

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

“Consumers, Transparency and the Open Internet” Workshop

**Tuesday, January 19, 2010
Washington, D.C.**

Thank you Joel, and thanks to both you and Julie Knapp for putting this workshop together. It’s great to see the heads of our Consumer Bureau and our Office of Engineering and Technology collaborating on this important event.

I’m pleased that Commission staff is holding this workshop on consumers, transparency, and the open Internet as part of our open Internet proceeding. At its core, this proceeding is about protecting and empowering consumers and preserving users’ control over the Internet. When we talk about Internet consumers and users, we mean not only an individual consumer subscribing to a fixed or mobile broadband service, but also an engineer in a garage or at a start-up company who is developing and deploying a new application over the Internet.

Specifically, this proceeding is about preserving consumers’ freedom to access lawful content and applications of their choosing over the Internet; produce and distribute content; and innovate without permission to create new businesses, services, and opportunities that no one has dreamed of yet.

Now, all of the principles we have proposed have a common purpose: to benefit consumers. But the sixth principle of transparency is particularly important for consumer protection and empowerment. I strongly believe consumers benefit from free and competitive markets, and that access to information is essential to properly functioning markets. I also believe that policies around information disclosure -- like the nutrition and calorie labels on food, and gas mileage estimates on automobiles -- can be enormously helpful in ensuring that markets are working.

I also believe sunlight is the best disinfectant, and that making network management practices clear and transparent to consumers can help discourage problematic behavior and minimize disputes. Transparency will not be alone sufficient to protect the open Internet, but I’m optimistic that it can do a lot of the work.

Based on the reaction to the sixth principle, it seems I’m not the only one who feels this way. We’re still reviewing the comments from the 120,000 people and organizations that have submitted filings, but we know that a large and diverse group of commenters believe that transparency can go far to preserve the Internet’s openness. A variety of stakeholders weighed in with positive comments on the proposed transparency principle, including a number of major broadband providers and a constructive joint filing from Verizon and Google. This support for transparency is an encouraging example of the growing common ground in our open Internet proceeding.

Consumers and transparency are central to this workshop and our open Internet proceeding, but they're also at the center of a number of other proceedings here at the Commission. Transparency and disclosure regarding broadband performance is a key issue for the National Broadband Plan. And we have opened a Notice of Inquiry into consumer disclosure issues for all telecommunications services, which is a top priority.

I am thrilled with the very impressive group of participants who have come here today, and I'd like to mention a couple of them. Chairman Jon Leibowitz of the Federal Trade Commission is a tremendous advocate for consumers, and deeply knowledgeable about open Internet issues, which he has worked on as a Commissioner at the FTC and now as its Chairman. The FCC is engaged with the FTC on these issues, which are important to both of our missions.

We are also very pleased to have the Honorable Konrad von Finckenstein, Chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) here. The CRTC promulgated an open Internet policy last year to prevent discriminatory network management practices and increase transparency, and I'm looking forward to learning from the CRTC's experience.

We are also joined today by consumer advocates, broadband service providers, content and application providers, and developers of transparency and information tools. Engineering and technical issues are central to today's workshop, so it's good to see that Julie Knapp, Chief of our Office of Engineering and Technology, is moderating this workshop along with Joel Gurin, and that we have several engineers among our panelists.

I look forward to learning from all of you here today.

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