Title II and the Ka-Ching! Factor

Consumers, Carriers and Economy MIGHT all take a hit

12/01/2014 8:00 AM Eastern

By: John Eggerton

TakeAway

Foes of Title II network-neutrality regulations are making the case that such rules would hit carriers, consumers and the economy right in the wallet.

WASHINGTON — Reclassifying Internet access under Title II could be a big hit in the pocketbook for both consumers and Internet-service providers.

That potential hit to the bottom line is one of many fronts industry players have opened in their battle against the push for reclassifying ISPs under some form of Title II common- carrier regulations.

As Federal Communications Commission chairman Tom Wheeler ponders that reclassification under pressure from the White House and Silicon Valley, foes of that strategy are fighting back with economic arguments in an effort to dissuade him. They may have a little more time to make that case.

Most FCC observers now anticipate that the agency is targeting February at the earliest, or more likely March, for new Internet-neutrality rules. An interim item seeking comment on the flurry of new options under consideration is also possible.

In the meantime, ISPs and others have been amassing their arguments, including the one focused on Title II's economic fallout.

The American Consumer Institute told the FCC that reclassifying Internet access under Title II common-carrier regulations would be a big tax hit on U.S. consumers that would depress, not stimulate, the economy.

In a letter to Wheeler and the other commissioners, ACI president Steve Pociask said that increased tax exposure could take many forms. For example, he said, many states could use the new authority to tax broadband property under the higher telecom rates of a public utility.

Pociask also said cable and wireless ISP intangible property could be included in the tax base. And in states that consider intangible assets as property, wireless ISPs could be taxed for the billions of dollars in spectrum they obtain in FCC auctions.

Another potential hit could be if state or local governments do not distinguish between the portion of cable plant used for broadband and that used for traditional video, and designate it all "mixed use" property subject to full taxation.

"ISPs that provide video services, information services and other lines of business could have the tangible and intangible property for these other lines of business taxed at higher rates and under a broader base for property tax purposes, exposing the entire business to these higher costs," he said.

And all of that is not even including the USF contributions that could represent an additional 15% tax from the federal government.

USTelecom wants the FCC to at least review its arguments that reclassifying Internet access under Title II would reduce broadband capital investment by almost a third (31.7%) annually, or as much as $45.4 billion over the next five years.

That translates to tens of billions of dollars in lost investment over the next five years, USTelecom said.

AT&T has already signaled that its investment in building out fiber to scores of cities, an initiative branded as GigaPower, is threatened by the uncertainty of how the FCC plans to regulate broadband.

In an ex parte letter to the FCC, telco trade group USTelecom cited an economic study for its figures and asked the agency to examine the study from economists Kevin Hassett and Robert Shapiro.

The study asserts that under the current, non-Title II regulatory regime, wired and wireless ISPs could be expected to invest about $218 billion over the next five years (2015-2019). Under Title II, it said, that investment could be as low as $173.4 billion.

USTelecom member AT&T funded the study. It was based on USTelecom research and data from Infonetics.

TAGS:

Title II **ISPs** **Wheeler** **FCC** **MSOs** **consumers**

Charter Proxy: Revenue Could Hit $16B in 5 Years

Target Would Double 2013 Level

12/15/2014 8:00 AM Eastern

By: Mike Farrell

TakeAway

Outpacing analyst expectations, Charter said last week in an SEC proxy filing that it anticipates revenue will top $16 billion by 2019 as a result of planned transactions associated with the Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger.

Charter Communications expects to nearly double its revenue to $16.3 billion in 2019 from $8.4 billion in 2013 as a result of the swaps, sales and spinoffs associated with the Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger, outpacing the impact most analysts had expected the deals would have on the company.

In a proxy statement at the Securities and Exchange Commission — filed because of an upcoming special shareholders' meeting Charter will hold concerning the deals — Charter said it expects its total pro forma revenue to rise from an estimated $11.4 billion in 2014 to $16.3 billion by 2019. Pro forma cash flow is expected to rise from $4.4 billion in 2014 to $6.6 billion by 2019.

In 2013, Charter reported total revenue of about $8.4 billion and adjusted EBITDA of $2.9 billion.

Back in April, Charter cut a series of deals with Comcast and Time Warner Cable in which Stamford, Conn.-based Charter would swap systems with 1.6 million of its subscribers for Comcast properties with 1.5 million customers.

Charter also agreed to buy systems with 1.4 million customers from Time Warner Cable. And Charter will own 33% of a separate, publicly traded entity called GreatLand Connections, which includes former Comcast systems in the Midwest and Southeast with 2.5 million subscribers.

Charter will manage the systems for GreatLand — and receive a management fee of 4.25% of GreatLand's revenue, or an estimated $200 million in 2015 — and the properties will take advantage of Charter's programming contracts.

GreatLand, headed by cable veteran and former Insight Communications chairman Michael Willner, is expected to report revenue of $4.6 billion in 2014, rising to $6 billion by 2019. That figure could rise even higher if GreatLand participates in continued industry consolidation, as is expected.

Analysts had been conservative in their forecasts mainly because about half of the new Charter will consist of slower-growth — Charter's characterization — Time Warner Cable systems.

While CEO Tom Rutledge said recently that those TWC systems are "where Char ter was a couple of years ago," in terms of their digital networks, he noted that Charter converted 4 million customers to all-digital in about 13 months.
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/news/finance/charter-proxy-revenue-could-hit-16b-5-years/386271#sthash.xUUTOmjy.dpuf

Multichannel News

Comcast Feels Heat Over Home Hotspots

Subscriber Lawsuit Seeks Class-Action Status 12/15/2014 8:00 AM Eastern

By: Jeff Baumgartner

TakeAway

Two Comcast subscribers are seeking class-action status for their lawsuit against Comcast's "homespot" deployment plan, claiming the MSO's approach violates the U.S. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

Comcast's plan to light up quasi-public WiFi hotspots in millions of DOCSIS gateways in customer homes is being challenged in court.

A lawsuit claims the MSO is launching "homespots"— WiFi hotspots created by turning up secondary "XfinityWiFi" signals in home broadband routers so the signals are accessible to other credentialed Comcast customers when they're roaming — "without first obtaining authorization." The suit claims the program poses security risks and degrades broadband performance.

The suit, filed Dec. 4 in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Cal ifornia by two plaintiffs — Comcast subscribers Toyer Grear and Joycelyn Harris — are seeking classaction status, arguing in part that Comcast's homespot approach violates the U.S. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

"Without authorization to do so, Comcast uses the wireless routers it supplies to its customers to generate additional, public Wi-Fi networks for its own benefit," the suit claims.

The Comcast homespots are currently set up as “opt-out,” meaning that the routers support the practice by default. Some Comcast customers, however, have said on the DSL Reports message boards that it’s difficult to stay out of the program, even after they’ve opted out. Whenever Comcast issues firmware changes to its routers, the devices revert back to the default state of broadcasting the secondary Xfinity WiFi signal. Consequently, those customers report they’ve kept the default settings to avoid the hassle.

Comcast, which aims to deploy 8 million WiFi hotspots by the end of 2014 via routers installed in homes and commercial venues, disputed the suit’s claims, holding that its homeas- a-hotspot program is beneficial to customers and that subscribers have always had the ability to turn off the capability.

“We disagree with the allegations in this lawsuit and believe our Xfinity WiFi home hotspot program provides real benefits to our customers,” a Comcast spokesman said in a statement. “We provide information to our customers about the service and how they can easily turn off the public WiFi hotspot if they wish.”

Comcast announced its neighborhood WiFi hotspot initiative in June 2013.

Comcast’s WiFi FAQ notes that the gateway’s private and public-facing SSIDs use separate service flows and “therefore anticipate minimal impact to the in-home WiFi network.” The document acknowledges, however, that WiFi, which is a shared resource, could be subject to “some impact as more devices share the network.” Data usage via the secondary SSID does not get applied to the home customer’s monthly totals.

The lawsuit’s plaintiffs also claim that Comcast’s homespot program opens subscribers up to security risks and pushes power costs to them; they also predict Comcast will use the secondary WiFi signals to build out a wireless/mobile service that can compete with cellular carriers.

The Comcast FAQ notes that customer credentials are protected by 128-bit encryption on the sign-in page, “the same standard used by thousands of online banking and financial services around the world.”

Regarding power consumption, the suit cites a Speedify test purportedly showing that heavy use of homespots could boost the router's electrical costs by up to 40%.

Comcast has not announced plans to use its WiFi network as a rival to cellular offerings, but there has been plenty of speculation that the cable industry could pursue so-called "WiFi-first" services that prefer WiFi and use cellular as a backup. In October, Craig Moffett, partner and senior analyst with MoffettNathanson, suggested that cable is "best positioned" to reap the benefits of such a strategy.

Like Comcast, Cablevision Systems has introduced a similar homespot strategy. The Comcast lawsuits, though, could cause other MSOs to put similar initiatives on hold until the cases are resolved.
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/comcast-feels-heat-over-home-hotspots/386272#sthash.86efCV6n.dpuf

Multichannel News

Cable Out-Foxes Broadcast in ’14

As Broadcaster Struggles, Cable Nets Carry Nielsen Ball

12/15/2014 8:00 AM Eastern

By: A.J. Katz

It’s no secret that the Fox broadcast network’s entertainment programs, both veterans and rookies, have struggled this season ratings-wise. The network remains in fourth place and hasn’t been able to gain momentum this year in the persons 18-49 demo, one that has traditionally gravitated to Fox and allowed it to stand out against its older-skewing broadcast competitors.

But there’s reason for parent 21st Century Fox to be optimistic: The positive performance of its niche cable networks in 2014.

A report published by Ratings Intelligence on Dec. 10 examined this year’s performance of six Fox-owned cable programmers: FX, FXX, National Geographic Channels, Fox Sports 1 and Fox News Channel.

Of the six channels measured, Fox News Channel possesses the greatest average total viewership in primetime: 1.79 million total viewers -- gauged on a Nielsen live + 3 basis -- up slightly from the year-ago average of 1.78 million. Also, Fox Sports 1 has seen a boost in average total viewership as well, thanks to its live event programming including postseason baseball, college football, NASCAR and the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Despite the continued excellence of *Sons of Anarchy*, FX is down in primetime total viewership this year compared to last. FXX has more than doubled its primetime audience this year, thanks to marathons of *The Simpsons* and new episodes of *The League*. Season 10 of *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia* premieres Jan. 14 and should continue to boost the network’s total viewership averages in primetime.

Results for the National Geographic Channels were mixed. Nat Geo Wild has seen an improvement in total primetime viewership, while National Geographic Channel has seen a bit of a decline.
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/news/content/cable-out-foxes-broadcast-14/386278#sthash.NNbuMrnQ.dpuf

Multichannel News

Advocates Are a-Twitter Over Title II

Internet Becomes Soapbox in Network-Neutrality Battle

12/15/2014 8:00 AM Eastern

By: John Eggerton

TakeAway

Title II advocates — and foes — are using social media to rally the faithful as the FCC sets its course on new Internet regulations.

WASHINGTON — Social media has been a driving — and uniting — force in the current effort to get the Federal Communications Commission to reclassify Internet access under Title II common-carrier regulations.

That 's not surprising, given that the issue is about protecting access to Internet destination and apps like, well, social media. So, like Hair Club for Men, social-media purveyors are not just the leading voice, they're also the "client."

From a powerful House member using Reddit to try and rebrand the push for strong open Internet rules, to a group rallying its online supporters to clog the FCC with phone calls, to the record-breaking flood of comments — more than 4 million — in the official docket, online activism has gotten results.

One need look no further than 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. to see just how impactful. When President Obama announced he was going all in for Title II reclassification, he began his YouTube video announcing the position with a simulated buffering symbol. That was a nod to an online protest during which websites used that same device.

There was pushback four years ago from some of the same critics of anything short of Title II, but social media — such as Twitter and Reddit— and mobile broadband, have exploded in the interim (witness the FCC's current consideration of applying its no-blocking or discriminating rules to mobile broadband, something it chose not to do last time around).

Even the National Cable & Telecommunications Association tried to fight fire with social- media counterfire. It launched a stealth Web/Twitter campaign, “Onward, Internet,” a soft-sell campaign soliciting input on why the Internet is working just fine “unfettered by rules,” an argument cable operators have been making against Title II-based regulations.

“I think social media had a huge impact in quickly spreading the word about what the FCC was doing,” Craig Aaron, president of Title II advocate Free Press, said. “And I think the fact that people rely on social media so much more than even a few years ago only drives home for people just how important the free and open Internet is to their ability to connect and communicate.

“And whether people were finding out about net neutrality because they watched [a clip from HBO’s *Last Week Tonight With] John Oliver* on YouTube or because Tumblr put the spinning wheel of death on their site during the Internet slowdown, they saw it and responded in record numbers. It completely changed the debate.”

Evan Greer, campaign director of Fight for the Future, which helped promote pro-Title II protests, including one at FCC chairman Tom Wheeler’s house, agreed.

“We are always looking for new and innovative ways to use social media to both activate the huge base of support that exists on the Internet, and to pressure those in power who need to hear from the public,” she said.

Greer pointed out that the battleforthenet. com website includes a “political scoreboard” that allows visitors to easily send Twitter posts to Congress members “to either praise or shame them for supporting or opposing Title II.”

But it’s more about channeling than driving the social-media pushback, according to Greer. “Our task is not so much convincing people as channeling their energy into meaningful actions that make change,” she said.
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/news/policy/advocates-are-twitter-over-title-ii/386282#sthash.6sAvCcim.dpuf

Multichannel News

OTT's Real Impact Eludes Nets — and Ops

Will New Services Complement or Disrupt Pay TV Model?

12/15/2014 7:45 AM Eastern

By: Mike Farrell

As over-the-top offerings from Dish Network, Sony and Verizon Communications move closer to reality, programmers and distributors still appear far apart on the ultimate impact that migrating content to an online model will have on the overall industry.

Dish was expected to be the first out of the box with an OTT product — chairman Charlie Ergen has said he expects to launch his offering around yearend — followed by Sony and Verizon with similar offerings in early 2015. HBO kick-started the OTT conversation in October when it announced plans to offer a direct-to-consumer product in early 2015 — some reports estimate it could come in April, just before the premiere of perennial hit *Game of Thrones* — and CBS has already launched its broadcast-based CBS All Access service in several markets and is expected to debut a Showtime Networks OTT service some time next year.

But while programmers see OTT as a complementary service that will allow it to tap into new technologies while maintaining the status quo of the cable distribution model, distributors have a different take. While OTT has the potential to have a real impact on subscriber losses — depending on how it is priced and packaged — many see the service as a means of dismantling the practice of bundling popular channels with less-watched ones in carriage agreements.

Recently, Charter Communications CEO Tom Rutledge warned that programmers could be playing with fire concerning OTT, particularly if they dilute the value of the cable distributor's content package with online products.

Rutledge argued that breaking up the bundle in favor of going over-the-top could have a serious impact on advertising revenue, in that it would significantly dilute the number of viewers for their shows.

"It's hard to imagine selling that to niche markets or in an a la carte market where you would end up with similar penetration," Rutledge said recently. "If the whole market were sold a la carte today, I think you'd take a $70 billion ecosystem and turn it into a $7 billion ecosystem."

OTT also could diminish the value of certain networks to operators, which could be an advantage in carriage negotiations for distributors. "To the extent I can save money by not paying somebody to be carried because their content is generally available elsewhere, I think that is an opportunity," Rutledge said.

While Rutledge doubted that OTT would destroy the current programming model, he hinted that it could lead to a hybrid that could be beneficial to distributors and programmers.

"If I could sell over-the-top, I would," Rutledge said. "If I could mix and match over the top with bundles in different ways I would and will."

At the same time, programmers like Viacom, which has signed distribution deals with Sony for its planned OTT products and has said it will sign others, believe both models can peacefully coexist because they are targeted at least initially at non pay TV homes.

While distributors and content providers understandably want to protect their business, they are missing a harsh reality, Pivotal Research Group principal and senior media & communications analyst Jeff Wlodarczak said.

“As much as someone like [21st Century Fox co-chief operating officer James] Murdoch says we have to create a real, legitimate competitor to Netflix and think about going direct [to consumer], the reality is the content players are likely always going to be handicapped by the fact they do not want to create a legitimate entertainment alternative to the existing pay TV model,” Wlodarczak said.

Nowhere is that more evident than in CBS’s OTT offering, CBS All Access, which for $5.99 per month live streams shows from its broadcast stations in 14 markets (minus sports programming) and on-demand access to its library of broadcast programs.

CBS CEO Les Moonves has said the service, which was launched in October, is performing ahead of expectations, but admitted that could be as little as 10 customers. Some analysts have been skeptical the offering will attract a sizeable audience.

“You see evidence of this in the expensive CBS OTT offer,” Wlodarczak said. “Once again, it comes down to the argument that effective a la carte pricing would have to be so expensive that consumers would likely be forced right back into the bundles they have to today, with likely fewer channels at similar costs
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/news/ott/ott-s-real-impact-eludes-nets-and-ops/386284#sthash.w9kKxZQ9.dpuf

Multichannel News

New year brings new features for Channel 12

- Article by: TODD NELSON , Special to the Star Tribune
- Updated: December 30, 2014 - 2:23 PM

Franchise renewal between Comcast and Northwest Suburbs cable commission brings more HD and on-demand offerings.

More shows available on demand. Enhanced programming information. Promotional spots on national networks.

Those are just some of the upgrades that Northwest Community Television will provide as it heads into a new year serving cable viewers in the northwest suburbs.

NWCT will continue to provide such staples as “hyper-focused” community news from Channel 12, plus live sports and municipal and public affairs programming. In addition, NWCT programs will appear in the cable TV program guide, and later in the year, professionally produced programs, including the popular “Sports Jam” segment, and cable-access shows will begin appearing in high definition.

Those features are part of a 10-year cable TV franchise renewal between Comcast and the Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission. The agreement, approved last month, allows Comcast to operate for the next decade in nine suburbs — Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth and Robbinsdale.

The accord also ensures the continued operation of Northwest Community Television, because franchise fees finance NWCT’s annual operating budget of about $4 million, said Mike Johnson, executive director of both the commission and NWCT. (Another Mike Johnson is an anchor and news director for Channel 12.) Each city also receives a portion of the fees to maintain or replace cameras and other equipment used to broadcast council meetings.

“We are hyper-focused on our communities and try to do it the best we can, because we feel it’s a service for the subscribers,” Johnson said. The coverage area includes a population of some 326,000 residents, Johnson said, citing census data.

Channel 12, which airs weekday newscasts and special local news shows on weekends, has won regional Emmys, and its news staff includes broadcast journalists who have worked across the region.

More than news

Johnson quickly points out that NWCT has more to offer than news, including live sports, public affairs programs and municipal coverage of City Council meetings.

“We cover all nine cities, we cover their public meetings, we go out and cover sporting events at schools, we cover parades and events,” Johnson said. “We have a public-access component where people come in and we train them to make programs in a separate studio. We have a whole department that does public affairs, city municipal programming.”

Under the agreement, NWCT will get two HD channels on the cable system, Johnson said. HD broadcasts likely won't begin until the fall, after NWCT makes improvements to its facilities.

"When we do live sporting events or when people are flipping channels for Channel 12, we don't want them to see a quality difference," Johnson said. "We want them to see the same type of crisp picture they see on KARE 11 and the same level of content quality."

The cable system also will add on-demand service for some NWCT programs and viewers will find NWCT program listings on the cable system's program guide. NWCT already offers on-demand viewing of programs on its website and recently launched an app that enables users to view content on mobile devices.

The franchise agreement, Johnson said, applies to Comcast and any entity that would succeed it. Comcast is considering withdrawing from Minnesota if its proposed merger with Time Warner Cable wins federal approval. A spinoff cable company, GreatLand Connections, is a candidate to replace Comcast in that event.

The franchise agreement also is nonexclusive, opening the nine-city NWCT service area to competition, Johnson said. That has drawn interest from CenturyLink, which has met with the cable commission to discuss offering video services.

Marcia Glick, city manager of Robbinsdale, said NWCT was of particular value to the city, which she said was too small to have its own communications department or even a communications staff person.

"We're able to work with [their] professional team to develop videos about things going on in our city, plus have that regionally focused news broadcast that Channel 12 puts together every day," said Glick, who watched council meetings on NWCT's website last year when she was stuck at home with a broken foot. "This is a valuable service to our citizens."

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Star Tribune

CenturyLink looks to enter Minneapolis cable market

Article by: ERIN GOLDEN , Star Tribune

Updated: December 23, 2014 - 7:04 AM

CenturyLink will seek a new franchise agreement to enter the Minneapolis market with its Prism TV.

Minneapolis residents could soon have another option for cable TV service, as CenturyLink looks to dislodge Comcast's monopoly on the market.

CenturyLink plans to seek a new franchise agreement that would allow it to provide its Prism TV cable service alongside Comcast's offerings. The digital cable service is distributed through a fiber-optic network and allows customers to watch live programming on smartphones and tablets, in addition to their televisions.

Such an agreement would require the approval of the Minneapolis City Council, which won't take up the issue until the new year. CenturyLink's move could dramatically reshuffle the local television market, as cable companies nationally are under intensifying competition from other providers and Internet streaming services, such as Netflix.

CenturyLink already has rolled out Prism TV in other Midwestern cities, including La Crosse, Wis., and Omaha, Neb. The company intends to seek franchise agreements in St. Paul and other cities across the metro area in 2015.

"This brings to customers the opportunity to choose, and to have an improved customer experience," said Joanna Hjelmeland, a CenturyLink spokeswoman.

Comcast, the largest cable provider in the Twin Cities, has a franchise agreement with Minneapolis that expires at the end of 2021. The deal requires Comcast to make its cable service available to every home in the city, with some exceptions for areas with low population density. But it does not guarantee that Comcast will be able to stand alone as the only cable provider in Minneapolis.

CenturyLink does not plan to immediately offer service to all Minneapolis residents. Instead, it would offer Prism TV to a variety of neighborhoods where its network is already in place and later bring it to other parts of the city.

Comcast said in a statement it expects competitors to adhere to the same standards it does.

"We do business in a competitive environment every day," said Mary Beth Schubert, Comcast's vice president of corporate affairs. "Any new provider entering the market should be held to the same requirements as our industry of bringing competition to all residents in the community, while also meeting existing state law statutes."

Council Member John Quincy, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee — which will have to sign off on CenturyLink's plan — said state law requires franchise holders to build out their systems over the entire franchise area. Franchise holders then pay the city a fixed percentage of their revenue.

In response to interest in a new franchise, the city has issued a formal notice of intent to accept applications. Now, CenturyLink and any other companies that want a shot at the business have a window of time to file their plans, along with a $40,000 application fee.

Quincy said Comcast has been the sole cable operator for years in part because companies must be able to prove they could serve the entire city.

“The bar’s pretty high,” he said. “If you’re going to be serious about doing it, you’re going to have to demonstrate a lot of capacity and capital to do the build-out.”

If the company’s plans sparked a lawsuit from Comcast, CenturyLink says it has agreed to pay all of the city’s legal costs.

Hjelmeland said CenturyLink is looking to expand the reach of its technology. The company has begun to offer 1-gigabit download speeds — the fastest available in the country — to some areas of Minneapolis. She said CenturyLink believes there’s a significant market for fast Internet coupled with new cable options.

Prism TV requires users to have Internet speeds of 25 megabits per second or faster.

“Minneapolis is a community that’s growing and thriving, and a community of people we call ‘early adopters,’ ” she said. “People who are interested in next-generation technology.”

In other cities, Prism TV customers select channel packages that range from 140 channels to more than 320 channels. CenturyLink advertises prices starting at $49.99 per month for existing Internet customers who bundle services. Unlike dish services, Prism TV provides local-access channels.

Quincy said the city’s process will include a formal period in which members of the public can submit comments on CenturyLink’s proposal.

He said he’s supportive of opening up the market to give more people the chance to provide and receive cable service.

“This is an amazing step forward, with whatever we do, as we’re trying to expand video services and capacity and competition for the interest of our residents,” Quincy said. “We want lots of choices to provide information to them.”

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http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/286634151.html

Star Tribune

Trade Journal Links

[Members] NetworkWorld: Why Comcast's pro-net neutrality ads are totally disingenuous

http://www.networkworld.com/article/2859790/wireless/why-comcasts-pro-net-neutrality-ads-are-totally-disingenuous.html?phint=newt%3Dnetworkworld_after_dark_alert&phint=idg_eid%3D0fc58ee929160d965af51ac9e6bb0955#tk.NWWNLE_nlt_afterdark_2014-12-16

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"Comcast Settles Antitrust Lawsuit For $50 Million"

Broadband Reports

"FCC Plans Massive Fine of Sprint for Bogus Charges"

National Journal

Wireless Carriers lose market value amid price wars. "What difference does a month make? In telecom, the answer is about $45 billion."

Wall Street Journal

"OTT, Online Video, and the Arguments for and Against Cable"

Lost Remote

NBC to Live Stream Its Network

Wall Street Journal

"The four things Republicans in Congress could do to stymie net neutrality"

Washington Post

AT&T views Chanute, Kansas as a threat: "Allow one high-speed service at incredibly low prices, and other cities will surely follow. Soon enough, this tiny insurgent will have turned into a nationwide trend, putting enormous pressure on AT&T's existing business model."

Motley Fool

"Municipal governments are developing creative partnerships to bring broadband and faster Internet access to citizens and businesses in their communities"

GCN

Open Technology Institute Report: "Lafayette [LA] has some of the fastest Internet in the world"

The Advertiser

The FCC's plate is filled with open dockets that could impact small carriers.

POTs and PANs

"ISPs Now Have to Offer At Least 10 Mbps If They Want Subsidies"

Broadband Reports

"CenturyLink and Windstream are prime candidates for FCC's Connect America Fund Phase II ... but both telcos are concerned that the timeline to meet the 10/1 Mbps requirement is not realistic."

FierceTelecom

Signs of a "shift in the way Americans are thinking about high-speed Internet access: the idea that cities will [be] the battlegrounds for the playing out of the broadband debates."

Washington Post

"The big telcos don’t neglect all copper, just the rural copper."

POTs and PANs

"Comcast sued for turning home Wi-Fi routers into public hotspots"

SFGate

National Association of Broadcaster "expresses concerns to FCC over how broadcasters will be moved around in incentive auction"

FierceWireless

"Research Confirms the Crowd: Netflix and Others Are Upending the TV Business"

New York Times

"Colorado Towns Stand Up to the Tyranny of Cable Companies"

News.Mic

Community Broadband Networks launches a 'Community Connectivity Toolkit' to help communities ask the right questions before beginning connectivity improvement initiatives.

Community Broadband Networks

"Verizon, Cox Strike Retrans Deal For WFXT: Station Is Back On After Almost Week"

Multichannel News

"STELAR Is Now the Law: President signs satellite distant signal compulsory license renewal"

Multichannel News

ICYMI-- http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2014/12/24/comcasts-secret-hotline-for-special-cardholders-really-exists-but-its-not-much-different-from-the-regular-one/

http://www.multichannel.com/news/content/comcasttwc-foes-outline-deal-issues/386505

"The National Association of Broadcasters has told a federal court that its retransmission consent deals with MVPDs are among their 'most closely guarded secrets' that should not be shared with third parties."

Broadcasting & Cable

Critics say "programs by Comcast and other cable companies offering cheap Internet aren't benefiting enough low-income families"

Bloomberg

Who Has Fast Broadband?

POTs and PANs

"An Albany consumer watchdog group says Time Warner Cable's $7 million, taxpayer-funded program to expand broadband Internet service across upstate is targeting more affluent customers."

Times Union

"Lack of home Internet access hinders students with school-provided iPads"

Chattanooga Times Free Press

FCC's proposes to "give online companies the same legal protections as cable and satellite providers to buy access to popular channels." Aereo and others praise the plan.

National Journal

Washington Post

"Dish Customers Lose Access to Fox News In Latest Retrans Fight"

Broadband Reports

National Cable Television Cooperative Sign Long-Term Retrans Pact with Disney

Multichannel News

"Minnesota's US Internet Offers 10 Gbps For $400"

Broadband Reports

"As Comcast merger enters final phase, deal may be on thin ice"

GigaOm

"Comcast's secret hotline for special cardholders really exists."

Washington Post

Cable companies put "massive effort" into expanding their WiFi networks.

POTs and PANs

Hotels, including Marriott, petition FCC for "guidance on whether hotels are acting within the law when they disable unauthorized Wi-Fi access points set up on their properties."

Wall Street Journal

"How the FCC Plans to Stretch Budget to Support New 10Mpbs Broadband Speed Target"

Telecompetitor

"Rural Broadband Funds Still Flowing in Missouri"

Government Technology

"Report: North Dakota leads nation in fiber optic access"

INFORUM
Telecompetitor

Hollywood Worries that Google Fiber Will Lead to Increased Piracy, While Ignoring Benefits
TechDirt

"This was the Internet's worst, best year ever"
Washington Post

"9 maps that explained the Internet in 2014"

Washington Post

WIRELESS

"The Sale of the Century? How the FCC Plans to Sell Off Part of the TV Band in Auction Scheduled for 2016."

Benton Foundation – Editorial

Dish Unveils Their Streaming Video Service, Sling TV, Which Lets Subscribers Stream ESPN Over the Internet for $20/Mo.

Re/Code

Broadband Reports

Top 9 Cable/Video Predictions for 2015

Light Reading

"The FCC Will Vote on Broadband Internet Rules in February"

Wall Street Journal

Washington Post

Google tells the FCC that reclassifying broadband providers under Title II would have a big side benefit for Google Fiber because it would give Google Fiber the same access to utility poles and other key infrastructure currently enjoyed by Comcast, AT&T and other big-name ISPs.

BGR

http://arstechnica.com/business/2015/01/fcc-makes-it-easier-to-complain-about-cable-internet-and-phone-providers/

"Verizon Said to Approach AOL for Possible Takeover, Venture"

Bloomberg

Baller Herbst's 2015 Federal Communications Law Compliance Overview Now Available:

2015 Federal Communications Law Compliance Overview

Washington Post's Wonkblog lists "Blocking Cities From Selling Their Own Internet" as one of the 11 worst policy ideas in 2014

Washington Post

Kansas

Comcast says it will upgrade its cable modems to DOCSIS 3.1 to allow customers to receive 1Gbps download speeds in 2015

ZDNet

"Comcast's Website Expands References to Usage Caps"

Broadband Reports

"What Rising Airline Fees Tell Us About the Cable Industry:" Unbundling Can Be Unpleasant

NYTimes

"Dish's new Sling TV is a huge deal. Here's why." (Hint: It's ESPN)

Washington Post

Susan Crawford Op-Ed: "Without city-controlled fiber-optic lines connecting municipal buildings and the pulsing infrastructure of the city – your city won't be able to gather, aggregate, visualize, collaborate over, ship around among agencies, report on, or even use the data you should know about in order to effectively manage a 21st century municipality."

National League of Cities Blog

"2015: The Trend Line for Communications Services -- Phone, Broadband, Internet, Cable TV & Wireless -- Sucks"

Huffington Post

"Why Your Cable Bill Is Going Up Again in 2015 -- Sports"

Bloomberg

CenturyLink considers movement into the growing over-the-top (OTT) video market segment.

FierceTelecom

"FCC Chair Has All But Confirmed He'll Side With Obama on Net Neutrality"

Washington Post

Wall Street Journal