chicago Tribune
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Los Angeles Times
[NBC's Steve Burke expects Olympics in Rio to be the 'most profitable' ever](#)

York Daily

Macquarie analyst, Amy Yong, estimates that by the end of the decade, ~65% of broadband share will be in the hands of cable. Which makes sense if you agree that cable still presents the best value at US\$1/GB for broadband and US\$0.25/per hour of video. The analyst believes that the winners will be Comcast, Charter Communications and AT&T taking share from CenturyLink and Frontier.

Comcast's Stream TV appears to be gaining traction. In the coming months, it should open up to non-Comcast subs within the company's footprint, provided they use the MSO's proprietary gateway modem. X1 will soon be offering Netflix directly, eliminating the need for a smart TV/third-party device middle-man. Charter is next to follow, as it works to integrate streaming services into its user-interface and boxes. AT&T's DirecTV is launching three video streaming apps: DTV Now, DTV Preview, and DTV Mobile. The offerings range from a 'fat' bundle which offers both on-demand and live TV to a skinny, adsupported bundle and a mobile-only option.

CenturyLink and Frontier are the most susceptible to cable competition, convergence of wireline/wireless, and the potential threat of wireless substitution. CenturyLink has an estimated 50/20/15 overlap with Comcast/Charter/Cox while Frontier has a 46/23/5 overlap with Charter/Comcast/Cablevision. The infrastructure advantage of fiber optics over copper is still an uphill battle. – *streetinsider.com*

Venues that are still under construction. A massive economic crisis and a presidential impeachment. Body parts washing ashore just yards from competition venues. The ever-present threat of the Zika virus.

NBCUniversal has to work hard this year to put a sunny spin on the setting for the summer Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro, as top execs did Monday at a news conference detailing the Peacock's programming plans for the event that runs Aug. 5-21. "We are ready, and Rio is ready," NBC Sports chairman Mark Lazarus said. "Obviously we're monitoring this situation closely."

On Aug. 4, NBC will run a special games preview that addresses the myriad issues vexing Brazil. After that, the coverage will "focus on the athletes and the sport and the young people of the world coming together," Lazarus said. He noted that NBC News has

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plenty of staff on hand to cover any also newsworthy developments outside of the Olympics.

Among the biggest bets that the company is making is in turning the games into a showcase for the capabilities of NBCU parent Comcast's cutting-edge X1 operating system for its cable subscribers. Comcast has assigned no less than 1,000 engineers to facilitate a special Rio 2016 portal for its X1, which blends Internet and traditional TV across multiple devices.

Despite the particular challenges that the event in Brazil presents, there is good news among the bad. NBC has already raked in more than \$1 billion in ad sales for the 17-day games, essentially covering the cost of the rights and improving upon the dollar volume from 2012's London Olympics. NBC's coverage of the Opening Ceremony in London drew an audience of 40.7 million, per Nielsen. NBC brass said confidently that they expect the audience for Rio's kickoff to surpass that number.

While the ceremony won't be airing live, viewers and streamers will be able to watch it on a one-hour delay to, as Lazarus told the gathering of reporters Monday afternoon, "give context to the show." For Comcast, the Rio games are an opportunity to move a different set of goalposts forward, according to chairman-CEO Brian Roberts. "It's a laboratory for 'What is the future of television?'" he said. NBC will already be making 85 hours of virtual reality content available to viewers with Samsung devices. But the gulf between producer enthusiasm and audience uptake for virtual reality remains wide. Comcast is partnering with BuzzFeed (in which NBCUniversal has invested \$200 million) and Snapchat to help ensure that the Olympics reach younger, social media-addicted viewers.

For those viewers who have Comcast's X1 system -- almost half of the cable giant's more than 22 million video customers, with 40,000 units being shipped out on a daily basis -- there will be a portal to all things Rio 2016 featured front and center on their TV or smartphone. Every stream of every event will be available at the touch of a button or a simple voice command. What's more, viewers will be able to see, say, lane assignments for live swimming events as they're underway, and click on each athlete to see a full bio and related videos featuring that athlete. They'll be able to "follow" countries or specific sports or athletes, or ask their remote, "How's the USA doing?" to bring up a full medal count infographic on the side of their screen.

"The 'A-ha!' moment was moving the (cable) box into the cloud," Roberts told Variety. "When you have a computer getting those lane assignments, that's not the same as a TV producer having to sit there and put it in." Having the TV screen and Internet connected through the X1 platform allows for instant scale and depth that is unlike anything that has come before but is undoubtedly a big part of TV's future, Roberts enthused.

"I'm trying to get us to reinvent ourselves as a technology company," Roberts said. "It'll take a few years and some trial and error for us to get great at it. But this is a marvelous moment to showcase that, and I think in a few years, that's how everyone will watch things." – *Variety*



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