

2008 Quello Communications Law and Policy Symposium

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY IN AN IP ENVIRONMENT

National Press Club

Washington, D.C., April 23, 2008

Time	Session topic
1:00-1:10	Introduction
1:10-2:40	Infrastructure Access: Fairness and Efficiency Next-generation IP-based networks will most likely be more strongly differentiated into a transportation layer and an application and services layer. This has contributed to a heated debate on network neutrality. However, many of the current arguments overlook the inherent interdependence between content and applications and the fact that platform providers and content and application providers are often dependent on each other. In the emerging environment of inter-modal competition between multiple broadband platforms, the interests of platform providers and content providers will often be aligned but sometimes at odds. Is the possibility of such frictions sufficient reason to mandate certain non-discrimination principles or may they be dealt with more efficiently on a case by case basis? Will the absence of non-discrimination bias the evolution of technical network architectures toward more closed approaches that may hamper innovation in the long run? How will we best handle massive amounts of traffic as multimedia applications proliferate? Under which conditions will there be sufficient investment in next-generation infrastructure to close the gap that has opened to other nations? Under what conditions can small innovators at the content and applications layer flourish? How should horizontal and vertical interconnection arrangements be established in IP networks? Are existing rules applicable and if not, what might replace them?
2:40-3:00	Coffee Break
3:00-4:30	Serving the Public Interest in Next Generation Media Even when media were one-way vehicles for delivering content to media consumers, identifying the public's interest in media services and crafting policies to address that interest posed conceptual and logistical challenges that were never fully resolved—a situation abundantly evident in the current clash of opinions over ownership policies for commercial media and the funding and oversight of public broadcasting. These challenges are considerably amplified by the emergence of a plethora of new media services delivered via IP-based networks. Should the new services allay concerns with concentrations of power that have featured so prominently in the policy debates over traditional media as some would argue, or are trends toward concentration that some see in the digital arena cause for heightened concern as others contend? With new media, users are both sources as well as recipients of information? What are the policy interests in the types of services and user-to-user relationships this new functionality has unleashed? Failures of commercial media to adequately supply socially-important information services is the traditional rationale for public broadcasting. Will there be similar unmet public needs in a future dominated by IP-based services? If so, how should policy respond?
4:30-5:00	Keynote address
5:00-6:00	Reception