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Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

[5 Battles for Trump FCC](#)

Republicans are poised to take control of the Federal Communications Commission and the agency is bracing for a shake-up. Under Democratic Chairman Tom Wheeler, the FCC pursued an ambitious agenda, capped by its controversial net neutrality rules. But after Donald Trump's election, Republicans demanded that Wheeler halt his work on any controversial items. Wheeler will step down in 2017 and control is tilting to the agency's Republican commissions after Dem Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel failed to be re-confirmed.

[Lifeline Obligations Clarified](#)

The FCC has released an Order clarifying that an ETC must permit Lifeline-eligible customers to apply the Lifeline discount to standalone broadband Internet access service if the ETC subject to high-cost public interest broadband obligations commercially offers a standalone BIAS service.

[ISPs Pushing to Repeal Privacy Rules](#)

Some of the nation's biggest Internet providers are asking the government to roll back a landmark set of privacy regulations it approved last fall — kicking off an effort by the industry and its allies to dismantle key Internet policies of the Obama years.

[AT&T May Be Violating FCC Rules](#)

If you've used or heard of programs such as T-Mobile's Binge On or Music Freedom, then you're familiar with an increasingly common business tactic known as zero rating: the decision by a cellphone carrier to let you stretch your data plan by exempting some services, such as Spotify or Netflix, from your monthly data cap.

[MA Wants Control Of CAF Money](#)

The state of Massachusetts has asked the FCC to release federal broadband Connect America funding to states.



Market Watch

[71% of Households Have Wi-Fi or Apple Airport](#)

[U.S. Smartphone Ownership at Record Levels](#)

[Straight Path to Return 5G Licenses](#)

[Map of Municipal Broadband Networks](#)



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Questions? Comments?
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Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

Cyber Criminals Target Cloud, IoT

Hackers are expected to take advantage of vulnerabilities associated with cloud technology and the Internet of Things, according to McAfee Labs 2017 Threat Predictions report, released late last year.

5 Regulatory Fights for Tech in 2017

Tech's influence and reach is growing and pitting the industry against a new wave of regulatory challenges. In the U.S., mega-mergers are likely to face tough scrutiny in 2017, and the industry is bracing for another round in the fight over encryption. At home, President-elect Donald Trump is vowing to roll back many Obama administration regulations. But overseas, the European Union is pressing ahead with a number of high-profile cases against some of Silicon Valley's giants.

Security Needs to be at Machine Speed

One of the advantages of virtualizing networks is that scaling applications becomes easier, and for AT&T part of the impetus to virtualize sooner rather than later was the desire to be able to rapidly scale security, specifically, in the face of increasing network usage.

10 Ways to Improve Productivity

Have a New Year's resolution to work from home more this year — maybe to spend more time with your children or save some gas money? Thanks to the flexible world of the Internet, I've been able to work away from The Post's D.C. office for about a year and a half now — joining an estimated 37 percent of Americans who say they've telecommuted. Working from home can have its own charms and challenges. Here's what I've learned about teleworking in my time away, including some tech tips to make sure that your office...

Worst Passwords of 2016

It seems that password security simply doesn't work. Many of us rely on simple, easy-to-remember strings of characters and letters, including strings found on your keyboard such as "1234567" or "qwertyu." While these strings are easy for you to remember, they are also no trouble at all for attackers to brute-force hacking techniques...



IN FOCUS: #Solutions2020 Call to Action Plan

On December 19, Commissioner Mignon Clyburn [released](#) the #Solutions2020 Call to Action Plan. This plan is a follow-up to a meeting held among industry stakeholders to address the challenges facing the communications industry. Comments and feedback to the draft plan were due January 11, and the final plan is expected to be released during the first quarter of 2017. The stated purpose of the plan is to “deliver robust, affordable connectivity within the next four years.”

The draft plan covers a number of topics, including ensuring affordable communications, empowering communities, 5G wireless spectrum and beyond for all Americans, enhancing consumer protections, broadband as a driver of improved health services, and promoting a more diverse media landscape. The report concludes:

“Taken together, these recommendations would narrow the opportunities divide, support the growth of our economy and greatly improve the quality of life for all Americans. Implementation will require bipartisan action, support from leaders at the federal, state and local levels as well as buy-in from representatives of the technology and telecommunications industries.”

NTCA submitted [comments](#) advocating steps that would “improve the business case for deployment of broadband service in the areas

served by rural rate-of-return regulated local exchange carriers.” Specifically, NTCA argues that a properly functioning and sized USF mechanism “is the cornerstone to solving for the economics of deploying *and* also operating broadband networks” in rural areas. NTCA also discusses the concept of “broadband clearinghouses”, where communities lacking adequate service would be able to pair with interested and capable broadband providers.

While the goals of #Solutions2020 are laudatory, the question remains, as with all things related to the FCC, how a new Commission will address universal service issues. One potential problem is the front runner for interim (and possibly permanent) Chair, Ajit Pai, is on the record consistently advocating for a strict overall budget. Trying to meet the goals of #Solutions2020 and staying within the current or even a reduced overall budget is extremely difficult, if not impossible.



Alexicon at Work

Alexicon is currently working on various regulatory filings, including NECA forecasts. In addition, further ACAM elections are due soon and Alexicon is helping clients work through the related requirements, including tariff filing options.

Conferences and Meetings

Vince Wiemer and Rob Strait will attend the Alaska Telephone Association's Winter Conference in Maui, Hawaii on January 22-25. Please join us in sympathizing with Vince and Rob as they suffer in the brutal Hawaiian winter...



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