

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

Future of Music Coalition Policy Summit

**Washington, D.C.
October 5, 2009**

I'd like to thank Jean Cook and Michael Bracy with the Future of Music Coalition for the invitation and for the stellar work they do for musicians through this organization.

I hope no one expects me to sing my remarks, or whip out a harmonica like former Commissioner Adelstein. Though I can't sing, and my guitar-playing days are behind me, I do want to discuss something that's been described to me as "music to the ears" of many artists and independent, creative people across the country -- and that's the preservation of the free and open Internet.

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, invoked an artistic metaphor when describing the essential openness of the Web. He called it "a blank canvas," where anyone could paint their ideas and pursue their inspiration, without obtaining prior permission from anybody else to do so. I believe we must keep the Internet open for the creativity and innovation that is just around the corner -- for the inventors, writers, and artists in basements, dorm rooms, and garages.

Music really does bring out the creativity in people. I'd like to share with you a riff on Net Neutrality developed by one of my staff members, a big Bruce Springsteen fan as you'll see.

He wasn't sure where exactly The Boss stands on Net Neutrality, but believes that everywhere from the *Streets of Philadelphia* to *My Hometown* in New York, every *Bobby Jean* and every *Jersey Girl* should be counting on the Internet remaining free and open, not *Counting on a Miracle*. They should count on *The Rising* of millions of voices to beat back any *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, or broadband *Badlands* that could threaten limited choice and create potential bottlenecks.

The people who built the Internet were working on more than a computer network, they were *Working on a Dream*. It was a network that was *Born to Run* in a land of open protocols, (the *Promised Land*). The Internet is more than an information highway, it is a telecom *Thunder Road* of wonderfully chaotic creativity and it will be a *Lonesome Day* if that is ever lost. But, hold on, *Janey, Don't You Lose Heart*, because the FCC will be taking up open Internet rules in the near future.

I am grateful for the multitudes of artists -- including musicians, songwriters, and other creative voices -- who are coming forward to say they have a *Hungry Heart* for a free and open Internet, who will shout "*No Surrender*" when it is threatened.

This exhausts Springsteen song title references except to say that the policy fight over Net Neutrality will be a *Jungleland* out there -- and everyone should be involved in our public FCC process. Open Internet rules will be considered as part of a multi-month rulemaking process that the Commission will begin later this month. You can find information and participate at www.OpenInternet.gov.

Now, why is the adoption of fair rules of the road -- Net Neutrality rules -- so important? Well, the artists, songwriters, and independent producers in the music industry know better than most. For example, at a recent public workshop held at the FCC we heard Alex Shapiro who discussed how the Internet allows her to manage her career even from rural Washington State.

Let me read from her testimony: "My name is Alex Shapiro, and I'm a composer. My use of the Internet has significantly shaped the evolution of my career, and has allowed me to reach audiences around the world, obtain commissions, and sell recordings and scores -- all from a fairly isolated outpost on a bridge-less island in Washington State."

Her point is an essential one. You don't have to be Bruce Springsteen to reach your audience on the Internet. You can be an independent artist on an island -- whether literal or musical -- and reach everyone who has an Internet connection.

With a free and open Internet, you don't have to have big-time, star-power leverage over record labels, publishing companies, commercial radio stations, or particular retailers to get your music to the public. In today's broadband world, the artists themselves can be self-empowering - they are free to connect with audiences, paying customers, and musical social networks in ways previously unimaginable.

Most importantly, Net Neutrality permits independent artists and independent labels to compete on an equal technological playing field with the biggest companies in the space. That's the American way -- letting Internet users, the broadest group possible of ordinary people, decide who wins and loses.

I want to emphasize that none of the principles I am proposing the Commission adopt will constrain efforts to ensure a safe, secure, and spam-free Internet experience, or to enforce the law. I believe that the enforcement of copyright and the obligations of network openness can and must co-exist. And I am encouraged that technologists and entrepreneurs in the music industry are exploring ways to implement legal, licensed platforms for music.

There are some wonderful examples of artists and independent labels using the Internet to earn a living, make money, and maintain artistic control over their careers and enterprises. Erin McKeown has been doing live webcast concerts from her house in rural Massachusetts as a way of raising money to produce her new album. We have seen the success of independent labels too. Because of the free and open Internet, Merge Records has been able to have dynamic top 10 acts -- such as Arcade Fire and Spoon -- without relying upon commercial radio play.

So, we have much to work on together to preserve the free and open Internet.

But freedom and openness alone is not enough for the millions of Americans who do not have access to high-speed Internet. And so I want to emphasize for you the importance of the FCC's work on broadband.

As part of the Recovery Act, Congress and the President tasked the FCC with developing a National Broadband Plan for the country and that strategy is due in February. Achieving universal broadband access, increasing the rates of broadband use, and putting broadband to work on the major challenges facing this country -- like health care, education, and energy -- is essential to this country's future.

Simply put, broadband is the major infrastructure challenge of our generation -- the platform for economic growth, technological innovation, and individual opportunity. It's increasingly vital for everybody to be part of a connected broadband nation. Just as an example, already, 75 percent of Fortune 500 companies now only list available job openings online.

Moreover, earlier this year, a survey of 7,500 people by the country music industry's trade organization revealed a disconcerting fact: Only 50 percent of core country fans have Internet access at home. For country artists, this means 50 percent of their market is currently unreachable online.

We welcome everyone's participation in the process of developing a National Broadband Plan. You can find out more at www.Broadband.gov.

I want to salute the many artists who have already signed up to publicly lend their voice in support of Net Neutrality --- including artists from R.E.M., Pearl Jam, OK Go, Wilco, and many, many more. Thank you.

I want to emphasize that I intend to work collaboratively with all of my Commission colleagues. Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn, and Baker all bring valuable perspectives to these endeavors and I look forward to their insights and input.

None of us can imagine what tomorrow's innovators will bring into being. But if we follow through in protecting the free and open Internet and in achieving universal broadband, we can be confident that the dreamers nobody has ever heard of who need an open platform to bring their vision to life -- the grad student in a lab today, the group of kids in a college dorm, the inventor in the proverbial garage -- will each have a realistic shot at seeing their dreams become reality.

And that's worth singing about. Thank you all for inviting me.