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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### [Lawmakers Sound Alarm on Amazon](#)

A growing number of Democratic lawmakers and civil libertarians are voicing concerns about Amazon's facial recognition software, worrying that it could be misused. They fear that without proper oversight the technology could hurt minority or poor communities and allow police to ramp up surveillance.

### [FCC Considers Small Cell Guidelines](#)

Small cells are seen as the building blocks of 5G networks, and carriers say the most time-consuming part of deploying small cells is working with city governments and permitting authorities. Many different decision-makers within a jurisdiction may have input when it comes to small cells, and the result can be a series of lengthy negotiations. That's why some companies are pushing state lawmakers to pass legislation the pre-empts some local authority over small cell siting and fees.

### [O'Rielly Targets Midband Spectrum](#)

One of the FCC's five commissioners said that he's working to release enough midband spectrum over the next two years that providers could create a new, fully operational 5G network using the licenses.

### [Updated MF II Map Released](#)

The Federal Communications Commission has released a version of the map of areas presumptively eligible for Mobility Fund Phase II (MF-II) support. The updated map is available on the Commission's website. This version of the map also shows an update to the areas presumptively ineligible for MF-II support due to qualifying, unsubsidized coverage reported by a single mobile provider.

### [Dems Accuse Pai of Oversight Evasion](#)

A group of House Democrats on Wednesday accused Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai (R) of trying to evade congressional oversight of his agency.



## Market Watch

[How VZ is Using AR for FiOS Tech Training](#)

[Linear TV Model is Dead Per Verizon CEO](#)

[Younger Viewers Watching TV Out of Home](#)

[Windstream 300 Mbps Broadband](#)



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Questions? Comments?  
Contact Chris Barron

[cbarron@alexicon.net](mailto:cbarron@alexicon.net)

# Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

## How Hackers Can Exploit Home Devices

As Americans increasingly fill their homes with smart technology, the risk of hackers exploiting their devices is growing. Experts say the expanding ecosystem of internet-connected devices such as smart thermostats, home security systems and electric door locks are increasingly susceptible to hackers, including those trying to leverage voice-command devices.

## Alexa Has a Mind of Her Own

A Portland, Oregon, family has learned what happens when Amazon.com Inc's popular voice assistant Alexa is lost in translation. Amazon on Thursday described an "unlikely... string of events" that made Alexa send an audio recording of the family to one of their contacts randomly. The episode underscored how Alexa can misinterpret conversation as a wake-up call and command.

## FBI to All Router Users: Reboot Now

The FBI is urging small businesses and households to immediately reboot routers following Cisco's report that 500,000 infected devices could be destroyed with a single command. The malware, dubbed VPNFilter, was developed by the Russian state-sponsored hacking group Sofacy, also known as Fancy Bear and APT28, according to the FBI, which last week obtained a warrant to seize a domain used to control the infected routers.

## ATSC Meeting Explores 3.0 Deployments

Real-world deployment and testing of the ATSC 3.0 Next Gen TV standard was front and center at the Advanced Television Systems Committee Annual Meeting here yesterday (May 23) with reports from Pearl TV, Sinclair Broadcast Group, Capitol Broadcasting, NAB and public broadcasting.

## U.S Reaches ZTE Deal

The Trump administration told lawmakers the U.S. government has reached a deal to put Chinese telecommunications company ZTE Corp back in business after it pays a significant fine and makes management changes, a senior congressional aide said on Friday. U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to confirm the deal in a tweet late on Friday.

## IN FOCUS:

### Broadband Service-Related USF Contributions

The FCC will vote on an Order at its June open meeting to address a lingering inequity in the way broadband internet access services are assessed for federal USF purposes. Acting on a June 2017 petition filed by NTCA and USTelecom, the FCC will vote on providing relief for RLECs paying USF assessments on broadband transmission services. Currently, only RLECs that opted to provide broadband internet access transmission service (e.g., DSL) as a common carrier service are being assessed USF contributions on the transmission component (per previous FCC decisions and forbearance actions).

According to the [draft order](#), "current rules...impose disparate financial burdens on certain rural broadband providers, and in turn, increase the cost of broadband for rural consumers. Specifically, while the Commission has consistently declined to impose Universal Service Fund (USF) contributions obligations on broadband Internet access services, small, rural carriers that provide broadband Internet access transmission services on a common carriage basis are uniquely required to contribute to the USF on the revenues from those offerings."

To fix this problem the FCC's proposed order would "Forbear from applying USF contribution requirements to rural carriers' broadband Internet access transmission services, and thereby eliminate discriminatory treatment of certain rural broadband providers and lower the cost of broadband for their customers."

The NTCA/USTelecom [petition](#) was filed in lieu of the FCC addressing the larger USF contributions reform problem. Clearly, the associations preferred a more holistic approach where fundamental fairness, and the overall health of the federal support mechanisms, demand "any and all broadband services should be required to contribute to support...federal USF programs." The Associations also claim that the forbearance requested in the petition be temporary in nature until such time as overall contributions reform can be tackled.

The FCC's draft order agrees with the Associations that the elimination of FUSF contributions obligations on a subgroup of RLEC BIAS transmission providers will have a *de minimis* effect on the overall fund (such revenues represent less than 1% of total contributions).

*If and when the FCC votes to approve the draft order (as it is expected to), the next question will be how and when the change will be made, more than likely with revised Form 499Q filings that are due in June (related to the May submissions). However, this is still under advisement. Regardless, this is good news for RLECs providing BIAS service on a common carrier basis as it will provide relief for collecting the FUSC that no other providers are required to collect.*



## Alexicon at Work

It's cost study and tariff season—Alexicon consultants are hard at work on annual cost studies and the tariff filings, including the Tariff Review Plan (TRP) schedules required for companies that do not participate in the NECA tariff. The tariff filings are due June 18.



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Contact Chris Barron  
[cbarron@alexicon.net](mailto:cbarron@alexicon.net)