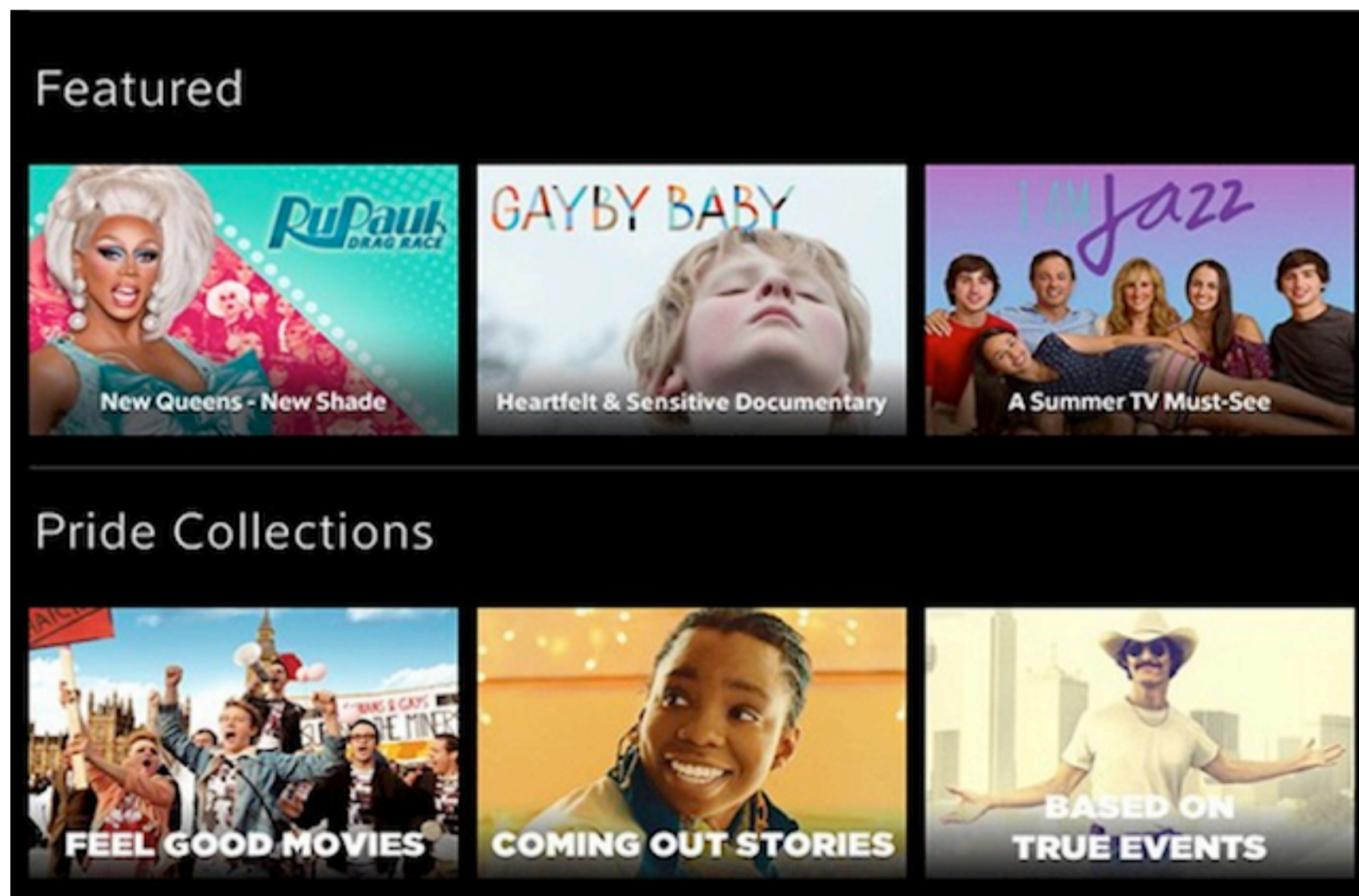


Interview: Jean-Claire Fitschen of Comcast on Launch of Xfinity LGBTQ Specialty Content

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 12, 2016 - 12:57pm

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CHICAGO – Comcast is a company of diversity, and has launched several options through that diversity with their Xfinity system options, and within their corporate culture. Joining the Spanish bilingual choice, and their in-house Accessibility Lab benefitting persons with disabilities, Comcast recently announced the launch of speciality content with LGBTQ themes. The Executive Director of Multicultural Services, Jean-Claire Fitschen, was recently in Chicago to promote the launch.



Example of Xfinity LGBTQ Programming in a System Screen Capture

Photo credit: Xfinity.com

Besides the LGBTQ content launch, Comcast also recently announced that the Netflix service will now be available on the X1 Xfinity devices, and through On Demand their customers can now access the programming that is available on that service. Jean-Claire Fitschen talked to HollywoodChicago.com about the LGBTQ content launch, and the philosophy of diversity at Comcast.

HollywoodChicago.com: What impresses me about Comcast, counter to the impression that they are a mega-corporation, is their commitment to providing both services and voices to persons underrepresented in the media. How does your position in the company embody

that philosophy and point of view?

Jean-Claire Fitschen: We champion diversity inclusion, including LGBTQ, and we do that in multiple ways – focusing on governance, work force, community investment and programming. That’s how the LGBTQ content came to be. It’s a core business and operations philosophy, and that’s the key. We’ve built our entire corporate culture around both the diversity component and inclusion. It’s manifested itself recently with the launch of our international collection and black TV/film collection on our Video-On-Demand platform, as well as the LGBTQ content launch.

HollywoodChicago.com: With the LGBTQ launch, what impresses you about the emotions and atmosphere expressed in that genre of media?

Fitschen: Primarily, I see the collection as serving its specific community. It’s been a long journey to get it right for the LGBTQ choices offered, and we worked closely with our self-identifying customers, non-customers in the community, and our own employees who have come out – over 3000 colleagues nationally. They helped in research, feedback and curation strategy. It’s really important that the collection serve the audience, and the collection is very diverse.

HollywoodChicago.com: Your company also has a commitment to create a smooth workplace environment for LGBTQ employees and their allies. What is encouraging about the success of Out@Comcast?

Fitschen: Both through the company I work for, and for me personally, I was part of the Out@Comcast Philadelphia headquarters launch, and was on the leadership team in the inaugural years. It’s tremendously important for the company, because it brings these diverse voices together in every aspect of our business.

Personally, I found that it transformed my daily experience. Being able to work across the organization, and meet the different talent and perspectives, it made coming to work exciting. It reconnected me with our community investment strategy on a very local level, in terms of the partnerships we participated in and helped fuel. Comcast is simply one of the best places to work for the LGBTQ community and their allies.

HollywoodChicago.com: When you look at the history of LGBTQ issues and TV/film, at what point do you think the breakthrough came for acceptance, and why was that significant to you?

Fitschen: Acceptance is a continuum, we always have room to grow. It’s incredible we’re seeing more inclusion in TV and film, and as an ally I am very empowered by my family and friends who are entitled, and are demanding, to see a full and positive representation of everyone in these stories. There is a hunger and expectation to produce such content, and people are using their consumer choices to reinforce that expectation of diversity.

I lived personally through an era in which family and friends were not able to live ‘out’ in the workplace or to their families, and it was a very painful time. That definitely fuels my desire to have these stories told, because of what happened during that former era. I don’t know what it’s like to live that way, but I knew the burden on my family and friends. We should not want that in the world today.

HollywoodChicago.com: What, in your opinion, is the best thing that LGBT allies in the straight world can do, to support their fellow LGBTQ travelers and stem the tide of bigotry against them?



Jean-Claire Fitschen of Comcast
Photo credit: Comcast

Fitschen: First and foremost, allies can be allies at every level, and people have different comfort levels regarding getting involved, but it’s all good. I definitely consider myself an ally activist at this point in my life, but I had a period when I was younger where I was not sure how I could help. I think that asking yourself the question, ‘how can I help?’ is where you can start. And there are so many organizations presently that offer help and guidance, and the resources are there to learn what we can do today.

HollywoodChicago.com: You are a graduate of Northwestern University in the 1990s, and have seen the amazing changes in the atmosphere since those times. How do you feel education needs to change, to both give access to more and diverse individuals, and within the evolution of our continuing technology forbearance?

Fitschen: It's very simple. I believe that LGBTQ history should be included in the history curriculum. As far as technology and education goes, I'm kind of taking it all in right now. I'm a fan of tech, and all that it has given us, but I'm also a parent who believes that there are authentic experiences outside of technology that is crucial to human existence.

HollywoodChicago.com: In your career at Comcast, you've been involved in many 'firsts.' Which one was the best technical advancement, and which one was the most socially conscious one?

Fitschen: In 2015, we launched the bi-cultural experience, which leveraged our Xfinity technology for Hispanic audiences to have bi-lingual Spanish and English options. Our entire navigation experience is now available in Spanish, and our voice command is available in Spanish as well. This was a use of technology that benefitted so many customers.

Socially, I was involved in the Center for Excellence, a call center for persons with disabilities, to use technology to get support. The Accessibility Lab is a space where technicians and developers work to build more applications to aid the handicapped. These initiatives brought my passion points to affect change in the organization, and are personally rewarding.

HollywoodChicago.com: There is so many challenges to creating and discerning programming in these days of multiple screens and options. What is exciting at Comcast, as far as keeping themselves on the pulse of what people want to experience in programming?

Fitschen: One, is our ability to bring independent films onto the platform, to increase the access of that genre of film for our customers. Also, we're integrating web content into our programming, and therefore many diverse stories can come into one place. It's very exciting.

For more information about Comcast Xfinity LBGTQ content, and all programming options, click on [Xfinity.com](http://www.xfinity.com) [21]



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