Video Remarks of Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission

FCC Workshop:
"Approaches to Preserving the Open Internet"

Seattle, Washington
April 28, 2010

Thank you Senator Cantwell and Representative Inslee for your thoughtful and important remarks. With these two leaders in government, the people of Seattle and Washington have powerful, committed supporters of a free and open Internet representing them.

I'd like to thank the extraordinary panelists and members of the public who have come here today to participate in this open workshop, and those who are participating online.

I'm very pleased that we are holding this workshop in Seattle. So much Internet innovation and investment happens here, both at the edge of communications networks -- eCommerce, mobile apps, online media -- and at the core, including major communications service providers.

And it was just a few hours south of here on the I-5-in Hillsboro, Oregon that Comcast's secret blocking of lawful Internet traffic was discovered -- by an engineer and former police officer who loves barbershop quartets and simply wanted to share lawful music clips with others. That experience and others made clear that an Internet in the dark runs too great a risk of becoming a closed Internet -- with substantial costs to our ability to lead the world in innovation and freedom.

Which brings us to today's workshop.

As a unanimous FCC said last month in our Joint Statement on Broadband, "Working to make sure that America has world-leading high-speed broadband networks-both wired and wireless-lies at the very core of the FCC's mission in the 21st century."

As part of this mission, for several months we've been conducting a fact-based, participatory process to develop basic rules of the road to preserve the free and open Internet to drive innovation, investment and competition, to protect and empower consumers, and to ensure new voices can continue to be heard online.

A key part of our process has been open workshops in Cambridge, Mass., a number in Washington, D.C., and now here in Seattle to learn from engineers, innovators, economic and legal experts, and Internet users; to understand your ideas and your concerns.

The record so far has shown broad consensus that Internet freedom and openness has been integral to its success, and substantial common ground on key issues, including:

- the FCC has a central role in preserving Internet freedom and openness;
- the importance of transparency;
- the unacceptability of blocking access to lawful content or apps;
- that reasonable network management is, well, reasonable;
- that open Internet is about lawful content; and
- that an open Internet can and should coexist with enforcement of copyright and other laws.

The question now is: how best to ensure that openness continues?

Today's workshop will look at how we can best preserve openness. What would happen to the Internet's openness without basic rules of the road? What are other countries doing? How can the rules we've put forward be improved?

The recent court decision was, of course, an unfortunate development. But it has done nothing to weaken my unwavering commitment to ensuring that the free and open Internet is preserved and protected. Doing so is crucial for the health of our broadband ecosystem; crucial to the health of our economy, and our democracy; crucial for ensuring free speech and for new speakers continue to flourish online; and crucial for ensuring that the student coding in his dorm room at the University of Washington right now, or the inventor tinkering in her garage in Renton, can create the next great, world-changing innovation.

I look forward to learning from today's discussion.

Watch video online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUjkjQ31zSM