

**Prepared Remarks of Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission**

**Launch of the Knight Commission Report:
“Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age”**

**Washington, D.C.
October 2, 2009**

I would like to thank Alberto Ibarguen, Walter Isaacson, Marissa Mayer, Ted Olson, Peter Shane, and all the members of the Knight Commission, as well as Charlie Firestone and the Aspen Institute for inviting me to this important event. I would also like to thank my predecessors who are here today, former FCC Chairman Reed Hundt and Michael Powell.

This is a time of real change. The Internet and digital technologies are disrupting many industries -- including traditional news and media businesses -- while also creating new opportunities. But even as things change dramatically, some principles remain constant. One of those is the importance of meeting the informational needs of our communities -- to prepare our kids to participate fully in a digital world and ensure the health of our democracy in the 21st century.

And so this is an extremely important and timely report, following in the tradition of the Carnegie Commission on educational television 40 years ago, and other reports that had tremendous influence.

In an age when so much has been politicized, this bipartisan group -- including two former FCC chairs from different parties and with different perspectives -- has reached consensus on important analysis and recommendations. It's remarkable -- and deeply reassuring -- that such a broad cross-section of media, Internet, industry, and public sector experts has come to agreement on so much.

At the FCC, we hear loud and clear your assessment that we are at a critical juncture that requires new thinking and aggressive action. I certainly hope that private sector innovation meets many of the challenges identified in this report. At the same time, I look forward to the FCC playing a positive and constructive role in helping achieve the goals of the report -- including having smart and effective policies that incentivize innovation, competition, and business models that will support a healthy information society, and serve the real information needs of our communities.

There are so many helpful and constructive recommendations in the Knight Commission Report. I can state unequivocally that we agree with several of your observations: the need for universal broadband, the importance of digital literacy, and the need for a free and open Internet. This bipartisan report provides a crucial reminder that these goals are essential to the intellectual and economic nourishment of communities and to democratic governance. We are working hard on these fronts.

We will study this report very carefully, and look forward to working with the Knight Commission and its members on steps that would further these profoundly important goals.