Reuters
Comcast to offer prepaid TV and internet service

Ars Technica
Verizon to disconnect unlimited data customers who use over 100GB/month

Motley Fool
How Apple Lost TV

New York Times
F.C.C. Backs Swedish Company to Run American Phone Routing System

New York Times
Roger Ailes Leaves Fox News, and Rupert Murdoch Steps In

Allentown Morning Call
VP nominee Mike Pence speaks to Pa. delegates

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Lone Pennsylvania Cruz delegate explains his vote

Verizon Communications Inc. is nearing a deal to buy Yahoo! Inc., beating out rival bidders, people familiar with the matter said.

Verizon is discussing a price close to $5 billion for Yahoo's core Internet business, one of the people said. The deal doesn't include the company's patents at this stage, the person said. While other assets including Yahoo's real estate were also on the block, it could not immediately be learned if they are part of the deal.

Philadelphia Daily News
Make Pennsylvania red again?

The companies may be ready to announce the deal in the coming days, the people said, asking not to be named because the deliberations are private. The two companies are in one-on-one discussions, one of the people said. The deal hasn't been finalized and may still fall apart, they said. A representative for Verizon declined to comment. A representative for Sunnyvale, California-based Yahoo couldn't immediately be reached outside of regular business hours.

The deal would end a months-long bidding process for Yahoo, which began earlier this year when Chief Executive Officer Marissa Mayer -- after keeping investors at bay for years -- said the company would explore strategic alternatives, including selling its main internet operations. Mayer was finally bowing to rising shareholder ire that gained steam after the collapse of a plan to spin off Yahoo's stake in Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. in a way that would minimize the tax impact for investors. Alibaba, the largest e-commerce provider in China, had emerged as the most valuable piece of Yahoo, and investors sought a way to realize some of those gains. After U.S. regulators failed to give prior approval for the transaction's tax status, Yahoo was forced to jettison the plan.

AT&T Inc. and Quicken Loans Inc. founder Dan Gilbert, as well as buyout firms Vector Capital Management and TPG were also **active** in the bidding process until the end. – ***Bloomberg***

AT&T Inc.'s quarterly profit and revenue got a lift from its acquisition of DirecTV but the company reported declining numbers of core wireless phone and pay television connections.

A year after closing its $49 billion acquisition of DirecTV, forming the biggest U.S. pay television operator, the company said cost savings from the deal are ahead of its plans. It lost 49,000 U.S. television subscribers in the second quarter but an executive said the company still expects to end the year with a net gain.

AT&T has been pushing its nationwide DirecTV satellite service and de-emphasizing its old U-verse service that operates in a 21-state footprint. In the second quarter, 391,000 households left U-verse, compared with the 342,000 that joined DirecTV. The company said about 80% of its 25.3 million television connections are now on the DirecTV service. "We would expect to see some improvement on both sides," Chief Financial Officer John Stephens said on a conference call Thursday. He said the second quarter is traditionally slow for the pay-TV business.

Mr. Stephens expects to benefit from National Football League-related subscriptions and other offers in the second half. The company said it is on track by year-end to cut $1.5 billion or more in annual expenses from the combined business.

The DirecTV deal diversified the telecom giant away the competitive consumer wireless market, where AT&T has been focused on retaining its most profitable customers and shying away from promotional offers to grab market share. The wireless business lost 180,000 mainstream phone connections in the second quarter while wireless service profit margins improved to 49.8% from 48.5% a year ago.

Phone additions are considered important because they provide more service revenue than tablets, and customers with postpaid phone accounts tend to stay longer. Overall, mainstream connections, including tablets, rose 256,000 in the quarter, ending the period at 77.3 million. Mr. Stephens said most of the lost phone connections were from so-called feature phones—as contrasted with smartphones—with an average revenue per user of about $35 a month. Overall, its mainstream wireless customers bring in about $55 a month.

Churn, the monthly cancellation rate, for mainstream customers dropped to just 0.97% from 1.01%.
AT&T's quarterly financial results have made for difficult comparisons to prior periods because the company reorganized reporting structures after the DirecTV deal. Total wireless revenue on a comparable basis dropped 2% in the quarter to $17.93 billion. Overall, AT&T reported a profit of $3.41 billion, or 55 cents a share, up from $3.08 billion, or 59 cents a share, a year earlier. Excluding items, profit per share rose to 72 cents from 70 cents. Revenue was $40.52 billion, up 23% from a year-ago period that didn't include DirecTV. Shares of AT&T, which have rallied 24% so far this year to levels not seen in more than a decade, were 0.4% lower in after-hours trading to $42.33. – ***Wall Street Journal***

Al-Jazeera Media Network is preparing to make its English language international news channel video content digitally available to US viewers again, according to an email sent to employees. The move comes almost three months after it shut down its US cable television network, al-Jazeera America, citing economic challenges in the US media market.

Al-Jazeera English reaches more than 305 million households in over 160 countries. But US viewers could not access its live stream coverage. Al-Jazeera English is in talks with cable carriers that carried the now defunct al-Jazeera America to make its live video stream available in the US starting in September, according to the email from Giles Trendle, acting managing director of al-Jazeera English and director of programs.

“I am pleased to be able to say that, all going well, AJE will available in the USA, across digital platforms, in September,” an email obtained by Reuters stated. “The exact date will be fixed once we get the green light from our Legal team, who have been concluding deals with the cable carriers of AJAM.” The memo did not specify which cable carriers.

“We won’t comment on internal memos that are informal and not definitive,” said Hasan Salim Patel, a spokesman for al-Jazeera Media Network. Qatar-based al-Jazeera Media Network shut down al-Jazeera America on 30 April, three years after its high profile launch. At the time, the company said it would expand its international digital service in the US as more consumers use their mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets for news. – ***Reuters***

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