

# CenturyLink interested in Coon Rapids cable franchise

By [Peter Bodley](#)

April 3, 2015 at 5:00 pm

Coon Rapids may soon have competing cable television franchises.

For years Comcast has had the lone cable TV franchise in the city; the Coon Rapids City Council in December 2014 agreed to extend Comcast's existing 15-year cable franchise, which is set to expire July 31, another four years to Dec. 31, 2019.

Now, CenturyLink wants to apply for a franchise to provide its Prism TV cable services in Coon Rapids. City staff met with CenturyLink representatives Jan. 22 and at its March 3 meeting, the council took the first step in the state-mandated process for considering a new franchise.

The council approved a notice of intent to franchise indicating that it was ready to receive applications from "qualified entities" with a deadline of April 3 at noon.

The notice schedules a public hearing at the council meeting of Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m., to consider franchise applications.

Each franchise application has to be submitted with a fee of \$7,500 to cover the city's costs in processing the application, said Assistant City Manager Matt Stemwedel.

According to the notice, in reviewing each franchise application, the city will consider documentary and testimonial evidence as well as other information in evaluating each application and giving priority to those that meet or exceed the criteria spelled out in the Minnesota Cable Act.

Following the public hearing, the council would start another process to negotiate the terms of the cable franchise and to introduce a new franchise ordinance, Stemwedel said.

The application by CenturyLink does not affect the city's existing franchise with Comcast, according Michael Bradley, the city's cable TV attorney.

"This is good news," Bradley told the council. "This will be an additional franchise."

Late last year CenturyLink filed an application for a cable TV franchise in the city of Minneapolis, its first in Minnesota, and a public hearing was held by the Minneapolis City Council earlier this month, Stemwedel said.

But CenturyLink has cable franchises in other parts of the country, including LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and Omaha, Nebraska, according to the company website.

To reduce costs, CenturyLink indicates that it will use its existing copper lines, both above and below ground, to provide cable service to its Coon Rapids customers if the franchise is granted, Stemwedel said.

While its telephone service covers the entire city, not all the lines have sufficient energy with enough speed to deliver cable service as well, he said. "They would work to build capacity over time," Stemwedel said.

Under state law, cable TV providers have to complete build out within five years of being granted a franchise, but CenturyLink has told the city that federal regulations supersede the state law, according to Stemwedel.

The build-out requirement is an issue that Comcast could raise at the public hearing, Stemwedel said.

Comcast has the ability to serve all of Coon Rapids with its cable system, according to Eric Strouse, manager of the city's cable television entity, CTN Studios.

Right now, Comcast's subscriber base in Coon Rapids is a little under 50 percent, a number that had fallen a bit the last five years with the advent of satellite and online services, Strouse said.

"But our revenues have remained stable," he said.

A franchise negotiated with CenturyLink would be similar to the franchise ordinance the city has with Comcast with the franchise charge and monthly PEG (Public, Education and Government) fee paid to the city's cable entity, CTN Studio, Stemwedel said.

The franchise fee, which is paid quarterly, goes to operating and staffing costs at the station, while the PEG fee is earmarked for capital costs, he said.

"The cable operation is self-sustaining," Stemwedel said.

Filed Under: [CenturyLink](#), [Comcast](#), [Coon Rapids](#)

[http://abcnewspapers.com/2015/04/03/centurylink-interested-in-coon-rapids-cable-franchise/?utm\\_source=wysija&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Daily+Newsletter](http://abcnewspapers.com/2015/04/03/centurylink-interested-in-coon-rapids-cable-franchise/?utm_source=wysija&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily+Newsletter)

Abcnewspapers.com

# More Programmers Are Thinking Globally

With TVN, Scripps on List of U.S. Growth-seekers in Europe 3/23/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: [Mike Farrell](#)

Even Scripps Networks Interactive, whose lifestyle networks have done relatively well in a down period of U.S. ad sales, considers overseas prospects to be worth the investment.

Evidence of that is the programmer's purchase of 53% of Polish content producer TVN. After the TVN purchase — amounting to \$1.5 billion in cash and assumed debt — Scripps said international sales would make up about 25% of total revenue, an eight-fold increase from the previous year.

Scripps shows have been seen in Europe for years. Its network stable, led by Food Network and HGTV, reaches an estimated 200 million homes in 180 countries worldwide.

But as with other U.S. programming groups, including Discovery Communications and AMC Networks, Scripps has concluded it makes sense to own a presence in non-U.S. markets, where there's a strong potential for ad growth. Discovery derives about half of its total revenue from outside the U.S., and international revenue is rising at AMC, Time Warner Inc. and 21st Century Fox.

## ***U.S. SLOWDOWN TROUBLING***

Scripps reported a 5.3% increase in total ad revenue in 2014, but that was almost half the 9.2% growth of the prior year. Other programmers have experienced flat to single-digit declines in U.S. ad revenue as falling ratings and competition erode the ad base.

Scripps Networks has a plan to increase its international presence, and chairman and CEO Ken Lowe called the TVN purchase “a key pillar” in that strategy.

AMC Networks made waves last year with its \$1 billion purchase of programmer Chellomedia. Adding Chellomedia, with its dozens of movie and entertainment networks, pushed international up to 20% of total revenue in 2014, AMC said.

Time Warner Inc. made its push into Eastern Europe in 2009, acquiring a 31% stake in Central European Media Enterprises, a media and entertainment company that operates in six geographical segments — Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Time Warner has since increased that stake to 49.9% and has steadily expanded its influence outside of the U.S.

Last year, Time Warner invested about \$1 billion into international operations, including continued investment in CME, the purchase of Dutch TV production house Eyeworks and the purchase of UEFA Champions League soccer rights in Brazil to bolster recently acquired Brazilian sports network Esporte Interativo.

International revenue amounts to about 44% of the total at 21st Century Fox and 28% at Time Warner. Other big international slices are coming to Viacom (26%) and Disney (24%), per a Discovery analysis of company and analyst reports.

International markets have better adgrowth prospects, though programmers might have to look harder for opportunities. Zenith Optimedia said global ad spending should rise by 4.9% in 2015, to \$545 billion; then by 5.6% in 2016 and 5.2% in 2017.

Ad revenue in Eastern Europe and Central Asia should grow at a 5.9% clip between 2014 and 2017, Zenith forecast, versus only about 2.9% in Western and Central Europe.

North America, including the United States, is expected to see ad markets decline from 4.6% growth in 2013-14 to 3.9% in the 2014- 17 period, per Zenith.

Pivotal Research Group senior research analyst Brian Wieser said European ad-market prospects vary by country. In the United Kingdom, TV advertising was up

about 6% in 2014, despite a 5% audience decline. France, Germany and Italy have fared worse. And even in declining markets, there are still places to see gains.

Wieser sees the shift of focus outside the U.S as good for programmers, and he agreed they should be pumping money into growth areas.

Sanford Bernstein media analyst Todd Juenger, a big proponent of international expansion, wondered if Scripps wasn't paying too much for TVN. The price tag represents a 20% premium, he said, which could be hefty given that it appears TVN's reach is limited to Poland.

### ***'ONE-COUNTRY PONY'***

"TVN appears to be a one-country pony," Juenger said in a research report. "It is hard to imagine much of TVN's content is portable."

The TVN deal could be seen negatively by potential Scripps buyers, other than Discovery, he said.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/more-programmers-are-thinking-globally/389023#sthash.HNexQ7op.dpuf>

**Multichannel News**

# Canada's TV Fix Is 'Pick and Pay'

**MORE A LA CARTE, FEWER BLACKOUTS ANSWER U.S.STYLE CALL FOR CHOICE** 3/23/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: Mike Farrell And John Eggerton

## TakeAway

Canada's TV regulator has made a move many U.S. pay TV customers have clamored for: Allowing the a la carte sale of cable networks to consumers.

For years, consumers have begged pay TV operators in the U.S. to sell channels individually, allowing consumers to buy only the channels they want.

Canada has heard their call.

In what was billed as a World of Choice "road map," the Canadian Radio-television Commission (CRTC) — Canada's version of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission — will start requiring multichannel video programming distributors to offer a la carte programming options and will not allow blackouts during carriage disputes between programmers and distributors.

By year-end 2016, viewers will be able to subscribe to the lowcost basic tier, which will have to include "all local and regional television stations, public-interest channels such as the Cable Public Affairs Channel and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, education channels, and, if offered, community channels and the services operated by provincial legislatures."

Rather than having to add bundled tiers, they can then "pick and pay" from among other channels, or add "small, reasonably priced" packages of service.

***ALL ABOUT CHOICE***

CRTC chairman Jean-Pierre Blaise said the decision was all about choice and affordability. “More and more Canadians are watching the content they want, when they want, and on multiple devices,” he said. “They are enjoying the freedom and benefits that come from living in a world of choice.

“They told us that the bundles offered by the cable and satellite companies were large, unwieldy and expensive,” Blaise added. “They expressed frustration that, in order to access a particular channel, they had to buy others that they didn’t want.”

In the U.S., consumer advocacy groups and even some cable operators have pushed for the ability to offer video a la carte, but most analysts believe economics will prevent true a la carte from ever happening. A full a la carte model would mean that the costs of individual channels would need to increase significantly just to make the same revenue as under the current business model, both analysts and networks have said.

Needham & Co. media analyst Laura Martin has estimated that a move to true a la carte would slash pay TV revenue in half from \$140 billion annually to about \$70 billion. A move toward total choice for all networks would force prices up to compensate for lost revenue from advertising and affiliate fees, she warned.

One common example has been that ESPN, which currently charges distributors \$6.04 per subscriber per month, would rise to \$30 per month in an a la carte world.

“All content companies benefit from TV bundling, as well as from new digital platforms that are driving record free cash flows from content creation globally,” Martin wrote in an earlier note to clients.

But as more and more networks look toward offering shows online directly to consumers — through products such as HBO Now and CBS All Access — and other players like Sling TV, Sony’s PlayStation Vue and Apple TV enter the market; distributors and programmers are under pressure to slim down their content bundles.

Already, the U.S. pay TV market has begun to see programming bundles shrink to some extent. At the beginning of the year, Dish Network’s Sling TV launched

offering a basic package of 20 channels (including ESPN and ESPN2) for \$20 per month. And recently Viacom said it would offer mobile access to children's programming via its Noggin service for \$5.99 per month, resurrecting the brand once used by its Nick Jr. channel.

Sony's PlayStation Vue package, released in a trio of markets earlier this month, offers about 55 channels for \$49.99 per month. And Apple, which reached a deal to offer HBO Now via its Apple TV in April, also is said to be considering a 25-channel offering for between \$30 and \$40 monthly.

### ***MORE CERTAINTY***

A la carte has been a major issue in Canada for several years — Rogers Communications, the largest pay TV operator in that country, trialed a "Pick and Pay" offering in London, Ontario, in 2012, offering about 86 channels (including government mandated channels) for \$20.29 per month.

That offering was scrapped after programmers expressed concerns, but according to reports, Rogers said it still offers dozens of channels on an a la carte basis and sees the CRTC ruling as giving it more certainty in its consumer offerings.

No. 2 Canadian cable operator Shaw Communications said it supports the CRTC in its efforts.

"While this new regulatory environment will not be without challenges, the commission has provided real opportunities for Shaw to continue delivering the best content experiences possible for our customers and viewers within a healthy, dynamic and competitive environment," Shaw CEO Brad Shaw said in a statement.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/canada-s-tv-fix-pick-and-pay/389016#sthash.nmBNAYxd.dpuf>

**Multichannel News**



# Over-the-Top Moves Stir Neutrality Debate

3/23/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: Jeff Baumgartner & John Eggerton

The Federal Communications Commission's new Open Internet rules appear to be opening up an old can of worms — should video traffic delivered over “managed” IP connections receive different treatment than video that's piped into homes using “best effort” high-speed Internet connections?

The topic heated up after *The Wall Street Journal* reported that HBO, Showtime and Sony were talking with Comcast and other providers about delivering their IP-based multiscreen content to consumers using a separately managed portion of an operator's spectrum, meaning such traffic wouldn't count toward broadband caps and other usage-based broadband policies, or perhaps be prioritized. Those talks would come as HBO gets ready to launch HBO Now, a standalone over-the-top service, and amid the debut of Sony's PlayStation Vue.

## ***APPLE TRIED FIRST***

Some background: Comcast came under fire — primarily from Netflix CEO Reed Hastings — in 2012 after it began to offer video-on-demand content via the Xfinity TV app to Xbox 360 gaming consoles using IP transport. Rather than delivering that content over the public Internet, Comcast uses separately provisioned IP bandwidth that doesn't co-mingle with traffic and spectrum dedicated to the customer's high-speed Internet service.

Comcast uses a similar managed IPTV setup for the Xfinity TV app for tablets and smartphones that's part of X1. Access to the service is limited to the customer's home network.

According to multiple industry sources, this is precisely what Apple originally had in mind during its discussions with Comcast and Time Warner Cable — Apple had sought access to the MSOs’ managed IPTV services so content could be shipped to the Apple TV box and supported by Apple’s own user interface. Those discussions didn’t result in a deal.

Apple was in similar talks with Liberty Global in recent months, but those fell through as well, according to a person familiar with the discussions. Apple, the *Journal* reported, is now talking with programmers about distribution rights for a “skinny” pay TV bundle that would debut as early as this fall.

What still isn’t clear is specific business arrangements Apple wanted with the MSOs, and what Sony, HBO, and Showtime might want now.

The talks bubbled to the surface soon after the FCC voted on new network neutrality rules that also reclassify broadband as a telecom service.

Those new rules would allow for special treatment of specialized services, such as VoIP, heart monitors and energy consumption sensors. But the rules warn that using “Non-Broadband Internet Access Service Data Services” as a way to sidestep the rules, including paid prioritization, “will not be tolerated.”

The FCC has already tentatively signaled that linear online video distributors (OVDs) offering services similar to traditional multichannel video programming will be subject to program-access rules.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/over-top-moves-stir-neutrality-debate/389015#sthash.MHFdUDmn.dpuf>

Multichannel News

**180-DAY CLOCK STOPPED IN COMCAST-TIME WARNER CABLE-CHARTER  
AND AT&T-DIRECTV TRANSACTION PROCEEDINGS**

**MB Docket No. 14-57**

**MB Docket No. 14-90**

We are today pausing the Commission's informal 180-day clocks in these two proceedings.

The Commission has entered protective orders in these proceedings, generally permitting outside counsel and outside experts employed by the various participants to review, solely in connection with their participation, confidential information that has been filed in the respective records.<sup>[1]</sup> Specifically, the protective orders provide for the review of information defined as Confidential Information and Highly Confidential Information, including Video Programming Confidential Information ("VPCI"). On November 13, 2014, a Petition for Review and a request for stay were filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit with regard to the review of VPCI under the protective orders. On November 21, 2014, the court granted the request for stay. The court heard oral argument on the merits of the Petition for Review on February 20, 2015, but has not yet issued its decision.

At this time, we believe it is prudent to pause the informal 180-day transaction clocks because the Commission would be advantaged by knowing the resolution of the pending Petition for Review before the transaction clocks reach the 180-day mark, which both are slated to do by the end of March. In reaching this conclusion, the Commission reserves the right to restart the clock as it believes will best serve the public interest and it intends to provide further guidance as it becomes appropriate.

We take this opportunity to remind the public that the 180-day clock represents a good faith undertaking by the Commission to complete action on assignment and transfer of control applications within a certain timeframe and is a means to keep interested parties informed of the progress of those reviews. The clock carries with it no procedural or substantive rights or obligations but merely represents an informal benchmark by which to evaluate the Commission's progress. Although the Commission seeks to meet the 180-day benchmark, the Commission retains the discretion to determine whether, in any particular review proceeding, events beyond the agency's control, the need to obtain additional information, or the interests of sound analysis constitute sufficient grounds to stop the clock.

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<sup>[1]</sup>See Applications of Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Cable Inc., MB Docket No. 14-57, Applications of AT&T, Inc. and DIRECTV, MB Docket No. 14-90, *Order*, 29 FCC Rcd 14267 (2014).

# CenturyLink can enter talks with Mpls. for cable TV service

Article by: [ERIN GOLDEN](#) , Star Tribune

Updated: March 16, 2015 - 7:32 PM

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The company wants to roll out cable service, but the city wants more information on state, federal rules.

CenturyLink is getting closer to entering the [Minneapolis](#) cable market, though the company may still face a tough challenge in convincing the City Council that its plan will pass legal muster.

The council's Ways and Means Committee voted Monday to allow the city to enter into negotiations with CenturyLink, which wants to introduce its Prism TV cable service into a market that's currently served by a single provider: Comcast. The committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the full council for a vote.

CenturyLink's plan to roll out its cable service over time, rather than providing it to the entire city right away, has stirred criticism from Comcast and a handful of residents who wrote letters and spoke at a February public hearing. It's also being scrutinized by Council Member Elizabeth Glidden, who said Monday that she's concerned because CenturyLink has yet to provide a detailed timeline for its new offerings or a map of which neighborhoods it would serve.

"I can't imagine a scenario where I, at least, would vote to approve a franchise agreement that included only the information that is presented today in the application," she said.

Glidden said the city needs more information to figure out if CenturyLink's proposal meets the requirements of both state and federal laws that govern franchise services.

That determination will be a complicated one. Minnesota law prohibits cities from issuing new franchises with conditions that are “more favorable or less burdensome” than those issued to other franchise holders, including in the area they serve. In addition, there is a section of state law with specific rules for how quickly franchise holders must build out their systems.

But a ruling by the Federal Communications Commission concluded that build-out requirements have a negative impact on competition and that “new entrants” into a market shouldn’t be forced to begin with a fully constructed system. CenturyLink officials argue that the federal ruling should take precedence over the state regulations.

While a report by city officials recommended that the city enter into negotiations with CenturyLink, it also concedes that the city is “left with a difficult choice.”

If the city is too cautious and requires a tight build-out timeline, it may risk losing an opportunity to encourage competition and potentially bring additional jobs to Minneapolis. On the other hand, the report suggests that the city could risk an “error on the side of competition.”

“Litigation may be inevitable with either choice,” the report concludes.

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# Apple said to plan limited, low-cost streaming service

Article by: EMILY STEEL and BRIAN X. CHEN , New York Times

Updated: March 17, 2015 - 9:00 PM

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The service would have fewer channels than cable – and be much cheaper, sources say.

Apple Inc. has held talks with a number of leading television groups to offer an Internet-based TV service for its iPhone, iPad and Apple TV set-top box, according to people briefed on the company's plans.

The service, which could be announced later this year, would offer a bundle of channels that is smaller and cheaper than the bloated catalog of offerings in a typical cable subscription, said these people, who discussed the incomplete plans on the condition of anonymity.

The plan would potentially offer networks owned by the television groups Disney, Fox, CBS and Discovery, the sources said Tuesday. That could include the broadcast networks ABC, CBS and Fox, along with a lineup of other cable networks, such as ESPN and Discovery Channel.

The total number of networks to be offered is yet to be determined. Apple is not including all of the networks owned by each of the TV groups, signaling yet another fraying of the traditional cable bundle. No deal has been reached yet, the sources said.

Pricing details remain unclear. One source pegged the rate for a monthly subscription at \$20 to \$25, while another said that it would be in the \$30 range. The final price point will probably depend on which networks are offered and negotiations with television groups, the sources said.

News of Apple's plans for a web-TV service follows an announcement last week that it had formed an exclusive partnership with HBO to offer the premium cable network's new digital TV service, called HBO Now.

A flood of media, telecom and tech companies are introducing digital TV services this year, trying to appeal to a generation of viewers willing to pay for Internet access but not traditional TV cable subscriptions.

Dish Network, the satellite provider, recently started a Web-based service called Sling TV that includes ESPN and other popular cable networks for \$20 a month. On Tuesday, the company announced a series of updates, including availability of service on the Xbox One console and the addition of A&E Network channels by the end of March. Sling TV also offers extra packages, priced at \$5 a month, for a mini-bundle of lifestyle or news networks, for instance.

CBS and Sony also are starting Internet-only subscription plans.

Apple will heavily market its new streaming service, which the company has pitched to networks as "better than the best-of-class cable products," one source said. Potential features would include on-demand functionality and the ability to stream live and on-demand television to an array of devices, another source said.

The Wall Street Journal reported news of the Apple TV service Monday, after an initial report in Recode last month.

Apple declined to comment on the potential new service.

One major entertainment company not involved in the latest round of discussions is Comcast and its NBCUniversal entertainment group, the sources said. If Apple and Comcast do not come to terms on a deal, the new service will not include the broadcaster NBC along with the cable networks it owns, such as Bravo and Syfy.

Comcast could be forced to come to a deal with Apple because of the conditions that it agreed to with regulators when it acquired - NBCUniversal in 2011. Under those agreements, an online video provider like Apple could demand that NBCUniversal make its programming available if Apple has signed deals with other television groups.

Apple has been rumored to be planning an online TV service for more than five years. But the company's approach so far has been to work with distributors like Time Warner Cable and The Walt Disney Co. on offering apps with access to their content for the Apple TV set-top box.

Offering a slimmer bundle of television channels over an Internet connection would help Apple distinguish its service from a traditional cable subscription. However, it would not be nearly as disruptive as the deals that Apple cut with record labels for the iTunes Store, when it negotiated to sell songs one track at a time, as opposed to forcing consumers to buy complete albums.

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# Apple TV 'skinny' package likely to accelerate cord-cutting

Article by: MEG JAMES and PARESH DAVE , Los Angeles Times

Updated: March 18, 2015 - 8:50 PM

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The tech giant's plan to roll out a "skinny" package of channels could force cable and satellite providers to offer smaller bundles.

**"Apple remains one of the few companies in the world that has the potential to transform the TV industry," one analyst said.**

Photo: Mark Lennihan • Associated Press,

[Star Tribune photo galleries](#)

Apple's ambition to be a dominant player in television is expected to accelerate the unraveling of the pay-TV bundle.

The tech giant is in negotiations with major television companies to offer a "skinny" package of channels that would include ABC, CBS and Fox Broadcasting, according to people familiar with the matter who were not authorized to speak publicly. Apple wants to roll out the service in time for the new fall shows in September.

The proposed streaming service takes aim at the 10 million homes that have high-speed Internet and no pay television programming, along with customers who are fed up with high cable fees. Apple's cachet and legions of loyal fans could make it one of the biggest threats yet to cable and satellite operators.

"Apple remains one of the few companies in the world that has the potential to transform the TV industry, and we believe consumers are ready for a change," Cantor Fitzgerald analyst Brian White wrote Tuesday in a research report.

The company is the latest to stake its claim in the fast-growing market of Internet television services.

Netflix and Amazon.com already offer subscription services, and Sony Corp. plans to launch its own TV offering for its PlayStation game console. Dish Network last month rolled out its Internet-delivered service called Sling TV that starts at \$20 a month.

Apple last week unveiled its deal to offer HBO Now, a \$14.99-a-month Internet streaming service on Apple devices beginning next month. Its planned Web TV subscription service would cost customers about \$30 a month, the people said.

Any new subscription service ultimately would be designed to spur sales of the company's Apple TV device, which some consumers could use to replace their cable box. Last week, Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook slashed the price of the device to \$69 from \$99.

### **'The floodgate is now open'**

The recent moves should help prompt cable and satellite TV providers to offer their customers smaller packages of services at lower price points to remain competitive. Consumers for years have been grouching about the high cost of subscriptions that include hundreds of channels they never watch.

"The floodgate is now open," CBS Chief Executive Leslie Moonves said during a recent investor conference. "Clearly the bundle is changing. The days of the 500-channel universe are over."

After years of false starts, Apple finally is getting traction with programmers that previously rebuffed its overtures. These programmers, including CBS and Fox, don't want to get left behind as consumers find ways to cut through the cable clutter.

Apple is willing to pay up to provide the channels — and that makes business sense for the programmers in an era of declining ratings and ad revenue.

Apple, CBS, ABC and Fox on Tuesday declined to comment on discussions, which were first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

It was unclear this week exactly which TV networks would be included in the proposed Apple service. Apple is said to be focusing on deals with companies such as 21st Century Fox that own both a major broadcast network and cable channels.

NBC is not in discussions with Apple. However, as part of a 2011 agreement with the federal government, NBC's parent company, Comcast Corp., is legally obligated to provide its programming to Internet services if NBC's rivals also participate.

The new service also might not include regional sports channels, which have helped drive up the cost of pay TV in recent years.

But analysts are not ready to write the obituary for the pay-TV industry just yet.

“We are going to see an increase in cord-cutting, but it's not going to be dramatic,” predicted James McQuivey, an analyst with Forrester Research. “The main reason it won't be dramatic is there is no way to cut the cord and still get everything you want.”

For example, Dish's Internet streaming service, Sling TV, offers ESPN, ABC Family, Cartoon Network and Food Network — but not ABC and CBS.

Dish introduced the service last month to appeal to budget-conscious consumers and apartment dwellers unable to install an antenna on their roof. Sling TV, which starts at \$20, allows consumers to add

packages like sports and lifestyle programming for an additional \$5 a month.

Analysts point out that the low cost might be deceiving.

People still would have to turn to cable and phone companies for their Internet service, some of which tack on fees if users exceed established data caps. This could be easy to do when users are spending hours streaming TV shows and movies.

Cable TV distributors also are expected to fight back by making their bundles of Internet and TV channels “economically attractive as a way to retain consumers,” Nomura Securities analyst Anthony DiClemente said.

Switching to a broadband-only package might save customers about \$30 to \$50 a month at current promotional rates, but adding Apple’s Web TV Service, Netflix and HBO Now “quickly erodes those savings,” DiClemente said.

Cable companies already have gotten the memo.

For example, Comcast has a promotional Internet service plus TV package for about \$40 a month. The slimmed-down package has 25 channels, including ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and HBO.

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# Charter's Plan B, As In Bright House

**Reports Indicate Deal Would Only Come After Comcast-Time Warner  
Cable Outcome** 3/16/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: [Mike Farrell](#)

It has been an interesting side story to the pending Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger drama: what will happen to Bright House Networks, the 2.1 million-subscriber cable operator whose business relies heavily on shared programming contracts with TWC?

One possible outcome has emerged with reports that Bright House has held talks about being acquired by Charter Communications.

But any deal would happen only after the Comcast-TWC merger is completed, according to Bloomberg. That process that has taken longer (and seems less likely to get accomplished) than originally thought.

If Comcast and TWC don't merge, Charter is likely to try again to acquire TWC. It was Charter's original offer that led Comcast to make a bid, one that TWC accepted.

Again, per the Bloomberg report, Charter would pay stock valued as much as \$12 billion for Bright House, the second-largest privately owned cable firm behind Cox Communications. That figure uses a similar per-subscriber valuation as TWC in the Comcast deal, so it might be high.

But Bright House, which has its biggest regional operations in the Tampa and Orlando, Fla., areas, is well-managed and has markets that would mesh well with Charter's existing systems. It also operates in Indianapolis, Detroit and Bakersfield, Calif., near existing Charter properties.

Charter declined to comment. Bright House said in a statement: “While we have had conversations with many parties about [the Comcast-TWC] transaction, we do not have an agreement with anyone regarding future plans for Bright House.”

Bright House emerged as a separate company in 2003, coming out of a former joint venture between Advance/Newhouse and Time Warner. TWC has the right of first offer to buy Bright House, MoffettNathanson principal and senior analyst Craig Moffett said last week, so if talks are being held with Charter, TWC has presumably taken a pass.

But that situation could change if TWC’s merger with Comcast falls apart and if TWC still wants to fend off a Charter takeover. Acquiring Bright House and its added leverage could make a deal less attractive to Charter, Moffett noted.

Charter also is underscoring it wants more cable — even though, as Moffett noted, Bright House has at least 30% overlap with Verizon’s FiOS TV, second only to Cablevision Systems.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/charter-s-plan-b-bright-house/388836#sthash.hXtrg5wJ.dpuf>

Multichannel News

# Plepler: Nothing to Fear From HBO Now

**Calls OTT Product a 'Win-Win' for Network, Distributors** 3/16/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: [R. Thomas Umstead](#)

Moments before Apple's glitzy announcement last Monday (March 9) of its high-tech Apple Watch, HBO chairman and CEO Richard Plepler took the mammoth stage at the Yerba Buena Center in San Francisco to confirm what many in the crowd already knew: The HBO Now standalone over-the-top service would roll out through Apple TV and other Apple-based devices next month.

HBO, which helped usher in the era of TV everywhere with the 2010 debut of HBO Go, now stands at the precipice of what could be a mass migration of cable networks offering their own over-the-top services directly to consumers. As cable operators and other multichannel video programming distributors continue to bleed traditional video customers, the bold move sparked some legitimate concerns that the service would cannibalize the premium channel's subscribers.

Days after he left the stage to let the pundits chew on his plans, Plepler spoke with *Multichannel News* editor in chief Mark Robichaux and programming editor R. Thomas Umstead about the value proposition of HBO Now to both potential subscribers and the premium network's existing distribution partners.

**MCN: Have you been satisfied with the feedback that you've received for HBO Now launching on Apple TV in April?**

**Richard Plepler:** I think we've gotten a lot of great feedback. I've said over and over again there is such an opportunity out there to grow our business in multilateral ways with our partners and with Apple and eventually with new partners. But I don't think that this in any way interferes with the exciting avenues that we can go down together with our current partners.

And when you look at the opportunity before us — which is reaching millions of homes who currently can't get HBO — and you say to yourself, "Wow, this presents an opportunity for our distributors to package HBO Now and to sell it to their broadband-only consumers," why is that not a win for the consumer, a win for our partners and a win for us? No one has been able to explain to me why that isn't so.

**MCN: Cable operators are nervous about HBO Now. They are looking at a declining video business. What do you say to them?**

**RP:** First of all, I go to our data which is pretty unequivocal: 97% of people who have HBO are not leaving the bundle and they're not cord-shaving. So one of the best inoculations if you are a distributor that you can have is to have HBO in your bundles — low cost, triple-play ... that's No. 1.

No. 2, I think when you get HBO into a broadband-only package or a low-cost video package, you have a much greater chance of upgrading that consumer, because people with HBO inside their bundles are very happy customers. And as people come to see the user-friendliness of HBO Now and they come to really appreciate the versatility of the product, you're turbo-charging the value of the subscription.

No. 3, most people really prefer a video bundle. They want it affordably priced, they love having HBO in it, but that's their preference. If we can work together to expand those packages and also to offer to the 10 or 11 million broadband-only homes, who may never be subscribers anyway, a stickier version of that broadband-only product, it's a win for the consumer, a win for our partners and a win for HBO.

**MCN: How much of what we know as traditional cable programming is going to go to this form of direct-to-consumer delivery?**

**RP:** This is not a binary dynamic, it's a multilateral dynamic, and the key is to have great content and great brands to go where the customer is going and to give the customer optionality to enjoy your content where, how and when they want and to do it in a fair value package. And what we're saying to our partners is I think it's pretty axiomatic that our content is terrific, so use us to grow. Everybody needs to be dexterous. We need to be dexterous and our partners need to be dexterous.



**MCN: Is there a reason why there isn't a live HBO feed as part of the HBO Now service? Will there be at some point down the line?**

**RP:** We're working toward that technologically and we're working to get that up as quickly as we can onto the product.

**MCN: What's your expectation for subscribers in the first year?**

**RP:** We don't have any great visibility into the first year and I would tell you this — this decision was not made to affect 2015 revenues. This was a strategic decision made in the long-term interests of our network so that we had maximum flexibility, maximum optionality going forward. We're looking to the future.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/plepler-nothing-fear-hbo-now/388837#sthash.AdIk5Y0q.dpuf>

Multichannel News

# OTT Proves Another Digital Divide

**MSOs, TV STATIONS SQUARE OFF OVER ONLINE VIDEO'S FUTURE**<sup>3/16/2015</sup>

8:00 AM Eastern

By: [John Eggerton](#)

WASHINGTON — The trade groups representing cable operators and TV stations are at odds over the Federal Communications Commission's proposal to define some linear online video providers as multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs), but even some of the broadcast lobby's network members are more aligned with cable's reluctance to have the regulator step in.

The National Association of Broadcasters has said it believes the FCC should apply both the rights and responsibilities of being an MVPD to over-the-top platforms, while the National Cable & Telecommunications Association has said the agency should leave the nascent online video market alone to develop without inserting itself into the equation.

The issue is gaining currency as more programmers launch over-the-top services that mirror traditional pay TV. The redefinition of MVPD — which would, at a minimum, extend program-access rights to online video distributors (OVDs) — would not apply to on-demand services, only those providers offering around-the-clock "channels" of linear programming.

The FCC has also said it wouldn't apply the new definition to "TV everywhere"-like online access to conventional cable services, though it has asked whether it should.

In FCC filings, the NAB said it backed the redefinition of an MVPD as a modernization of the rules that takes into account Internet video distribution and boosts pay TV competition.

In a separate filing, though, three of NAB's network members — identifying themselves as video programmers, not broadcasters — told the FCC to back off, or at least hold off . CBS Corp., 21st Century Fox and The Walt Disney Co. (parent of ABC) — Comcast-owned NBCUniversal did not sign on — told the FCC “there is no market failure to address, and that imposition of additional regulation may limit, rather than increase, the opportunity for consumers to obtain their desired video programming in a myriad of new ways.”

Asked if Comcast associated itself with either argument, a spokesperson said, “We didn't file ourselves and didn't say anything specific about anyone else filing.” Comcast is the NCTA's largest member; NBC is a member of the NAB.

The NCTA in its filing said the FCC should let the marketplace work without intervention and, in any event, the definition of MVPD can't be stretched to cover OVDs.

The NCTA said the FCC does not have the authority to change the definition of MVPD, and even if it did, the change would do nothing to boost competition. “The commission may not, as a matter of law — and should not, as a matter of sound public policy — deem OVDs to be within the scope of the statutory definition of an MVPD.”

The NAB, by contrast, wants to make sure the FCC applies more than just programming- access regulations to OVDs. It wants online providers to be subject must-carry, syndicated exclusivity and other responsibilities that go along with MVPD status, or at least with cable MVPD status.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/ott-proves-another-digital-divide/388846#sthash.9HsOIUPo.dpuf>

Multichannel News

# FCC Drills Into Dish Spectrum Bid

3/16/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: **John Eggerton**

WASHINGTON — Federal Communications Commission chairman Tom Wheeler has signaled the agency is going over Dish Network's AWS-3 auction bids with a fine-toothed comb.

Wheeler did not identify Dish by name. Neither did Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), whose letter Wheeler responded to with the assurance the agency was drilling down on the bidders in its post-auction review, as it looks toward the next broadcast incentive auction. But the subtext was clear.

Dish's participation in the ASW-3 auction came via two companies in which it holds a majority interest and which applied for \$3 billion in bidding credits as small business DEs (designated entities).

"I assure you that we take seriously concerns that parties may seek to capitalize on our rules in order to receive benefits intended for small businesses or to game the auction process," Wheeler wrote to Pallone.

"Dish's investments in two [designated entities] in the AWS-3 auction ensured that more parties, not fewer, could participate in the long-term spectrum economy," the Englewood, Colo.-based company told the FCC last month in a meeting with officials. - See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/fcc-drills-dish-spectrum-bid/388847#sthash.40lnSsie.dpuf>

Multichannel News

# Walden Slams Title II's 'Total Overreach'

**But Top Wheeler Aide Says New Rules Are No Burden** 3/09/2015 8:00 AM Eastern

By: [John Eggerton](#)

WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission's decision to reclassify broadband Internet access under Title II common-carrier regulations was a "total overreach," as well as illogical and illegal, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), the House Communications Subcommittee chairman, told small and medium-sized cable operators last week.

But Gigi Sohn, special counselor to FCC chairman Tom Wheeler, suggested the new regulations were light-touch rules that should not hurt the American Cable Association members gathered for the organization's annual Summit here, where both officials spoke.

Walden, in a Q&A session with ACA president and CEO Matt Polka, also said he had off-the-record conversations with companies who had told him Title II rules would translate into a 20%-30% cut in their broadband investment.

Wheeler has downplayed warnings from Internet-service providers that investment cuts could be a byproduct of reclassification, pointing to statements by some executives that they would continue to invest regardless.

Continuing his recent criticisms of the Obama administration's push for Title II, Walden said it is a "fiction" that the FCC is an independent agency and that the White House directive was a "tragedy" for professionals at the agency.

He said there had been no market failure and that Republicans had proposed legislation that could prevent blocking, throttling and paid prioritization by ISPs. Polka said his members support those bright-line rules.

Walden said no Democrats were sponsoring his bill, but that he believed they had been “held in abeyance” until after the FCC’s Title II vote. Although he didn’t say it, it is unlikely that any Democrats would sign on as long as the language foreclosing Title II and weakening Section 706 authority remained.

He signaled that Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, would take the lead on video issues in the planned overhaul of the Communications Act, while the House would focus more on FCC reauthorization and reform — he said a lot of the latter was needed — though it, too, would look at video.

Later at the Summit, Sohn told ACA vice president of government affairs Ross Lieberman that small cable operators shouldn’t be adversely affected by Title II’s “light-touch” approach. Lieberman said he’d have to agree to disagree with Sohn on that point.

ACA executives elsewhere at the event said Title II would likely mean rate regulation, and they haven’t ruled out a lawsuit against the FCC.

The FCC is not applying 27 of 43 provisions in the Title II order, and the ones it is applying involve such areas as privacy protections, protections against billing fraud and protections for the disabled. As MSOs, ACA members are already subject to privacy rules, she added.

“I don’t want to be so glib as to say these are ‘sleeves off the vest,’ because they are requirements, but I don’t think you will find them burdensome,” Sohn argued.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/walden-slams-title-ii-s-total-overreach/388646#sthash.Kammbfld.dpuf>

Multichannel News

# Street Lengthens Odds on Comcast-TWC

**But Merger Still Has Better-Th an-Even Chance: Analysts**3/09/2015 8:00 AM  
Eastern

By: [John Eggerton](#)

WASHINGTON — Comcast may yet get to buy Time Warner Cable.

Various Wall Street analysts have lowered the odds that No. 1 U.S. MSO Comcast's purchase of No. 2 TWC will be consummated, but they're still arguing that the \$69 billion deal has a better-than-even chance of getting past the Justice Department and Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC's decision to apply phone company-style Title II common-carrier regulations to broadband Internet-service providers could be a plus for the deal, though opponents last week were trying to make sure that decision did not provide any momentum.

Comcast faces a dual vetting challenge. The FCC and Justice Department are looking at the combination's traditional cable-TV subscribers, though Comcast is spinning off systems to Charter Communications and the newly created GreatLand Connections to keep that tally below 30% of the national pay TV customer count.

As of year-end 2014, Comcast counted some 22.4 million video customers, while Time Warner Cable had 10.8 million pay TV subscribers. After the merger and the system swaps are done, the post-deal Comcast would have just under 30 million subscribers.

***FOCUS ON BROADBAND***

But likely even more important to an FCC focused on broadband and the power of ISPs over the Internet is the combined company's share of the high-speed data market.

The FCC plans to change its statutory definition of what constitutes advanced telecommunications deployment, in terms of broadband speed, to a minimum of 25 Megabits per second downstream. This could penalize Comcast and Time Warner Cable for providing that high-speed service, as the companies would have a greater share of those subscribers than they did under the prior 4 Mbps benchmark.

But that might be a miscalculation, said Bernstein Research senior analyst Paul de Sa. While reducing the size of the high-speed market would increase the combined company's share, de Sa said, it also means that Comcast-TWC would control fewer high-speed households.

"Comcast has a higher share of a smaller number of subscribers, reducing anticompetitive concerns," de Sa said in a note to investors two weeks ago.

"While the FCC recently set a new number as an aspiration for advanced broadband (a number which over 90% of Comcast customers are already receiving), they've set different thresholds for different proceedings," Comcast executive vice president David Cohen told *Multichannel News* in an email. "The market for broadband is local, not national, and that's the way the FCC and the DOJ have looked at it in past transactions.

"Even if taken it as a national market, because TWC has so many fewer customers on higher speeds than we do, the percentage increase when the companies combine increases only 1%," Cohen added.

Analyst Craig Moffett, who had laid the odds at 80-20 in favor of approval as recently as January, was down to 70-30 last month and now has deal approval at 60-40. That was partly due to the FCC's decision to redefine high-speed Internet service at 25 Mbps, which he called "emblematic of a relatively anti-cable zeitgeist in Washington."



Wheeler has singled out ISPs as the potential blocking and degrading link in the Internet chain, with the incentive and opportunity to discriminate against both consumers and edge providers.

The FCC could approve the Comcast-TWC deal with conditions that assured that its new Title II regulations would apply to the largest ISP regardless of whether the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit might throw them out again.

In addition, as part of the proposed Title II regime, FCC chairman Tom Wheeler has proposed creating a new complaint regime for interconnection issues, such as over-the-top video provider Netflix's longstanding complaint about having to pay for peering.

That regime could make the FCC more comfortable with allowing a Comcast-TWC combination, particularly given the aggressive stance assumed by Enforcement Bureau chief Travis LeBlanc, who would investigate those interconnection complaints.

### ***TITLE II BOOST?***

Bernstein's de Sa said he sees Title II as a slightly net positive for the deal.

"[T]he new rules provide a basic framework for preventing discrimination by broadband providers against internet content," he told clients. "In principle, therefore, if the rules work, post-merger Comcast will not be able to exploit the market power that opponents of the deal are concerned about."

Whichever, Comcast's Cohen suggests he hopes the Title II decision means the FCC can get moving on the deal.

"Now that the FCC has put in place industry wide rules on the Open Internet — which we'll evaluate when we see the order — we expect they'll turn to the pending transaction reviews, both ours and AT&T/DirectTV," Cohen said. "We continue to hope for regulatory approvals early this year."

Not so fast said the Stop Mega Comcast Coalition, which last week circulated a white paper, "Net Neutrality Rules Are No Cure for Mega-Comcast."

Comcast last month exercised an option to extend the deal's breakup date to August.

- See more at: <http://www.multichannel.com/street-lengthens-odds-comcast-twc/388656#sthash.cL8SONNo.dpuf>

Multichannel News

## Trade Journal Links

Whether You're Red or Blue, You Should Love the FCC's Internet Plan. According to one Tea Party member: "[a] fiber connection [is] just like electricity or a street grid, and it [is] government's role to make sure that facility is cheap, ubiquitous, and fast." | [Medium](#)

"In the US, the last mile of internet infrastructure is an enormous problem. There are two reasons for this: technical restraints holding back the bandwidth needed to support modern-day internet traffic, and a lack of competition between the major carriers selling internet service to the end user." | [Gizmodo](#)

"New HBO Now Streaming Service Shows Consumer's Will Is King" | [NPR](#)

Sony to Roll Out Internet TV Service This Year | [WSJ](#)

"DirecTV has been tricking consumers into paying more for TV, the FTC says" | [Washington Post](#)

FCC "plans to soon begin working on a proposal to subsidize Internet service for low-income consumers by expanding its Lifeline program, which is mocked by conservatives as the 'Obamaphone' program." | [National Journal](#)

Lake Oswego, Oregon will draft a request for proposals for a private (or possibly public) partner to build and operate a municipal fiber network after receiving city council approval. | [Portland Tribune](#)

"What it's like to go on the Internet for the very first time – at age 82" – and why the digital divide matters for senior citizens | [Washington Post](#)

"FCC Leaves Itself Wiggle Room on Net-Neutrality Rules: Agency releases 400 pages on rules but also says many issues will be decided case by case" | [WSJ](#)

Charter Communications to Buy Bright House Networks | [Broadband Reports](#)

"Nielsen Finds 13% of Homes With Multiple OTT Video Subscriptions" | [Telecompetitor](#)

"Could Google Afford to Live-Stream Sports for Free?" | [Quartz](#)

There is no reason for Congress to rewrite the Communication Act unless they will give consumers more and better Internet choices: "To encourage broadband competition, Congress could make it easier for private companies and utilities owned by local governments to provide Internet service in more parts of the country." | [N.Y. Times Editorial Board](#)

Blair Levin Op-Ed: Celebrating the Fifth Anniversary of the National Broadband Plan and Looking Forward to What Is Next | [Benton Foundation Blog](#)

Webcast of Friday's Broadband US TV Panel: "FCC Takes Charge – Net Neutrality and Muni Broadband New Title II Rules for Broadband Access and Preempting State Limits on Municipal Networks" | [Broadband.US TV](#)

"Will the FCC Decide How Much You Pay for Internet? The agency insists net neutrality won't lead to price controls, but the industry is skeptical." | [National Journal](#)

A map of all the underwater cables that connect the internet | [Vox](#)

FCC Puts Review of Comcast-Time Warner, AT&T-DirecTV Deals on Hold; Agency move is related to a court decision on the disclosure of video-programming contracts | [WSJ](#)

"Wireless technology may offer a number of great advantages in terms of ease of use and convenience, but a new study conducted by NTCA and Vantage Point Solutions reveals that wireless technologies are a complement rather than a replacement [to wireline networks]" | [FierceTelecom](#)

"Montana lawmakers are considering issuing \$15 million in bonds to help expand Internet, phone and cable services to isolated communities." | [The News Tribune](#)

"Apple Plans Web TV Service in Fall: In talks with programmers to offer a slimmed-down bundle of about 25 channels...anchored by broadcasters such as ABS, CBS, and Fox" | [WSJ](#)

On Apple's Streaming Service: ""One major entertainment company not involved in the latest round of discussions is Comcast and its NBCUniversal entertainment group, the people said. If Apple and Comcast do not come to terms on a deal, the new service would not include the broadcaster NBC along with the cable networks it owns, such as USA, Bravo and Syfy." | [N.Y. Times](#)

"FCC Seeks Input on Presuming Cable Video Has Effective Competition" | [Broadcasting & Cable](#)

"Cablevision to Offer HBO Streaming Service: New York-based company is first cable operator to agree to offer new HBO Now service" | [WSJ](#)

"The Race Is on for Skinny TV" | [Light Reading](#)

Wheeler to Congress: "No, the White House didn't give me 'secret instructions' on net neutrality" | [Washington Post](#)

<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/03/24/comcast-minnesota>

Editorial Board: "Comcast merger a chance to narrow the digital divide" | [L.A. Times](#)

NYC official wants Comcast to offer \$10, 10Mbps Internet after merger

One-third in city have no broadband; it's too expensive, public advocate says. | [Ars Technica](#)

"Streaming TV Services Seek to Sidestep Web Congestion; HBO, Sony and Showtime want separate lanes, spurring net neutrality concerns" | [WSJ](#)

If it succeeds, Apple could become the biggest gateway to online video — the new Comcast for the Internet. And it has more cash on hand than any of its rivals to secure the most-desired shows. | [Washington Post](#)

"Republicans can't overturn the FCC's new net neutrality rules without this Democrat [Sen. Bill Nelson, D-FL]. And he's not playing along." Says he will only cooperate with a bipartisan bill that "fully protects consumers, does not undercut the FCC's role and leaves the agency with flexible, forward-looking authority to respond to the changes in this dynamic broadband marketplace." | [Washington Post](#)

"Trade groups, not Verizon, will reportedly sue FCC over net neutrality" | [Ars Technica](#)

Seattle City Council votes to eliminate cable franchise district system, which required cable TV companies to provide service to all neighborhoods within a given district | [GeekWire](#)

"The over-the-top video services announced or rumored so far are too narrow for existing pay-TV subscribers and are too expensive for people who have opted not to subscribe to traditional pay-TV services" | [Investor's Business Daily](#)

"HBO, Vice Media Announce News Programming Deal; Content startup to launch daily newscast for HBO through 2018" | [WSJ](#)

"CenturyLink says 1 Gig has great potential for schools, telecommuters" | [FierceTelecom](#)

CenturyLink Plans to Expand 1 Gbps Offering to 505 Developments In Utah | [Broadband Reports](#)

"Verizon Not Worried About Cable's Push Into Wi-Fi Calling" | [Broadband Reports](#)

"OTT Video Satisfaction Survey: Streaming Problems Drive 75% Away" | [Telecompetitor](#)

"New homeowner selling house because he can't get Comcast Internet" ... "Besides Comcast and CenturyLink, the Kitsap Public Utility District operates a gigabit fiber network that passes near the man's house... [but] Washington is one of the half-dozen states that forbids municipal broadband providers from selling service directly to consumers." | [Ars Technica](#)

"Comcast Pushes Back Closing for Time Warner Cable Merger to Middle of 2015; Citing Regulatory Delays" | [WSJ](#)

Considering the potential of Comcast's new Wi-Fi service: "[W]e have on one hand the potential benefits from what could be a new and attractively priced competitive option in the wireless sector. On the other hand, we have a range of complex and intertwined public policy issues related to the continued expansion of Comcast's market power across multiple sectors of the communications industry, and the prospects for anti-competitive impacts of that expansion." | [MSU Quello Blog](#)

"ESPN will cost \$36.30 per sub in a la carte world priced by 'reach', analyst says" | [FierceCable](#)

During another Congressional hearing over the FCC's net neutrality rules Congressman Gohmert tells FCC Chief: "You're playing God with the Internet" | [Washington Post](#)

"98 Percent of Americans Are Connected to High-Speed Wireless Internet" | [White House Blog](#)

"Under Political Pressure, NFL Suspends TV Blackouts; The league will decide whether to permanently end the unpopular policy at the end of the season." | [National Journal](#)

"The Supreme Court on Monday took up a class-action lawsuit against DirecTV Inc. brought in California over early termination fees charged to customers." | [WSJ](#)

"Why Cable TV Beats the Internet, For Now; It's not time to cut cable yet, unless you're among the few cord-cutters who can clear enough hurdles" | [WSJ](#)

[Techdirt: FCC Moves To Give Internet Video Startups The Same Protections As Cable Companies](#)

[https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20150403/06352430535/fcc-moves-to-give-internet-video-startups-same-protections-as-cable-companies.shtml?\\_scoop\\_post=22a80240-de0b-11e4-86f4-842b2b775358&\\_scoop\\_topic=287150#\\_scoop\\_post=22a80240-de0b-11e4-86f4-842b2b775358&\\_scoop\\_topic=287150](https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20150403/06352430535/fcc-moves-to-give-internet-video-startups-same-protections-as-cable-companies.shtml?_scoop_post=22a80240-de0b-11e4-86f4-842b2b775358&_scoop_topic=287150#_scoop_post=22a80240-de0b-11e4-86f4-842b2b775358&_scoop_topic=287150)

"Comcast announced on Thursday that it will soon begin offering a service capable of delivering Internet speeds of up to 2 gigabits per second — that's twice as fast as Google Fiber's top speeds and 200 times what the average U.S. household currently gets. " | [Washington Post](#)

"Comcast 2 Gig Plans Contradict Claims Title II Kills Investment" | [Broadband Reports](#)

Comcast claims that merger will "bring \$8 billion in price reductions to businesses" | [Ars Technica](#)

FCC Releases Sixteenth Annual Report on the "Status of Competition in the Market for the Delivery of Video Programming" | [FCC](#)

"Amazon to FCC: Many OTTs Don't Want Program-Access Rights; Asks FCC Not to Stick Round OTT Peg Into Square MVPD Hole" | [Multichannel News](#)

"NCTA: FCC Can't Redefine OVDs As MVPDs; Says Franchise Authorities Can't Regulate OVD Services Offered To Non-Subs" | [Multichannel News](#)

"Moody's: Internet Video Poses No Real Threat to Cable...."the shift in the pay TV sector will be evolutionary, not revolutionary." | [Broadband Reports](#)

"9th Circuit rules Netflix isn't subject to disability law. Are websites 'public accommodations?' Federal courts have split on the question." | [Ars Technica](#)

"U.S. Internet users pay more and have fewer choices than Europeans; Areas of service rarely overlap between Internet providers" | [Center for Public Integrity](#)

"Charter to buy Bright House [in \$10.4B deal], but only if side deal with Comcast gets approved." Deal would make Charter the second biggest cable operator in the U.S. behind Comcast | [Ars Technica](#)

Comcast "will soon be offering a symmetrical 2 Gbps fiber offering to 1.5 million customers in Atlanta starting next month" and "2 Gbps to 18 Million Homes By Year's End" | [Broadband Reports](#)

"5 Sad Facts About America's Ridiculously Slow Internet" | [Gizmodo](#)

FCC Explains Decisions on Broadband, Net Neutrality in a webinar briefing state and local governments | [Government Technology](#)

"10% of Americans own a smartphone but do not have broadband at home, and 15% own a smartphone but say that they have a limited number of options for going online other than their cell phone." | [Pew Research Center](#)

"AT&T Will Have to Face Federal Suit for Limiting 'Unlimited' Data; AT&T tried to use the new net-neutrality rules as a shield from the FTC, but a federal judge didn't buy it" | [National Journal](#)

The Communications Act outlines what actions the FCC may and may not take, and may restrict the FCC from crafting optimal policies. Brookings discusses three ideas for improving the stale law. | [Brookings TechTank](#)

A CenturyLink Representative Apologizes for Misleading Customer About Its Gigabit Internet Service in Seattle | [The Stranger](#)

"The Internet's Clearly Not Ready to Stream Big Events"... "Being a cord cutter in 2015 is great—until there's something you actually need to watch live." | [Wired](#)

"FCC Officially Documents First Ever Decline in Pay-TV Subscribers" | [Telecompetitor](#)

The fine-print of Comcast's 2 gigabit announcement. Comcast says it will offer 2 gigs to customers "within close proximity to Comcast's fiber network"... And by that, they means you basically must be living directly next to an existing fiber line." | [POTs and PANs](#)

"CLIC Sets Muni Broadband Protection Event; Wheeler to Speak at Broadband Communities Conference" | [Multichannel News](#)

Report: "Cable hones its wholesale skills in special access, wireless backhaul"... "Having a wholesale channel is another way cable can offset residential video subscriber losses." | [FierceTelecom](#)

"Comcast, Georgia town call truce in right-of-way fight" | [FierceTelecom](#)

Minnesota House Republicans "are aiming to save \$30 million by cutting grants to build out broadband Internet access across Minnesota." | [CBS Local](#)

"Over 50% of consumers in US broadband households subscribe to an OTT video service, according to Parks Associates." | [Broadband TV News](#)