Video Competition: Three Talking Points

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WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission has said that while the video marketplace had changed, it has yet to conclude just what that means in terms of competition.

The context was broadcasting, and the agency said it would seek comment from stakeholders on its tentative conclusions about the need for continuing ownership regulation.

But it doesn't have to wait around for those to get a read on how the major stakeholders feel about the state of video competition.

On a separate track, the FCC has collected information on its annual state of the video marketplace report, as mandated by the 1992 Cable Act.

Here are those assessments at a glance:

National Cable & Telecommunications Association: The NCTA is starting to sound like a broken record, but that is because cable's share of the marketplace has been declining for years without a resulting notation from the FCC that competition is "intense, dynamic, and irreversible," as the NCTA said in its filing.

"For many years, [the] NCTA has shown and asserted in these video competition proceedings that competition in the video programming marketplace is flourishing," it told the commission. "By now, this has become

not only an obvious truism but an understatement that fails to convey the breathtaking changes that are taking place literally every day."

The NCTA does not recommend any actions beyond making a lengthy case for why it believes the integrated set-top ban needs to go ASAP.

National Association of Broadcasters: The NAB's focus in the video report is on making the case TV stations are still important players, not a surprise given the red-headed step child status they feel relegated to by the FCC's incentive auction plans. The NAB asks for relief from ownership and attribution rules, but that is a long shot with the current FCC.

It also talks about a competitive marketplace, but interestingly with broadcasting as the relevant marketplace, distinct from cable. "Broadcasting is a highly competitive segment of the video marketplace, especially as compared to the MVPD industry," the NAB said. Broadcasters' defense of the marketplace has recently focused on an assault against cable, part of the ongoing fight over retransmission consent reform.

Consumer Electronics Association: The CEA is an equal opportunity ox-gorer, taking aim at multichannel video programming distributors and broadcasters alike.

It has criticized policies that favor MVPD leased access devices and has been fairly dismissive of broadcasters as a competitive force.

The CEA has said that according to its own figures, only 7% of households rely on an antenna exclusively, and of those, more than one-third have broadband access, and therefore have that video alternative
- See more at: http://www.multichannel.com/news/news-articles/video-competition-three-talking-points/373653#sthash.qvU3ZK51.dpuf

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