



NEWS

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STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS ON THE LAUNCH OF DIGITALLITERACY.GOV

“I applaud the cross-governmental effort led by NTIA and the Department of Education to create a portal that will connect citizens to educational materials to build the necessary digital literacy skills necessary for success in the 21st century. I am glad that the FCC was a partner in this effort because we know all too well that broadband intersects with just about every great challenge confronting our nation today—be it creating jobs, expanding equal opportunity, providing quality education, overcoming our costly energy dependence, ensuring health care for everyone, maintaining a nourishing environment, empowering people with disabilities, restoring our global competitiveness, and making sure we have the news and information that our country’s democratic dialogue requires to sustain itself. There is no solution for any of these challenges that does not have a broadband component to it. Economic recovery and job creation depend upon all of us having the information tools we need to develop ourselves, find opportunity, and help our nation compete.

“Getting broadband out to all our citizens is not just something that would be nice for us to do. It is something essential for us to do if we want to provide individuals the opportunity to live productive and fulfilling lives in the Twenty-first century and something equally imperative if we want our country to have a competitive edge in this challenging world. This is why I am an ardent supporter of the new literacies—digital literacy, media literacy and news literacy. It’s crucial that meaningful support is given to educate our citizens about how important this is to their futures and that they must learn how to navigate the awesome power of the Internet. It’s crucial that, with the proliferation of websites, our young people—and us elders, too—can distinguish between trustworthy and not-so-trusty places on the Net and that we provide our young citizens the education they need to create media and to be their own editors. And it’s crucial that our new town square of democracy, which will be paved with broadband bricks, is open to all and accessible by all.

“We all remember that famous quote from Thomas Jefferson who, when talking about newspapers—the broadband of its time—said that, if given the choice, he would prefer newspapers without government over a government without newspapers. But that wasn’t all he said. Jefferson went on to say, ‘But I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them.’ At this critical juncture two hundred years later we would be wise to heed that advice. It is absolutely critical that we extend the power of broadband to all corners and with it advance our democracy. I urge all relevant stakeholders to explore DigitalLiteracy.gov and thank those responsible for this achievement.”