

## A look back at the consolidation wave sweeping TV providers

June 5 2015, by Tali Arbel

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This April 1, 2015 photo shows an entrance to Charter Communications' headquarters in Town and Country, Mo. Charter will renegotiate this bid and combine it with a deal for Time Warner Cable in May. (AP Photo/Jeff Roberson)

Cable and satellite TV providers are joining together to get more heft as the Internet shakes up the television industry.

They're facing increased competition from online video, shedding traditional TV subscribers, and having to pay more for channels like ESPN. That's prompted a wave of mergers.

By combining forces, [cable companies](#) can bulk up on subscribers, giving them greater power to negotiate with entertainment conglomerates that supply content. They also can gain access to new technologies.

The next marriage might bring together satellite TV provider Dish Network and cellphone company T-Mobile. The Wall Street Journal reports they are discussing a deal.

Here's a look at big [cable](#)-industry combinations—and frustrated deals—in the past few years:

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## MAY 2015: THE NEW GIANT

Charter Communications, with the backing of cable pioneer John Malone, announces \$66 billion worth of deals for Time Warner Cable and smaller cable company Bright House Networks. That would give it 17 million TV and 19 million home Internet customers, catapulting it into third place behind Comcast and a combined AT&T and DirecTV. But intense regulatory scrutiny is expected. Tom Wheeler, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission charged with monitoring the country's phone and Internet industries, signaled that it's not enough to show that consumers won't be harmed by the merger. He says the agency "will look to see how American consumers would benefit" from the deal.

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## MAY 2015: EUROPEAN PLAYER SETS ITS SIGHTS ON USA

Altice, a European cable and mobile phone operator on an acquisition tear, enters the U.S. market. The company controlled by founder Patrick Drahi says it will buy a 70 percent stake in St. Louis-based Suddenlink, a smaller company with 1.5 million customers, for \$9.1 billion. Altice says it has big ambitions for expansion in the U.S. and is reportedly interested in Time Warner Cable.

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## MAY 2015: MOBILE ADS

Verizon says it will pay \$4.4 billion for AOL, the company best known for old-school dial-up service and a failed \$165 billion merger with Time Warner. AOL has transformed itself into a powerhouse advertising-technology company with a stock of online video. That technology is what the country's largest wireless carrier wants so it can be a player in mobile video and ads as people spend more and more time on their phones and tablets.



This file combo made from file photos shows the AT&T logo on the side of a corporate office in Springfield, Ill., left, and a DirecTV satellite dish atop a home in Los Angeles. AT&T, the second-largest U.S. wireless carrier, on May 18, 2014 agreed to buy satellite TV company DirecTV for \$48.5 billion. (AP Photo/File)

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## APRIL 2015: DEAL BREAKDOWN

Comcast walks away from Time Warner Cable after regulators from the FCC and Justice Department signal they won't approve the deal. The combination of the country's No. 1 and No. 2 cable providers would have given Comcast, which already owns entertainment giant NBCUniversal, control of more than half of the country's broadband subscribers (per the FCC's definition of high-speed Internet). Regulators

worried the company would have gained outsized power over the Internet and the ability to undermine online video rivals like Netflix.

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### MARCH 2015: IT'S CHARTER, AGAIN

Charter's first swing at Bright House, which has about 2 million customers, mostly in Florida. It's paying \$10.4 billion. Charter will renegotiate this bid and combine it with a deal for Time Warner Cable in May.

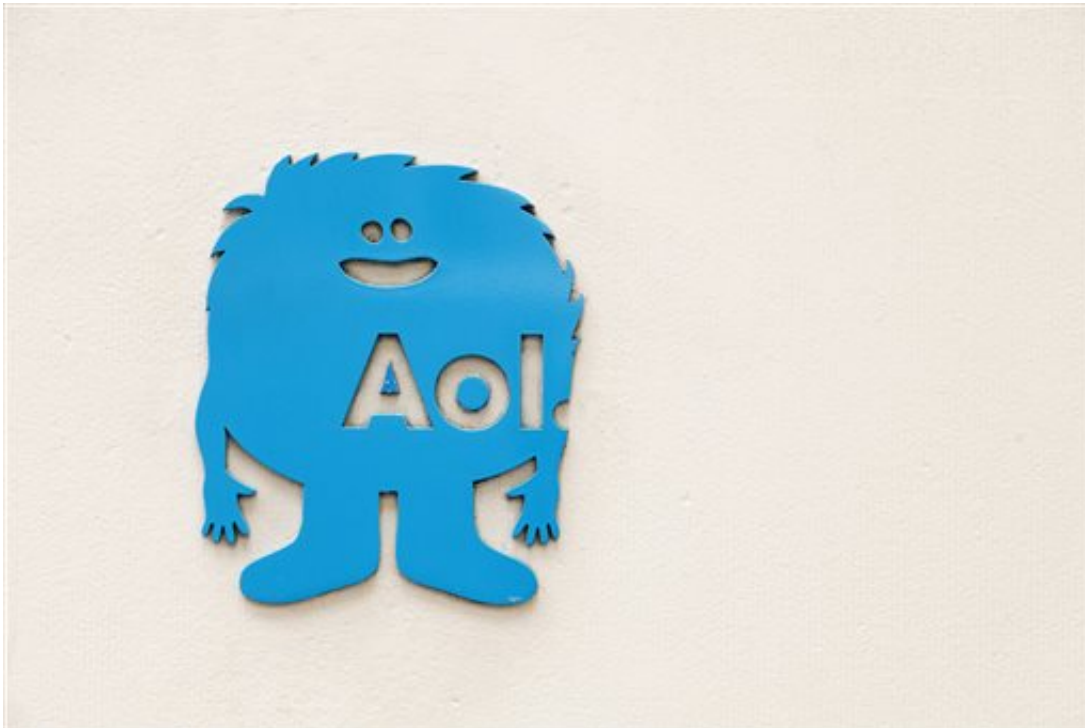
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### NOVEMBER 2014: MALONE BULKS UP ABROAD

Liberty Global, which counts Malone as chairman, completes its \$13 billion deal for the rest of Dutch cable provider Ziggo. It bought British cable provider Virgin Media for about \$23 billion in June 2013. Liberty Global has 27 million customers, mostly in Europe. Its only presence in U.S. territory is in Puerto Rico.

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### MAY 2014: MARRYING HOME AND MOBILE



This May 12, 2015 file photo shows an AOL logo posted on the building where the company's headquarters are housed, in New York. Verizon on May 12, 2015 announced it is buying AOL for about \$4.4 billion, advancing the telecom's push in both mobile and advertising fields.. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File)

AT&T, the second-largest U.S. wireless carrier, agrees to buy satellite TV company DirecTV for \$48.5 billion. The company would have 26.4 million U.S. TV customers in the U.S., topping Comcast, 16.1 million fixed Internet customers, tens of millions of wireless customers and DirecTV's Latin American subscribers. It has the potential to offer some customers a single bill for cellphone and TV and home Internet service. It's expected to be approved by regulators.

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FEBRUARY 2014: THE MAKING OF MEGACOMCAST

Comcast agrees to buy the second-biggest cable operator, Time Warner Cable for \$45.2 billion. Charter had offered \$38 billion and was rejected. This sets off a long regulatory review and protests from many corners: a slew of consumer groups, competitors like Dish and Netflix, unions for entertainment-industry writers and a television network, WeatherNation. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.), of "Saturday Night Live" fame, was one of its toughest critics, saying the deal would lead to higher prices, fewer choices for consumers, and threaten innovation and free expression.

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## MARCH 2013: MALONE'S REEMERGENCE



In this Wednesday, July 11, 2012, file photo, John Malone, chairman of Liberty

Media and CEO of Discovery Holding Company, arrives at the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho. Liberty Global in March 2013 said it will buy a 27 percent stake in Charter Communications for \$2.6 billion, setting the stage for future deal-making that will reshape the industry. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

A company controlled by Malone says it will buy a 27 percent stake in Charter Communications for \$2.6 billion, setting the stage for future deal-making that will reshape the industry. At the time, Charter had about 5 million customers.

Malone, now 74, made his fortune with Tele-Communications Inc. He was president and CEO from 1973 to 1996 and sold it for \$48 billion in 1999. He controls or has interests in several cable and media companies in the U.S. and abroad.

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This April 1, 2015 file photo shows a Charter Communications van in St. Louis. In May 2015, Charter announced \$66 billion-worth of deals for Time Warner Cable and smaller cable company Bright House Networks. (AP Photo/Jeff Roberson, File)

## JANUARY 2011: COMCAST BECOMES ENTERTAINMENT GIANT

Comcast clinches a 51 percent stake in entertainment behemoth NBCUniversal after a regulatory review that lasted about a year. The deal prompted an outcry from consumer and media advocacy groups and was even spoofed on the NBC show "30 Rock." Comcast paid General Electric \$6.2 billion in cash and contributed its existing channels like E! and The Golf Channel, worth \$7.25 billion, to NBCUniversal. Comcast bought the rest of NBCUniversal from General Electric, for \$16.7 billion, in March 2013.



In this June 11, 2013 file photo, Comcast Corp. CEO Brian Roberts speaks during The Cable Show 2013 convention in Washington. Comcast, the country's largest cable company and owner of NBCUniversal, in February 2014 agreed to buy the second-biggest cable operator, Time Warner Cable, for \$45.2 billion. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File)



In this Wednesday, March 18, 2015 file photo, Altice group's Chairman Patrick Drahi poses for photographers at the Scopus Awards of the French Friends of the Hebrew University, in Paris, France. Altice, a European cable and mobile phone operator that has been an acquisition tear, in May 2015 said it will buy a 70 percent stake in St. Louis-based Suddenlink, a smaller company with 1.5 million customers, for \$9.1 billion. (AP Photo/Thibault Camus, File)



In this June 6, 2013, file photo, pedestrians pass a Verizon Wireless store on Canal Street in New York. Verizon on May 12, 2015 announced it is buying AOL for about \$4.4 billion, advancing the telecom's push in both mobile and advertising fields. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)



In this Nov. 12, 2014 file photo, Comcast Corporation chairman & CEO Brian Roberts speaks at a Comcast presentation at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. After regulators from the FCC and Justice Department signaled that they wouldn't approve the deal, Comcast in April 2015 said goodbye to Time Warner Cable. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)



This Jan. 7, 2014 file photo shows the company logo of Dutch cable and broadband provider Ziggo at its headquarters in Utrecht, central Netherlands. Liberty Global in November 2014 completed its \$13 billion deal for the rest of Ziggo. It bought British cable provider Virgin Media for about \$23 billion in June 2013. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong, File)

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