



- ▶ DRAFT DEPLOYMENT REPORT ERROR
- ▶ EFFORT TO REINSTATE NET NEUTRALITY
- ▶ TECH READIES FOR PRIVACY FIGHT
- ▶ FCC MAY BE VIOLATING RECORDS ACT
- ▶ QUALIFIED BIDDERS FOR 24 GHZ AUCTION ...1

○ ISSUE 9 | ○ VOL 3-8 | ○ 2019

- ▶ FACEBOOK FLEXES FIBER MUSCLE
- ▶ T-MOBILE PLANS CABLE SERVICE REPLACEMENTS
- ▶ FIBER BROADBAND TO POWER 59% OF CONNECTIONS
- ▶ CORD CUTTING ALMOST DOUBLED IN 2018 ...1

- ▶ 5G—A LITTLE MAGIC
- ▶ FACEBOOK'S PRIVACY PLAY
- ▶ HUAWEI LAWSUIT EXPLAINER
- ▶ NCTC TAPS HARMONIC FOR PLATFORM
- ▶ CLEAR BLUE & INTERNET FOR THE UNCONNECTED ...2

Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

Draft Deployment Report Error

It's the FCC's official duty to promote connectivity throughout the U.S., and as part of that it issues a yearly report on improvements to broadband deployment. The latest report, however, seems to contain an error large enough to throw its numbers completely off what Chairman Ajit Pai has already claimed.

Effort to Reinstate Net Neutrality

Democrats in Congress unveiled a bill on Wednesday to reinstate net neutrality rules repealed by the Federal Communications Commission under U.S. President Donald Trump, the latest salvo in a more than decade-long battle over how to regulate internet traffic.

Tech Readies for Privacy Fight

K Street is going on a lobbying blitz as lawmakers begin work on drafting the first federal privacy bill, a high-stakes debate for the tech industry.

FCC May Be Violating Records Act

Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Mike Doyle (D-PA) wrote to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai to request information about its policies on the retention and disposition of electronic communications, including email, text messages, chat and instant messages and social media messages.

Qualified Bidders for 24 GHz Auction

All four of the biggest U.S. wireless operators are expected to participate to some degree in the upcoming 24 GHz auction, or Auction 102, which is set to begin March 14. Last week, the FCC released the list (PDF) of 38 qualified bidders for the 24 GHz auction, and that list includes AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and, listed as ATI Sub LLC, Sprint. Bluegrass Cellular, U.S. Cellular, Windstream Services and Starry are also among



Market Watch

[Facebook Flexes Fiber Muscle](#)

[T-Mobile Plans Cable Service Replacements](#)

[Fiber Broadband to Power 59% of Connections](#)

[Cord Cutting Almost Doubled in 2018](#)



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Questions? Comments?
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Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

Facebook's Privacy Play

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday announced the company would be reorienting itself to become a more privacy-minded platform. "I believe the future of communication will increasingly shift to private, encrypted services where people can be confident what they say to each other stays secure and their messages and content won't stick around forever. This is the future I hope we will help bring about," Zuckerberg said in a post.

Huawei Lawsuit Explainer

Huawei Technologies Co Ltd has opened up a new front in its battle with the U.S. government by filing a lawsuit challenging a congressional ban on federal agencies' use of the Chinese technology company's products. Legal experts said the firm is likely to lose its case because U.S. courts tend to avoid second-guessing Congress' actions relating to national security, including the ban enacted in August as part of a defense spending bill.

NCTC Taps Harmonic for Platform

Harmonic said today that it has entered into an agreement with the National Cable Television Cooperative (NCTC) to offer the vendor's CableOS virtualized cable access technology to more than 750 independent cable operators in the United States.

Clear Blue & Internet for the Unconnected

There's a key piece of the "internet for the unconnected" puzzle that Clear Blue Technologies International is providing, and that's smart off-grid technology to power these systems. The Toronto-based company is involved in the Facebook-led Telecom Infra Project, where it's working with Facebook and other TIP members to deliver clean power and remote management capabilities for the TIP OpenCellular solution.

5G—A Little Magic

The scene on the big display in front of me looks like something from Grey's Anatomy. A team of doctors and nurses lean over a patient who's draped with a white cloth, while a TV screen beside the operating table displays a video of the patient's colon. Suddenly, a yellow line appears on that video, showing the doctors where to cut.



IN FOCUS

Broadband Performance Testing

The FCC's broadband network performance measurement rule, codified in 47 CFR §54.313(a)(6), was kicked off by the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus, along with the Office of Engineering and Technology, in a July 6, 2018 [Order](#) (see July 11, 2018 Special Bulletin for a complete summary). That order provided a fairly rough outline of how the Bureaus saw testing would work, including where to test and the definition of tests, the timing of tests, and number of test locations. The order did not, however, adopt any specific testing method technology, and left a lot of questions unanswered. As a result, NTCA filed an [Application for Review](#), WTA filed an [Application for Review](#), and USTelecom, ITTA, and WISPA filed a [Petition for Reconsideration](#), none of which have been addressed by the FCC.

The numerous problems raised in the filings have not been addressed—in fact, the WCB has yet to issue the promised guidance on random sample selection and other testing topics. All this, and testing is currently scheduled to begin the third quarter of 2019.

The procedures outlined in the Order were designed for price cap carriers that, by virtue of receiving CAF support, have deployment milestones this year that need to be monitored. Most RoR carriers do not have deployment milestones, and won't until next year at the earliest. Other major problems include the fact that various vendors

are still working on testing solutions, and that USAC, to whom testing results will be reported, still has significant unresolved "issues."

One of the most significant problems could be the requirement that the test encompass the full "customer experience" - meaning the testing has to start inside the customer premises and terminate at one of 16 approved internet exchange points. This requirement raises multiple issues, including having a random sample of customers (to be apparently selected by USAC) allow entrance into their homes, and having small ISPs be, in essence, responsible for the testing results of networks (i.e., middle mile) outside of their control.

Ideally, the FCC would delay performance testing for small carriers (WTA asks for 2 years), while in the meantime vendors finalize testing protocols and small carriers can test the solutions. Also, asking small ISPs to gain access to the customer homes necessary to complete testing is somewhat problematic, at best.

It is unknown if and what the FCC will do with this issue, so in the meantime carriers should be preparing for testing to begin in July.



Alexicon at Work

Doug Kitch is accompanying the National Tribal Telecommunications Association Washington, D.C. fly-in next week.

Dion Nero will attend the Minnesota Telecom Alliance Annual Convention and Trade show in Minneapolis on March 18-20.



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Questions? Comments?

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