

FCC One Pager

As we all work to expand broadband access for all Americans, there is a unique opportunity to leverage existing television screens, as a bridge to the benefits of new and valuable broadband information. In many homes without broadband, the television is the primary portal for video news and information. The emergence and continued expansion of broadband video can now make it possible to provide convenient access to a very diverse set of content, in a form factor that is accessible on existing televisions in consumer homes. As such, our drive for broadband access should not be limited to delivering content and information just to the computer, but also to the television. With this approach, broadband delivered video can be used to bridge the digital divide and allow those without computers to access more broadband information. While broadband video consumption continues to grow, the number of households that benefit from this development is not growing. The government can help bring underprivileged households into the broadband era by supporting the delivery of valuable online content to a screen that they already own.

Broadband video is well positioned to drive more diverse and valuable programming to consumers. This can provide more affordable and targeted access to content in general, including programming around education, public safety, health care, economic and other national priorities that are relevant to the entire population. Broadband is a better vehicle for delivering content that is specific to a particular group of consumers, whereas a broadcast network is ideal for disseminating more general content. In the end, consumers will have more choice and control over the content that they receive in an open broadband video era. The FCC can enhance this positive development by providing the necessary support to ensure that valuable educational and children's programming is made available through incentives to broadband video providers.

As we consider our options for continuing the expansion of broadband access, it is important to support the unrestrained growth of broadband video as a consumer alternative. We should ensure that broadband video access is not limited in homes by the broadband service providers for competitive reasons. We should also be careful not to limit broadband video access with antiquated regulations or policies that were developed in the analog multichannel video era. The government was successful at encouraging the growth of internet commerce by limiting taxation and regulation. The same approach should be taken with broadband video.

There are many challenges that remain for broadband video. The cost of delivery is still relatively high, the economic models that will be sustainable are not yet clear and popular commercial content is still not widely available and is expensive. Despite these limitations, broadband video usage continues to accelerate. As outlined, there are great benefits to thinking more broadly about broadband to include video access. We are hopeful that support for broadband video will be a key priority in the National Broadband Plan.