

Conversations with FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski
September 10, 2009

Congress has given the FCC a very important responsibility around Broadband. Congress and the President asked the FCC to draft a National Broadband Strategy for the United States. Here's why that's so important. Broadband is our generation's major infrastructure challenge. It's for us what railroads, highways and electricity were to past generations. Broadband, high speed internet, I believe will be our country's platform for economic growth, opportunity, for job creation, for innovation. Our platform for helping solve so many vital challenges for our country from healthcare, to energy, to education, public safety. Broadband will also be a platform for bringing government into the twenty-first century. For making sure the government communicates better with the American people, encourages broad participation in all government proceedings, uses data effectively for the public, ultimately provides better services for less cost.

The FCC I believe, needs to be a twenty-first century agency for the Information Age. We need to find ways to use New Media and technology to perform the important functions that we have at the FCC. When I think about what that means, I think it's in three different categories. So first is using New Media and technology to communicate effectively. Second is participation: using communications and technology to encourage the widest possible participation in what the FCC does. We're doing that with some of the tools that I mentioned, Blogband, Broadband.gov, we'll be launching very soon IdeaScale. We're looking for all the ways we can to take advantage of New Media and technology to harness the expertise we have all over the country around communications, from small businesses all over the country, individual citizens, people at academic institutions. There are so many people who have something to add to FCC proceedings. Ordinary consumers who have a view on the way that our communications infrastructure, communications devices affect their lives. So I've spoken about using New Media and technology to communicate more effectively, using New Media and technology to encourage participation. The third is thinking about data. We have launched a data review at the FCC where we're looking at the data that the FCC collects and we're asking, "Are we collecting the right data to do our job? Is there data that we should be collecting that we're not? Is there data that we are collecting that we don't need to collect?" Let's make sure that we have the data we need to do our jobs at the FCC.

If I could say one thing that I'd like to make sure the FCC does it would be to unleash the power of innovators and entrepreneurs in the United States. In fact that's why one of the very first things we did as a Commission in my time as Chairman so far has been to focus on innovation and investment. We launched a Notice of Inquiry last week. It's the beginning of a proceeding at the FCC focused on innovation and investment in the wireless space. Wireless because we have a huge opportunity in mobile to lead the world. And we asked in this proceeding, "What can we do at the FCC to best promote innovation and investment in the United States? What aren't we doing that we should do? What are we doing that we should stop doing? The FCC has unique responsibilities around spectrum and I'd like to see us make sure we're handling that responsibility in a way that best promotes innovation and investment in wireless and throughout the broad communications infrastructure in the United States.