BCAP 60th Anniversary NewsClips

June 20, 2017

Ars Technica
Cable lobby tries to stop state investigations into slow broadband speeds

Fierce Cable
Cable broadband is underpriced, and operators should aim for $90 ARPU target, analyst says

Washington Post
A Republican contractor's database of nearly every voter was left exposed on the Internet for 12 days, researcher says

Broadcast Law Blog
Modernization of Media Regulation –

Verizon has agreed to repair aging copper phone lines in the Lehigh Valley and statewide in a settlement it recently reached with its union, the Communications Workers of America.

The telecom giant will repair the worst of its legacy copper network in areas without FiOS and replace 15,000 unsightly and dangerous "double poles" on Pennsylvania roadsides, according to the deal. Double poles are damaged poles left after replacement, many times strapped to new poles. The poles could perilously dangle between existing poles with the telephone wires still attached to them.

The Pennsylvania pact could lead to phone improvements in the Lehigh Valley, said Ed Mooney, vice president of CWA District 2-13 in Philadelphia. Mooney said the union for years had been unsuccessful in convincing Verizon, whose first quarter **profit stood at $3.45 billion**, to reinvest in copper in areas without FiOS. "The end game here is to figure out a way to work with the company where deploying fiber across the entire state is not only economically feasible but also returns the investment to the company," he said.

Verizon, however, rejected calls from the union to expand FiOS into Pennsylvania areas without it. Most of the **Lehigh Valley does not have FiOS**, which is the company's branded high-speed internet and TV service that uses fiber-optic transmission lines, an upgrade from copper. The settlement concludes a long-running dispute between Verizon and its Pennsylvania workers, who claimed the aging copper wires didn't reliably serve voice or DSL internet customers, and posed safety risks for the public and employees.

In October 2015, the CWA, which was in the midst of contract negotiations, asked the Public Utility Commission to investigate its claims against the company. Six months later, **Verizon workers went on strike** over pension freezes, job outsourcing and other issues. The commission was preparing to hold public hearings before CWA and Verizon agreed to hold settlement talks, PUC spokesman Nils Hagen-Frederiksen said.

In the settlement document, Verizon said it committed no wrongdoing. Company spokesman John H. Johnson declined further comment. No one could provide specifics on the extent of repairs in the Valley. But Acting Consumer Advocate Tanya McCloskey, whose office joined in the petition on behalf of residential customers, said the statewide pact could lead to local phone enhancements. "The idea is they make the repairs and work together to try to improve the service territory," McCloskey said. "The overall goal is trying to improve the quality of service for customers."

[What Rule Changes Should Broadcasters be Requesting?]

Advanced Television
[Adobe Introduces Advertising Cloud for Programmatic TV Buying]

Philadelphia Inquirer
[Pennsylvania badly needs new revenue, top Senate Dem says]

Easton Express-Times
[How these Pa. lawmakers plan to bring fairness to elections]

Harrisburg Patriot-News
[A 'get out of town' budget appears inevitable, lawmakers say]

Also under the deal, Verizon will evaluate all requests in 2015 and 2016 for phone-line replacements in Pennsylvania within two months. Verizon will replace those lines it deems unsafe or unreliable within 18 months. The agreement between Verizon and CWA runs through Dec. 31, 2020. Verizon employs about 500 workers in the Lehigh Valley and Berks County. Consumers with Verizon complaints can call the PUC at 800-692-7380. – ***Allentown Morning Call***

Several months ago, President Trump signed into law a **repeal of sweeping privacy regulations** limiting what broadband providers can do with customer data. Now, an Assembly Democrat is trying to resuscitate those rules for Californians. Assemblyman Ed Chau (D-Monterey Park) unveiled a measure on Monday that would largely enshrine the sputtered federal regulations into California state law. The bill would require Internet service providers, such as Verizon, Comcast and AT&T, to get permission from customers before using, selling or permitting access to data about their browsing history.

Such restrictions were crafted by the Federal Communications Commission under the Obama administration. But the FCC under Trump sought to roll back those rules before they went into effect. Congress approved the repeal in March, and the president signed it. "Congress and the administration went against the will of the vast majority of Americans when they revoked the FCC rules," Chau said at a news conference, adding that with his measure, AB 375, "California is going to restore what Washington stripped away."

California is the 20th state to introduce a bill to restore privacy rules in the wake of the action in Washington. Supporters of the bill acknowledged that they'll face stiff opposition from Internet service providers and a possible challenge over whether these state-level regulations conflict with federal law. Ernesto Falcon, legislative counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said he was confident the proposed bill would not be preempted by federal law, because communications law has traditionally allowed a division of responsibilities between the state and federal government.

Joining Chau at a Capitol news conference was an array of privacy advocates and consumer groups boosting the bill. "AB 375 means that no Californian will be forced to pay for access to the Internet with their money and their privacy rights," said Becca Cramer, legislative coordinator for the American Civil Liberties Union of California. – ***Los Angeles Times***

When Silicon Valley executives arrived at the White House Monday to talk about **modernizing federal computer systems**, there was plenty of common interest at stake. The administration wants to cut redundancies and modernize the way Americans interact with their government, and tech companies see a $90 billion-a-year business.

But those companies also face a common challenge. The government’s sprawling information-technology system is flawed and balky, controlled in agency fiefdoms that will be difficult to break. And much of the spending now goes toward keeping older systems running, limiting the amount the government can invest in new technology.

Critics say the lack of oversight over IT spending and operations is part of the problem, as is a plethora of customized and even duplicative systems within a single agency. “We have a crazy quilt system of management,” said Rep. Gerry Connolly (D., Va.), who has become a leader in Congress on IT issues. “So no clear lines of authority, accountability, responsibility, there’s no transparency.”

Tech companies such as Amazon.com Inc., Oracle Corp. and Microsoft Corp. hope to provide the government more cloud computing, software and data services that could help save money as well as improve user experiences and reduce cyberthreats. Advocates of an overhaul also want to consolidate the current proliferation of email, payroll and other systems, as well as thousands of data centers. David Berteau, a former Defense Department assistant secretary, said he had to carry four separate mobile devices to communicate with all the Pentagon systems he had to access. “There’s a huge chance to save money on shared services and the cloud,” said Mr. Berteau, now president of the Professional Services Council, a group that promotes technology to improve government results. “The real value of IT modernization comes as much in breaking down the internal barriers” as in modernized services, he added.

The Monday meeting brought new focus to the issue, even if it shed little new light. Officials promised more action soon. “We’re embracing big change, bold thinking, and outsider perspectives to transform government and make it the way it should be, and at far less cost,” President Donald Trump said in concluding remarks.

Amazon’s Jeff Bezos talked of using commercial technology wherever possible. He said it was “impossible to overstate” the importance of artificial intelligence, according to a White House pool report Other topics included analytics, big data, purchasing modernization, government and private sector partnerships and high-skill visas. But making progress depends on finding political will. “The real problem is the leadership problem,” said Rep. Will Hurd (R., Texas), who is sponsoring a major IT modernization bill in Congress. “We have to make sure we have people in the agencies that recognize the need for modernization, and it starts with the head of the agency.”

The White House effort to push IT modernization could be a boon to major tech companies that have moved aggressively into cloud computing and software services. It could hurt some consulting firms that have traditionally focused on the government market. “I think the market is moving in a direction that says that more innovative companies are going to come in and break into the market,” said Mike Hettinger, an adviser to tech companies and a former senior Capitol Hill aide. Mr. Hurd’s bill would give agency officials more incentive to save money on IT by allowing them to spend the savings on modernization. The administration also has sought some increased investment in cybersecurity. – Wall Street Journal; **more in *Politico***

New shows featuring the likes of Ellen DeGeneres, Samantha Bee and Wonder Woman may soon be coming to Snapchat.

In a wide-ranging deal with Snap Inc., Time Warner Inc.’s Turner cable channels and the Warner Bros. studio will create up to 10 original shows a year for the ephemeral messaging app in genres including scripted drama and comedy, the companies said. The deal also includes a path for Time Warner’s premium network HBO to develop shows for the app.

Snap’s shows tend to run just three to five minutes, so traditional television companies, which are **eager to reach** Snapchat’s young user base, don’t view its efforts as a threat to their core pay-TV businesses. “You can envision a lot of really **compelling marketing and programming** that will drive viewership to our television and film content and new users for our emerging direct-to-consumer services,” said Gary Ginsberg, Time Warner’s executive vice president of corporate marketing and communications, in an interview.

The two-year deal marks one of the largest show development deals Snap has landed to date and shows how Snap is attempting to reinvent television for young, mobile users. In a video for the company’s roadshow before its public offering, Snap’s chief strategist, Imran Khan, framed Snap’s opportunity by highlighting how young people ages 18 to 24 have shifted their attention to mobile phones from traditional TV. “These users represent a big opportunity for us because they are harder to reach on traditional media, and they are often highly sought after by advertisers,” Mr. Khan said in the video. The $100 million deal encompasses Time Warner’s show investment for the app as well as an advertising commitment from HBO, Warner Bros. and its Turner networks. Time Warner’s sale to AT&T Inc. is pending with regulators.

Snap will keep 50% of the ad revenue from shows, while its media partners will keep the other half, The Wall Street Journal has previously reported. It is a less attractive split than what Snap offered earlier on for its “Discover” publisher platform, where at least some partners were allowed to keep 70%

of the ad revenue if they sold the ads. Time Warner's commitment is a vote of confidence for the young company as it seeks to convince investors its new advertising form will grow. Snap disappointed investors in May when its revenue, which comes almost entirely from advertising, surged from a year earlier, but declined sequentially for the first time.

Still, the app has become a darling for traditional media executives who are eager to reach younger viewers as traditional pay-TV cord-cutting accelerates. Snap has **already signed up** a variety of big media companies like Comcast Corp.'s NBCUniversal and CBS Corp. to create shows for its app, and its executives have taken a hands-on approach to curating its originals, advising traditional network executives on everything from plotlines to shooting angles. Media executives say early viewership metrics from Snap are promising. For example, Snap said that NBC's "The Voice" on Snapchat is up 45% in viewership in its second season. The app aims to air three shows a day by the end of the year, up from one currently. – ***Wall Street Journal***

How much faith do you have in government running things?

State Sen. John Eichelberger, a Blair County Republican, wants the government to handle publication of public notices, taking them away from media companies and putting them on a government-run website. Eichelberger introduced Senate Bill 745, which essentially gives the government the power to control its own notices. The bill was referred to the Senate Local Government Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Scott Wagner, R-York.

Like many organizations, we think that's bad policy and urge readers to tell their representatives to oppose it. Legal notices are valuable sources information that lets the public know about tax increases, public meetings, government projects and zoning laws, among others. Under current state law, local governments must post public notices in newspapers. You'll find them in most classified sections.

The Meadville Tribune charges for pubic notices, just like other companies do. However, moving notices to a government-run website will not eliminate costs or come free of charge. We think taxpayers still will be on the hook for the costs associated with gathering the information, writing the notices and posting them to a government site.

When we asked Republican state **Sen. Michele Brooks**, whose 50th District includes all of Crawford County, her stance on the bill, she declined to take a position on the bill in its current form, saying through a spokeswoman that the bill would likely be amended before a final version comes up for a vote. "I am sorry we cannot be more specific than that at this time, but she is trying to find that right balance between cost-savings and access to information," the spokeswoman said. "It's always important to find cost-savings, but I also believe it is important that information is transparent and accessible," Brooks said. If Brooks is, indeed, concerned with government being transparent and accessible, the answer is clear: a "no" vote.

We strongly believe it's in the public's best interest for all to have access to notices. In rural areas like Crawford County, internet access can vary, which would leave some in the dark on legal notices if Eichelberger's plan prevails. Many constituents in Brooks' district lack internet access, according to Brooks' spokeswoman. According to the National Telecommunications & Information Administration, online-only notices would eliminate access for up to one-third of our citizens, with up to 29 percent of Pennsylvanians not using the internet at all.

Pew Research found 36 percent of seniors do not using the internet at all, and 49 percent of seniors are without broadband access at home. In addition, a poll conducted in 2016 by American Opinion Research showed that 89 percent of Pennsylvania adults believe keeping the public informed through legal notice advertising is an important requirement for government. Also, that same study showed that 87 percent believe that keeping the public informed is a worthwhile use of government funds.

We also would like to point out that more than 82 percent of all Pennsylvania adults read a newspaper, in print or online, each week, according to the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association. We also agree with the association's assessment that the hacking of government websites is an increasing problem, and public notices must be in print, verifiable, and secure, in order to meet these requirements. Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Senate was the victim of a "ransomware" cyberattack that left democratic staff and legislators without access to their email or computer systems for weeks.

Pennsylvania's newspapers have already funded, and continue to fund and support, the statewide, searchable public notice database at **www.publicnoticepa.com**, at no additional cost to taxpayers or government. Newspapers across the state, like The Meadville Tribune, upload their notices to the site

	every day. In our view, Eichelberger's bill hurts the public. Notices should be as accessible as possible by the public. – ***Meadville Tribune*** **editorial**

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