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Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

[Warrant Needed for Cellphone Data](#)

The Supreme Court ruled that law enforcement in most cases has to obtain a warrant in order to search and seize long-term cell phone records that would show a person's location. In a 5-4 ruling, the court held that the Fourth Amendment's protections against an unreasonable search protects people from having the government acquire their cell-site records from wireless providers in run-of-the-mill criminal investigations.

[NTIA Reauthorization Bill & Broadband](#)

The National Telecommunications & Information Administration got a tire-kicking Tuesday (June 26) in a hearing in the House Communications Subcommittee on what was billed as rural broadband legislation, including coordinating funding efforts and getting more accurate and granular maps of broadband coverage, as one legislator put it.

[Senate Panel Approves Starks for FCC](#)

The Senate Commerce Committee on Wednesday approved Geoffrey Starks, a Democratic nominee for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), sending his nomination to the full Senate.

[220 Applicants Approved for CAF Ph. II](#)

The FCC has approved 220 applicants to participate in the July 24, 2018 Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II auction (Auction 903) for long-term high-cost support for voice and broadband services in fixed locations.

[RHC Program Budget Increased](#)

The FCC has adopted a Report and Order that raises the annual funding cap for the Universal Service Fund's Rural Health Care Program to \$571 million. The program's previous \$400 million budget was set in 1997 and never indexed for inflation. The \$171 million increase represents what the funding level would be today had the 1997 cap included an inflation adjustment.



Market Watch

[AT&T Trials Fixed Wireless 5G in Indiana](#)

[Viasat 100 Mbps Service Targets Businesses](#)

[FirstNet Serves Over 1000 Agencies](#)

[Report: M&A Activity in Telecom Industry](#)



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Questions? Comments?
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Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

CenturyLink Banks on Machine Learning

CenturyLink has boosted its Security Log Monitoring platform by blending in machine learning and artificial intelligence. With today's businesses operating in hybrid environments, and with the increasing number of mobile workers, more robust security measures are needed.

AI in the Workplace

While there has been plenty of talk about how artificial intelligence (AI) will transform the workplace, so far the effects have been subtle and slow to reveal themselves, although the scale of the oncoming change is starting to become apparent. Machine learning, task automation and robotics are already widely used in business. These and other AI technologies are about to multiply, and we look at how organizations can best take advantage of them.

Groups Urge Probe of Google, Facebook

Eight consumer advocacy groups are calling on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate Google and Facebook over what they see as "misleading" tactics that push consumers to give up their personal data. "Companies employ numerous tricks and tactics to nudge consumers toward giving consent to disclosing as much data as possible for as many purposes as possible," the advocacy groups, led by Consumer Watchdog, wrote in their letter to the FTC.

Google Duplex AI Calling Service

Google today shared a new demo of Duplex, its conversational AI that makes phone calls on behalf of Google Assistant users, and revealed more details about how the AI will work when speaking to businesses and customers. Initial use cases will involve making hair salon appointments and restaurant reservations.

Blockchain Potential for Telecom

Blockchain has the potential to have a huge impact on the telecom industry thanks to the industry's large customer base and internal processes. There are numerous potential applications of blockchain in the telecom space, from voice settlement to mobile number portability. Blockchain has ballooned in popularity in recent years mostly because of cryptocurrencies.



IN FOCUS:

Nationwide Number Portability

The FCC has set the agenda for its July Open Meeting. One of the items that will be addressed is a Report and Order covering certain Nationwide Number Portability (NPN) issues. The FCC issued an NPRM in October 2017 requesting comment on a wide range of issues related to the implementation of NPN, a process where customers could port numbers to different geographic areas. NPN is widely seen as a wireless industry issue—especially for smaller carriers that may have trouble competing with the national carriers' ability to allow for *de facto* number portability.

The Report and Order to be voted on in July is apparently designed to begin an NPN process, but is not the final regulatory action that will be necessary. Instead, the FCC will address (1) forbearance for remaining interexchange dialing parity rules, and (2) the current rule that required the next-to-last carrier on the call path to query the LNP database (i.e., the N-1 rule).

Interexchange dialing parity requirements for incumbent LECs were eliminated in 2015, except for customers who were still pre-subscribed to stand alone long distance service. In addition, CLECs are still subject to these dialing parity requirements. The Report and Order would eliminate these requirements for all carriers and in all situations—a change that was supported by most of the industry.

The N-1 rule, on the other hand, will be retained but now will allow for other carriers to perform the database query if they so choose,

pursuant to an agreement or other arrangement. However, the N-1 rules will continue to be in place, for now, for all other situations.

To be clear, the Report and Order is not the final decision paving the way for NPN. The FCC states "NPN is naturally a multi-stage process requiring a series of changes to various aspects of policy and possible other rules." The decision to be voted on in July appears to be, at most, stage one.

However, the issues surrounding NPN are complex and have the potential to adversely affect rural LECs as to cost of service and operational issues. WTA, while not formally taking a position on NPN, stated "the costs and benefits...need to be studied carefully, particularly before proceeding with wireline portability." We agree, and hope the FCC will move forward as suggested by WTA.



Alexicon at Work

ALEXICON 2018 MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Alexicon will hold its 2018 Management Conference on August 22-24 in Colorado Springs. The conference will be held at the Antler's Hotel at 4 South Cascade Avenue, and will feature a diverse cast of topics and presenters. Included, on August 22 are a golf or gambling outing, and a group dinner on the evening of August 23.

Plan on joining us in Colorado in August! Contact Juli Charter at 719-531-6342 or jcharter@alexicon.net if you have any questions, need further information, or would like to register.



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