

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
***EN BANC* HEARING ON BROADBAND AND THE DIGITAL FUTURE**
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
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My thanks, first of all, to Carnegie Mellon for hosting us this afternoon and evening. What a great place to explore our digital future—at an institution that has done so much to reshape and expand the bounds of technological possibility. Carnegie Mellon is the bridge to the future for one of the greatest manufacturing cities the world has ever known. Founded on a fortune built from steel and industrialization, this institution is in the vanguard leading Pittsburgh, leading the nation, helping lead other countries into the Digital Age. From hardware to software, from law to policy, from break-through vision to application, the ideas generated on this campus are shaping how technology guides all our lives. So it's exciting—and it's a real privilege—just to be here, and I look forward to a great session of listening and learning.

And it's always a pleasure and a privilege to be with my friend and your outstanding Congressman Mike Doyle. His vision and leadership and extraordinary service in so many areas, and particularly in the technology, broadband and Internet issues where I work with him, are another big reason why this city is moving ahead and showing the way. You know, we face enormous challenges to ensure that broadband technology is working for everyone in Pittsburgh and everyone across the country—to make sure that it creates jobs rather than destroys them, that low-cost access to a high-value Internet opens doors for children rather than a lack of access slamming those doors shut. Mike Doyle understands this and as he helps his fellow townspeople in Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas to harvest the opportunities created through modern telecommunications, he also helps us in Washington understand the importance of getting our approach right. I don't exaggerate one bit when I say that his tireless work on broadband and technology policy has been an incredibly important spur for both Congress and the FCC to work towards the realization of these objectives. I am honored to know him and work with him and to be here today in his home district to visit with him and with all of you.

We still have much to do in making the technology tools of the 21st century work for every American. And I always underline those two words: "every American." Because no matter who you are, where you live, how much money you make, whether you are young or old, rural or inner city, healthy or dealing with a disability, you will need—and you are entitled—to have these tools and services available to you. I think it's a civil right; I really do. The need to chart a path to the realization of that right is why we're here today.

Sitting at the FCC in Washington DC, it's all too easy to be lulled into believing that technology and broadband are issues that matter primarily to a handful of big companies—a few network operators, a few big trade associations, a few multi-billion dollar equipment manufacturers. Because these are the folks we hear from so often—often every day—and they are also the folks who can afford to hire fancy K Street

lawyers and deploy small armies of lobbyists at the FCC and on Capitol Hill. But the truth is that these issues are about each of us and all of us. We are all stakeholders, with a right to be heard, when it comes to charting our communications future. This is, after all, the stuff that is shaping how you and I are going to live our lives. Broadband matters to us as individuals, as human beings, as consumers, as small business owners, entrepreneurs, computer science professors and elementary school students, newspaper reporters and broadcast journalists, archeologists and astrophysicists, musicians and bloggers, coffee shop owners, producers, actors, and directors—the list is as long and broad as America. Broadband is reshaping how all of us communicate with each other and learn about the world around us. So we better get it right. That’s why we’re here today—to learn how you think we’re doing today and what more we need to be doing. We still have a lot to learn.

Some of you may have seen ESPN’s recent competition on what great American city should be called “Tittletown.” Certainly when we think of Pittsburgh many of us think of Terry Bradshaw and the Steelers, Willie Stargell and the Pirates, Mario Lemieux and the Penguins. But what should really come to mind is how this great sports town is transforming itself into a vibrant, high-tech city that can lead the country into the age of digital technology. So I’m looking forward to learning about this great city’s technological genius and how it can be channeled into overcoming the challenges that face all of us in the years ahead. Thanks again to Carnegie Mellon, Mike Doyle, all of our panelists, and each of you in the audience. Thanks again for having us and for coming today.