



Correspondence received by the Task Force through June 30, 2009



Hello,

At the Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA) Spring conference, where I led a panel on the social web, I was pleased to have an opportunity to sit in on the broadband panel where David Diers, VP of Comcast Business Services, provided an overview of their footprint, DOCSIS 3 and future broadband speed plans. While enlightening, Comcast and the other cable companies appear to have synchronized their message: *current* bandwidth consumption is so laughingly low (Comcast says ~2GB is the media and Time Warner states ~1GB) that they are being "quite generous" with their caps and tiers. It seems we should be just tickled at how magnanimous they're being with these bandwidth caps.

Anyone with any technical savvy, who takes even a moment to understand internet and bandwidth consumption trends, knows that this positioning is disingenuous and is nothing but a veiled attempt at placing strategic obstacles in place in order to restrain competition and protect their cableTV franchises.

However, it's not just anti-competitive moves that concern me and many others, it's the fact that a cable company with a monopoly is not only supplying the infrastructure layer, they're also delivering applications in the form of television as well as with digital telephone (with television, both real-time and on-demand, they're competing with both streaming vendors *and* entities such as NetFlix, Apple's iTunes, or what Best Buy has just announced: <http://tinyurl.com/deruj6>). Though Mr. Diers has taken umbrage to my characterization of Comcast as a monopoly in Eden Prairie, when pressed he's unable to come up with any other known choice internet access speeds even resembling broadband...because there aren't any.

I would hope your recommendations include a strong and material separation between those two layers and their ability to restrain competition. If not, it's as though the providers own the tollway AND the trucking companies, but their trucks get to fly through the automated tollgate while any competing trucking company is waiting in line to pay.

IMPACT ON INNOVATION

With my work with Minnov8.com, I'm very close to innovators (both entrepreneurs as well



as corporations harnessing internet and web tech) and there is great dismay over tiered broadband and its potential effect on innovation. Though I've encouraged reaching out to the Task Force, it will most likely take some sort of alarming and draconian move like Time Warner made, unlikely now that they've failed.

This past Saturday, Cloudcamp MSP was held (<http://www.cloudcamp.com/minneapolis>) sponsored by organizations like Best Buy, Split Rock Partners, Microsoft, Cisco and many others. If you're not yet familiar with the rapid acceleration in information technology that is hosted over the internet, then the Task Force *must* include this category as one of the key drivers of next generation I.T., entrepreneurial innovation, education, telemedicine, and a primary justification for an open, unfettered and level playing field with internet provision.

The investment, energy and innovation occurring in this arena is nothing short of astounding. If bandwidth caps are allowed to be instituted and be low, I predict it will severely restrict innovation in this growing delivery model for applications and internet innovation. More on cloud computing here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing

"Why Tiered Broadband is the Enemy of Innovation" by Om Malik
<http://tinyurl.com/6n7rt8>

"Flat-rate broadband – however cheap or expensive (depending on your point of view) it might be – inspired the formation of Skype, YouTube, Facebook, Apple's iTunes and MySpace, amongst others. It allowed us to freely experiment, to embrace both the applications and the ideas they represented, such as VoIP, online video, digital downloads and social networking."

TIME WARNER

As you probably know, Time Warner took a very visible (and low bandwidth cap) tiered strategy that sparked so much protest that they backed off last week.

From around the tech web:

The Embarrassment of American Broadband:
<http://tinyurl.com/ckzbfh>

Welcome to Consumption Based Broadband:
<http://tinyurl.com/d43kbh>

Washington Post opinion:
<http://tinyurl.com/ddc3nd>





This issue is coming to a head as the stakes rise with both ISP's and those of us who understand what it already means to have a private enterprise in control of the applications layer of the internet and who can compete within it. It appears that the cable companies are making moves now in order to have bargaining chips with the FCC and with the MN Legislature when it comes time to write bills, and I'm hopeful your recommendations are visionary, strategic, fair and ones that minimize control and maximize innovation -- whether that innovation comes from a college kid up late building the next, great Web application, or if it's Comcast having an incentive to invest multi-millions in infrastructure.

Thanks.

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Check out another blog I participate in:

Minnov8: Minnesota Innovation in Internet & Web Technology

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I am a Comcast customer in Minneapolis: I pay them for cable internet and TV. I think that Comcast has a monopoly and uses it to limit choices through its broadband cap, and restrict innovation by restricting viewers to their proprietary cable boxes. These great benefits are not cheap either.

I strongly favor regulation to treat broadband cable as a neutral public utility and reduce the monopoly control.

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Dear MN Ultra High Speed Task Force,

I'm currently out of state attending school, but caught word of your group through a MN-local news source, MinnPost.com.

I think broadband access is a revolutionary technological achievement that can greatly benefit citizens if implemented and maintained properly. What worries me is the increasing control of this valuable public interest by a few profit-taking corporations and even emerging monopolistic practices that could probably be curtailed with proper oversight and regulation. These monopolistic practices are probably not emerging from any evil intentions, but the intent to preserve a business model that will shortly be antiquated. For instance, web-video may soon rival commercial television in quality and impact, and this may lead companies that sell both cable television and cable internet to try and keep these merging technologies separate, when there are no technological reasons for doing so. Similar arguments apply for other media distribution, like music, voice and video communications, print, and probably more. Keeping this in mind I hope this task force will advocate for community-based projects, like public internet access and wi-fi, and further broadband cable layout. I also hope net-neutrality is encouraged and any bandwidth caps are reasonable and able to be expanded as usage changes. I would also like to see closed, proprietary technologies discouraged from public use.

Thank you, and please continue keeping in mind the citizens not represented by well-funded corporate entities!

Andrew Barthel





Government regulation naturally evolves to the point where the companies being regulated actually do the regulating. Thus the banking industry got to decide gambling, lying and stealing were acceptable behaviors.

Large internet access providers now want to use their power to decide what regulations should be made in order to protect their profits. This behavior and attitude is in direct conflict with every principle of free enterprise dating back further than Adam Smith's writing.

Please do not allow the State of Minnesota to become a place where corporations decide what the rules are based on protecting their profits. The quality of life is already declining here due to the disinvestment in basic infrastructure. Limiting access to knowledge and communication resources will put Minnesota so far behind the competitive edge that no high quality and high integrity corporation or individual could justify locating in the state.

Stuart Macdonald

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"To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." -Theodore Roosevelt





The Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Taskforce - Contact Us Web Site Message

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How can we help you:

Got your info from MinnPost article:Who should have control over your TV? A conversation with a Comcast executive By Steve Borsch | Tuesday, April 14, 2009





Dear Ms. Wells:

I don't profess to be a tech guru or understand the myriad of tech issues facing the taskforce. I'm just a "normal" broadband user. But the issues raised by Steve Borsch in his recent posts on MinnPost.com ratify concerns I always have when dealing with large corporate entities holding either information, technology, or market control over consumers who are not similarly skilled. The reality is that consumers cannot be individually be knowledgeable on technical issues such as this and so there's a heavy burden on government entities to act meaningfully on behalf of consumers.

I worked for a major oil company for 20+ years before retiring. That company contributes large sums (in absolute dollars) toward alternative energy research and advertising t. But in day-to-day practice everything they actually do is designed to drive consumers toward dependence and use of oil and oil byproducts. Not because the company is inherently evil, although many may think so... it's just that's how the company makes money.

There can be no difference with cable/internet providers. They are going to act in self-interest only and so long as they can hold an effective monopoly at a particular service level, the provider's interest will be to maximize their profit, consumer be damned. And there are a whole variety of things they can do to confuse consumers, obfuscate the implications of their actions, and generally muddy the waters so that a typical consumer, faced with hundreds of decisions a day, cannot meaningfully assess the implications of a purchase decision from the monopoly provider.

Minnesota needs to ensure that there's genuine, meaningful, and real competition between providers, that providers fully disclose all connectivity issues their proprietary systems have with other technologies, and that the "pipeline" is not priced beyond the ability of consumers to reasonably pay. If we cannot have universal broadband coverage available at a reasonable price, then we do not have universal broadband coverage. Period.

I think it's also important that government sponsor a low/no-profit alternative to the major commercial providers. There is no effective way for a consumer to get through to most providers - lines are jammed, hold times are awful, the call center folks lack training, and you can't even escalate problems because the managers who really make the decisions are often hidden behind the protection of the customer service folks. Government by its nature has to be more responsive... eventually, anyway.

I wish I had the technical background to make a meaningful contribution because accessibility to the internet is going to be a key driver in our nation's future. If we turn that over to unregulated commercial carriers whose motivation will be to maximize their own



profit, the US will fall even further behind the nations who are already far better at getting their citizens wired with access to high quality broadband at reasonable prices.

Best wishes,

Mark Giorgini





As a Dakota media producer who is working more and more through the internet...I need assurances that the cable/TV/telephone companies can't control my use of internet and television services.

I look forward to leadership from the state of Minnesota on broadband policy.

Pidamaya for the work you do.

M



Mona M. Smith

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Ms. Wells,

I was reading Steve Borsche's article in the Minn Post this morning and saw his suggestion about contacting the task force with comments. Here is my comment:

I currently live in Bloomington, where I can get DSL service under 1mbps in theory from Quest (my current provider of phone service, I wanted a real phone, not VOIP) or broadband via Comcast. I recently downgraded my Comcast cable to their most basic cable, it was simply not worth the money. I was able to save around 40 dollars a month in doing so. I planned on using that 40 dollars a month to purchase "season passes" on iTunes to watch the few shows my wife and I follow. That in the end saves me a lot of money, since the season passes are typically under 40 bucks and we don't follow more 12 shows. My end goal is to eventually drop Comcast's cable all together and use a digital antenna and watch the shows we want over the net (via iTunes or other services). I have put this plan on hold though, as I am very concerned about bandwidth caps and how it would negatively affect my ability to access digital version of TV shows through the net.

I realize that there is not a bandwidth cap per say yet in MN, but know that Comcast is testing them in other markets. I also know that Comcast has in the past (with vantage) done things to their network to make competitive products less useful. I worry that this might be the case in the future in MN since I am tied to a single provider for my internet needs and at their mercy. My wife and I will be getting iPhones this summer, which will only increase our bandwidth use at our home.

I think the State of MN should do everything in their power to ensure that Comcast (and/or if a capable competitor emerges) maintain a neutral stance on the bandwidth usage and content they provide access to. I can understand the need to limit some users (say those who are using their home connection to host servers, constantly moving large data files or those doing illegal activities) but they should recognize that as digital media becomes more popular users will increasingly turn to it. I don't feel I should be penalized by Comcast (with cap overage fees) if I choose to use a superior (in my opinion) product to access HD digital content, such as movies/tv shows via a provider of my choice on the net. I think the State of MN and its citizens would benefit from regulation that give Comcast some authority to regulate usage but do not penalize users who chose to not use Comcast cable services to access their digital media and thus use high amounts of bandwidth.

While I can safely say, I don't come anywhere close to using 250 gigs of bandwidth a month, I can envision that amount being reached in the future, when I cease to use Comcast for cable tv.



Thanks,

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The Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Taskforce - Contact Us Web Site Message
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How can we help you:

I am concerned at the broadband monopoly that the cable company has in my area. Being a monopoly, there seems to be little that can be done to restrict their policies from imposing unnecessary restrictions on my service, in the interest of supporting their other interests (cable tv).

I would be much happier in an environment where the broadband infrastructure was shared or leased, and ISPs could compete on service, rather than relying on ownership of the infrastructure.





Dear Diane,
I was recently outraged to read a [MinnPost article](#) about Comcast's plan to make consumers "authenticate" before they can stream video over Comcast-provided Internet connections. We can NOT allow such a policy to exist. The nature of the Internet and what makes it so amazing is it's ability to bridge the gap between rich and poor, between the educated and not educated. The Internet is the great equalizer with content and information available 24 hours a day to anyone who can get access. Arguably, Internet access should be free or low-cost enough that it's not a barrier for any person to have it.

The idea that not only should we charge for Internet access, but that Comcast subscribers could only access video content if they also subscribe to cable content is beyond comprehension. Comcast is afraid that their traditional model of revenue is dying, and with good reason: it is! Cable TV has long been the bane of many TV watchers, especially Comcast. There's a reason they have one of the lowest customer satisfaction ratings of any cable company. The overpriced rates and inability to order channels ala cart already puts many people at a disadvantage. Those people have finally found a way around these restrictive practices and superfluous fees and now will be blocked from streaming video over the Internet also?

I'm sure the inevitable argument will be: "get a different provider." Have you noticed the cable TV and Internet market lately? It's pretty bad. If I need high-speed Internet for my home office and I only have 2 providers, what am I supposed to do? And what if I live in an area where the only high speed option is Comcast? I then have to subscribe to cable just so I can access free streaming video? Comcast already has a monopoly in the Twin Cities and many areas of this country. Please don't allow them to extend their abusive practices.

Sincerely,
Kristi McKinney





Dear Ms. Wells,

I understand that the Minnesota Ultra High Speed Task Force chair, Mr.

King, has asked that the public's suggestions and recommendations to the body be routed through you to minimize the proliferation of emails and provide an orderly path for these communications. Please forward this to the members of that body.

I am concerned that MSOs (multi system operators, local example Comcast) are laying the foundation for dominance over content and application services as well as broadband access to the internet. I plead with you to recommend to the MN legislature that they act so as to protect MN consumers of content and services by precluding this type of vertical integration.

I am no economist, but it seems to me that the telephone companies'

control over long distance services, prior to regulatory change, could be compared to MSO dominance of content and services delivered over their broadband signals, should it be allowed. Surely we all remember the astonishing drop in long distance pricing and diversification of available services, once that market was opened to competition and innovation. It makes no sense to wait until such negative consequences are upon us? We should act NOW to draw a circle around MSO control over uses of their vital resource, while supporting their legitimate need for revenue enhancement.

Technical enhancement and infrastructure development to broadly extend internet services across Minnesota is critical, but it will be a bitter fruit if a virtual monopoly is granted the MSOs in the process.

Thank you for considering these views,

Steve Titterud

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From Mike O'Connor:

Broadband without Internet ain't worth squat

by David S. Isenberg

keynote address delivered at

Broadband Properties Summit 4/28/09

We communications professionals risk forgetting why the networks we build and run are valuable. We forget what we're connecting to what. We get so close to the ducts and splices and boxes and protocols that we lose the big picture.

Somewhere in the back of our mind, we know that we're building something big and new and fundamental. We know, at some level, there's more than business and economics at stake.

This talk is a 30,000-foot view of why our work is important.

I'm going to argue that the Internet is the main value creator here - not our ability to digitize everything, not high speed networking, not massive storage - the Internet.

With this perspective, maybe you'll you go back to work with a slight attitude adjustment, and maybe one or two concrete things to do.

In the big picture, We're building interconnectedness. We're connecting every person on this planet with every other person. We're creating new ways to share experience. We're building new ways for buyers to find sellers, for manufacturers to find raw materials, for innovators to rub up against new ideas. We're creating a new means to distribute our small planet's limited resources.

Let's take a step back from the ducts and splices and boxes and protocols. Let's go on an armchair voyage in the opposite direction -- to a strange land . . . to right here, right now, but without the Internet.

In this world we have all the technology of today, but no Internet Protocol, that is, there's no packet protocol that all proprietary networks can understand.



In this alternate reality, every form of information can be digitized, BUT there's not necessarily a connection between all this information and all the users and services that might discover it and use it to their advantage.

This was the world envisioned by the movie, *The President's Analyst*, where The Phone Company secretly ran the world. It's from 1967, the same year that Larry Roberts published the original ArpaNet spec.

Roll Clip

In a world without the Internet, it's not clear that we'd actually have a thought transducer in our brain. But if we did, I'd bet we couldn't program it ourselves. I'd bet we couldn't shut it off. I'd bet we couldn't decide who could receive its signal and who could not.

What WOULD we have?

We would have super-clear telephony. We'd have cable TV with lots and lots of channels. We'd have lower op-ex and higher def. We'd probably have some kind of telephone-to-TV integration so we could order from Dominos while we watched *Gunsmoke*. Our cell phones would make really, really good phone calls . . . and we'd have another half-dozen bungled attempts to convince us that picturephones were the next great leap forward.

Surprisingly, we might not have email. The first generation of Internet Researchers only discovered human-to-human email in 1972 - the subsequent growth of "People-to-People" applications was a big surprise to them. Now, without email, there there'd be no reason to invent the Blackberry or the iPhone. Without the Internet, it would be a voice, voice, voice, voice world.

This voice, voice, voice would be expensive. Without the Internet - specifically without Voice over IP -- we'd still be paying fifteen cents a minute for long distance, because VocalTec would not have commercialized VOIP, Vonage and Skype wouldn't exist, and even the major telcos would not have used VOIP to destroy the international settlement system.

Data service? Think ISDN. Actually, think about a dozen different so-called Integrated Services Networks, each with its own access and login, with no good way for one to connect to another. Metcalfe's Law would suggest there'd be orders of magnitude less traffic overall.

Would we have Search? Perhaps. Imagine what *Encyclopedia Britannica On Line* would look like in a non-Wikipedia world .

. . . at a buck a lookup.

Digital photography? Perhaps . . . but medium would be paper and the biggest company would be Kodak.

What about Amazon? EBay? YouTube? Weather.com? Google Maps?



Travelocity? Yahoo Finance? iTunes? Twitter? Facebook?

Craigslist? Blogging? On-Line Banking?

We wouldn't even have Web sites. Sure we could probably buy some kind of proprietary on-line presence, but it would be so expensive that only GE, GM and GQ could afford it, and so inaccessible they probably wouldn't want to pay.

Web 2.0 - the ability of a single computer to reach across the Internet in a dozen different directions at once to build an customized web page on the fly - would be worse than unavailable, it would be unthinkable.

But it's not all bad. Without the Internet, we would still get our news from newspapers, the corner bookstore would still be down on the corner, the Post Office would be thriving, your friendly travel agent would still be booking your trips, Dan Rather would still be on TV, perverts would still get their sick pix in inconvenient plain brown wrappers, and the NSA would not know the books I bought at Amazon or who I email with.

Tough. We lost a lot of skilled leather-smiths when they invented the horseless carriage. We'll find ways to deal with the Internet's changes too.

Without the Internet, the minor improvements in telephony and TV certainly would not drive the buildout of a whole new infrastructure. The best way to do telephony would still be twisted pair. The best way to do Cable TV would be coax.

Now I'm a huge Fiber to the Home enthusiast! But I'm also part of the Reality Based Community. So let's face it, even WITH the Internet, including Verizon's amazingly ambitious FIOS buildout, the business case for fiber is so weak that 97 percent of US homes still aren't on fiber. We are still in "Law of Small Numbers" territory. The Internet is the only thing standing between our limited success and abject failure.

Notice, I have not yet, until now, used the word BROADBAND.

But before I talk about broadband, I want to talk about Synecdoche. Synecdoche is when you say, "The Clock" but you mean Time. Synecdoche is when you say, "Eyeballs," but you mean The Customer's Attention. Synecdoche is when you say, Dallas, but you mean, "The Mavericks."

Most of the time Broadband is synecdoche. When we say, "Broadband," most of the time we mean, "High Speed Connections to the Internet."

I repeat, Most of the time when we say Broadband we mean High Speed Connections to the Internet. Broadband is synecdoche.

Without the Internet, "Broadband" is just another incremental improvement. It makes telephony and TV better. It makes the Internet better too. But the key driver of all the killer



apps we know and love is the Internet, not Broadband. And, of course, the Internet is enabled by lots of technologies - computers, storage, software, audio compression, video display technology, AND high-speed wired and wireless networking.

Now, Broadband is a very important enabler. The United States has slower, more expensive connections to the Internet than much of the developed world. And that's embarrassing to me as a US citizen.

Imagine if a quirk of US policy caused us to have dimmer displays. That would be a quick fix, unless the display terminal industry demanded that we disable the Internet in other ways before it gave us brighter displays. Or insisted "all your screens are belong to us."

High-speed transmission does not, by itself, turn the wheel of creative destruction so central to the capitalist process.

The Internet does that. Broadband, by itself, does not fuel the rise of new companies and the destruction of old ones.

The Internet does that. Broadband by itself is not disruptive; the Internet is.

The Internet derives its disruptive quality from a very special property: IT IS PUBLIC. The core of the Internet is a body of simple, public agreements, called RFCs, that specify the structure of the Internet Protocol packet. These public agreements don't need to be ratified or officially approved - they just need to be widely adopted and used.

The Internet's component technologies - routing, storage, transmission, etc. - can be improved in private. But the Internet Protocol itself is hurt by private changes, because its very strength is its public-ness.

Because it is public, device makers, application makers, content providers and network providers can make stuff that works together. The result is completely unprecedented; instead of a special-purpose network - with telephone wires on telephone poles that connect telephones to telephone switches, or a cable network that connects TVs to content - we have the Internet, a network that connects any application

- love letters, music lessons, credit card payments, doctor's appointments, fantasy games - to any network - wired, wireless, twisted pair, coax, fiber, wi-fi, 3G, smoke signals, carrier pigeon, you name it. Automatically, no extra services needed. It just works.

This allows several emergent miracles.

First, the Internet grows naturally at its edges, without a master plan. Anybody can connect their own network, as long as the connection follows the public spec. Anybody with their own network can improve it -- in private if they wish, as long as they follow the public agreement that is the Internet, the result grows the Internet.



Another miracle: The Internet let's us innovate without asking anybody's permission. Got an idea? Put it on the Internet, send it to your friends. Maybe they'll send it to their friends.

Another miracle: It's a market-discovery machine. Text messaging wasn't new in 1972. What surprised the Internet Researchers was email's popularity. Today a band that plays Parisian cafe music can discover its audience in Japan and Louisiana and Rio.

It's worth summarizing. The miracles of the Internet - any-app over any infrastructure, growth without central planning, innovation without permission, and market discovery.

If the Internet Protocol lost its public nature, we'd risk shutting these miracles off.

One of the public agreements about the Internet Protocol lays out a process for changing the agreements. If somebody changes their part of the Internet in private, they put the Internet's miracles at risk. Comcast tried to do that by blocking BitTorrent. Fortunately, we persuaded Comcast to stop. If it had continued, it would have put a whole family of Internet applications at risk, not only for Comcast Internet customers, but also for everybody who interacts with Comcast's customers.

The whole fight over Network Neutrality is about preserving what's valuable about the Internet - its public-ness.

The Internet threatens the telephone business and the cable TV business. So of course there's a huge propaganda battle around the Internet.

The propaganda says Network Neutrality is about treating every packet exactly the same, but the Internet has never done that. The propaganda says that Network Neutrality is about regulating the Internet, but we know that the Internet exists thanks to the government's ArpaNet, and subsequent wise government regulation.

Look who's calling for regulation anyway! The only reason telcos and cablecos exist is that there's a whole body of franchises and tariffs and licenses and FCCs and PUCs keeping them in business.

Cut through the propaganda. Network Neutrality is about preserving the public definition of the Internet Protocol, the structure of the Internet packet, and the way it is processed. If there are reasons to change the Internet Protocol, we can do it in public - that's part of the Internet too.

It's the Internet, smart people. Your property already has telephone and TV. So does everybody else's. Broadband without the Internet isn't worth squat. You're building those fast connections to The Internet.

So please remember that the essence of the Internet is a body of public agreements. Anti-Network Neutrality attacks on the public nature of the Internet are attacks on the value of



the infrastructure improvements you've made to your property. So you can't be neutral on Network Neutrality. Take a stand.

If you install advanced technology that makes your property more valuable, you deserve your just rewards. But the potential of the Internet is much, much bigger than your property.

Like other great Americans on whose shoulders I stand, I have a dream. In my dream the Internet becomes so capable that I am able to be with you as intimately as I am right now without leaving my home in Connecticut.

In my dream the Internet becomes so good that we think of the people in Accra or Baghdad or Caracas much as we think of the people of Albuquerque, Boston and Chicago, as "us" not "them."

In my dream, the climate change problem will be solved thanks to trillions of smart vehicles, heaters and air conditioners connected to the Internet to mediate real-time auctions for energy, carbon credits, and transportation facilities.

In my dream, we discover that one of the two billion who live on less than dollar a day is so smart as to be another Einstein, that another is so compassionate as to be another Gandhi, that another is so charismatic as to be another Mandella . . . and we will can comment on their blog, subscribe to their flickr stream and follow their twitter tweets.

But I also have a nightmare . . .

In my nightmare, the telephone company has convinced us that it needs to monitor every Internet transaction, so it can -- quote-unquote -- manage -- what it calls "my pipes".

Maybe it says it needs to stop terrorism, or protect the children, or pay copyright holders. Maybe there's a genuine emergency -- a pandemic or a nuclear attack or a 9.0 earthquake.

In my nightmare, whatever the excuse -- or the precipitating real-world event -- once the telephone company gains the ability to know which apps are generating which packets, it begins charging more for applications we value more.

In my nightmare, once the telephone company has some applications that generate more revenues because they're subject to management -- and others that don't -- the former get all the newest, shiniest, fastest network upgrades, while the latter languish in what soon becomes Yesterday's Network.

In my nightmare, new innovations that need the newest fastest network, but don't yet have a revenue stream, are consigned to second-class service. Or they're subject to lengthy engineering studies and other barriers that keep them off the market. In other words, in my nightmare, all but the most mundane innovation dies



So it's up to you. When you make high-speed networks part of your real estate, if you insist that these connect to the REAL Internet, the un-mediated, un-filtered publicly defined Internet, you're part of a global miracle that's much bigger than your property. Please ask yourself what's valuable in the long run, and act accordingly.





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FYI for the Task Force:

+ Article from the Economist, validating what some on the Task Force might conclude are my paranoid delusions about strategic control by Comcast, on what's becoming more obvious and discussed openly: Cable companies making moves to limit competition and protect cable TV revenues

+ A post on Minnov8 with additional thoughts around it:
<http://minnov8.com/2009/04/26/economist-tv/>

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Steve Borsch
Direct: 952.486.7678

Down the tubes

Apr 24th 2009

From Economist.com

URL: http://www.economist.com/printedition/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=13527685

(article's text attached)

Here is yet another article (reprinted below) from BusinessWeek about this: "Cable and media companies like Comcast (CMCSA) and Time Warner (TWX) are developing plans that require viewers to prove they have a subscription to an MSO before they can watch video online."

Again, regulation is a must with these entities that own both the infrastructure, and thus access to, the applications layer.

Get Ready to Prove You Paid for That Video

Hulu put premium content online; now Comcast's video site Fancast is among those pushing to get you to pay for it via "authentication"

URL:

http://www.businessweek.com/print/technology/content/apr2009/tc20090424_766570.htm



By Chris Albrecht

(article's text attached)





Email from Steve Borsch:

Task Force Members,

It's because I'm paying attention to this stuff that it continues to appear by the day. I've not sent emails recently (with article links which I could do daily) but instead have been watching to see how the Task Force mission unfolds. Reviewing all of the meeting notes (since I couldn't be there in person), it is clear to me that:

a) All discussions you've been having surround the infrastructure layer, the pipes and speed;

b) Little-to-no discussion has been conducted about control over that infrastructure by ISP's, and the risk that control poses to innovation, public access and a competitive marketplace.

The following article was written by Cory Doctorow, author, European Director for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (he resides in London), and was written for the Guardian in the UK. If all the attention geeks are paying to it means anything (it's linked to from hundreds of blogs), the Task Force should know about it too.

I submit it for the leisure reading of Task Force members as it relates to open access and the fact that the only thing standing between internet gatekeepers and enlightened regulators are people who can see strategically, understand the implications of ISP moves (e.g., traffic shaping; bandwidth caps; caching of video to ensure the ISP's delivery of HD quality is superior to all others offered over the internet; et al) and stand up to balance the power and ensure the internet remains an open conduit.

My hope is that those people are you.

--

Steve Borsch

Direct: 952.486.7678





We must ensure ISPs don't stop the next Google getting out of the garage

Allowing ISPs to have too much would drastically hinder the chances of fresh new startups developing into major businesses – as happened with Google

by Cory Doctorow

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 19 May 2009 16.28 BST

URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/may/19/we-must-ensure-google-garage>

(article's text attached)





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Email to Website:

Thank you for your comments. I will see that it is circulated to the task force members.

-----Original Message-----

From: RNordvold1@aol.com [<mailto:RNordvold1@aol.com>]

Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2009 7:15 PM

To: Diane.Wells@state.mn.us

Subject: The Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Taskforce - Contact Us Web Site Message

The Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Taskforce - Contact Us Web Site Message

Name:

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55746

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218-263-5670

How can we help you:

A definition of Broadband has to be set at 10 Mbs or higher. Ultra High-Speed Broadband has to be set at 100 Mbs or higher. Only "future proof" technologies should be considered to provide ubiquitous connectivity throughout the state and the only technology that can offer that level of service is fiber. In areas of rural Minnesota where return on investment will prohibit investment by the private sector, we must develop a public private partnership



that will enable this level of connectivity. To do otherwise would be to invest in infrastructure that will be will be obsolete before the project gets off the ground.

