**Pondering the Future of Niche Cable Networks**

On Wednesday, owner NBCUniversal made it official. It’s shutting down the Esquire Network cable channel, which had fallen to just 45 million subscribers, though it will continue to offer a digital version of Esquire Network. At a time when cable carriage negotiations are becoming more barbed and cord cutting has led to an increase in skinny bundles, small cable channels face an uncertain future.

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