



NYS Broadband Flash Bulletin

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FCC Releases 2012 Report on Consumer Wireline Broadband

The FCC released its second *Measuring Broadband America Report*, a nationwide performance study of residential wireline broadband service. The July 2012 Report contains the most recent results from the FCC's Measuring Broadband America program, an ongoing, nationwide performance study of residential broadband performance in the U.S. The study involves actual performance tests for thousands of subscribers of Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

The Measuring Broadband America program developed out of a recommendation by the National Broadband Plan to improve the availability of information for consumers about their broadband service. It is part of a comprehensive series of initiatives that draw upon cooperation between the Commission, industry, and other stakeholders to promote transparency and ensure that consumers get the information they need to make informed marketplace decisions and to effectively manage communications subscriptions and services.

The 2012 Report provides an update on data collected in the FCC's initial Measuring Broadband America Report, released in August 2011. According to the 2012 report, in just one year, ISPs have improved in both their ability to deliver what they promise to their customers, and in the overall speeds they can and are delivering. The following three primary improvements in residential broadband service are identified in the new report and listed below:

- ISP promises of performance are more accurate.**
Accurate delivery of advertised performance by ISPs has improved overall. Five ISPs now routinely deliver nearly one hundred percent or greater of the speed advertised to the consumer even during time periods when bandwidth demand is at its peak. In the August 2011 Report, only two ISPs met this level of performance. In 2011, the average ISP delivered 87 percent of advertised download speed during peak usage periods; in 2012, that jumped to 96 percent. Consumers today are experiencing performance more closely aligned with what is advertised than they experienced one year ago.
- ISPs are more consistent in their ability to deliver advertised speeds.**
Differences among ISPs in their ability to deliver advertised speeds are now smaller. Last year's results showed wide variances between top performers and bottom performers in meeting advertised speeds. The standard deviation for download speed across all technologies dropped from 14.4 percent, as computed from the August 2011 Report, to 12.2 percent in the 2012 Report. This 15 percent reduction is an indication that ISPs are delivering significantly more uniform performance than they were a year ago.
- Consumers are subscribing to faster speed tiers and receiving faster speeds.**
On average, customers subscribed to faster speed tiers in 2012 than in 2011. This is a result of both upgrades by ISPs to their network as well as some migration of consumers to higher speed services. During the testing period for the August 2011 Report, the average speed tier was 11.1 Mbps; for the 2012 Report, it increased to 14.3 Mbps, an almost 30 percent increase in just one year. Because ISPs also did a better job in the testing period for this report of meeting or exceeding their advertised speeds, the actual increase in experienced speed by consumers was even greater than the increase in advertised speed—from 10.6 Mbps to 14.6 Mbps—an almost 38% improvement over the one year period.

Although the study focuses on the most popular service tiers within a company and not on the maximum speeds that may be offered by ISPs, the FCC is encouraged to see that higher and higher speed tiers are becoming available to consumers. Last year, the fastest service tier that was popular enough to be included in testing was 35 Mbps. In this year's report, two ISPs had tiers in excess of 35 Mbps that were sufficiently popular to be included in the survey, and many ISPs have begun to introduce tiers of 100 Mbps and higher for consumer use.

The FCC believes that the August 2011 Report was a significant factor in improvements in ISP delivery of advertised speeds. Since the release of that Report, the Commission has continued to engage in discussions with the participating ISPs. Over the past year, there have been significant investments by ISPs in their networks, and the gap between advertised and actual speeds narrowed. Almost across the board, the July 2012 Report shows that ISPs are doing a better job of delivering what they promise to their customers today than they did a year ago.

To view the full report visit <http://www.fcc.gov/measuring-broadband-america/2012/july>.

FCC Kicks Off Connect America Fund

On July 25, the FCC announced that it will spend \$115 million in the next three years to bring high-speed Internet to 400,000 residents and businesses in rural parts of the 37 U.S. states that don't currently have access.

The money is part of the FCC's Connect America Fund project, which works to bring broadband to rural areas that lack access to broadband Internet. The goal is to connect 7 million unserved rural Americans to broadband in six years, and puts the nation on a path to connect all 19 million unserved residents by 2020.

The Connect America Fund was created last year when the FCC overhauled its Universal Service Fund, which focused on ensuring telephone access. The money for this Fund comes from charges on consumers' monthly phone bill.

As per the release, expanding broadband Internet access has been one of the FCC's top priorities under Chairman Julius Genachowski.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said "today's action is just the beginning of our efforts to unleash the benefits of broadband for millions of homes and small businesses in unserved rural communities across the U.S. In today's economy, broadband is a vital platform for innovation and opportunity, including jobs, education, and health-care."



The companies that accepted the subsidies from the first phase of the "Connect America Fund" also will be required to independently invest in the network infrastructure. The FCC didn't disclose how much broadband providers will invest, but says in a statement that it could be in "tens of millions of dollars." To be eligible for the subsidy, Internet providers agree to follow oversight procedures, including reports on how the money was spent.

Frontier Communications will receive the largest amount from the fund after agreeing to extend broadband service to about 200,000 customers in 16 states. CenturyLink, based in Monroe, La., will expand service in 22 states, the FCC says.

To read the full press release visit http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db0725/DOC-315413A1.pdf.

To learn more about the Connect America Fund, visit <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/connecting-america>.

The U.S. Department of Labor Joins the Connect2Compete Broadband Program

A nonprofit program focused on making broadband available to low-income U.S. residents has added a job-training partner to its roster and will increase its focus on using broadband to train and search for jobs, officials announced Monday.

[Connect2Compete](#) (C2C), a nonprofit supported by the FCC along with more than [40 non-profit and private-sector partners](#), will work with the U.S. Department of Labor to provide digital literacy training at nearly 2,800 employment and training centers operated by the agency. C2C will train employees at the agency's American Job Centers on the nonprofit's services, including discounted broadband service and refurbished laptops.

In addition, C2C will launch a nationwide digital literacy database, available both online and through a toll-free phone call, and promoted by a nationwide advertising campaign by the Ad Council, officials said. The database will launch later this year.

"Digital literacy programs are important because U.S. residents lacking computer skills are missing out on many services," FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said during a press conference. "Offline Americans are missing out on education opportunities, health care opportunities, and, yes, job opportunities."

"Connecting all Americans and teaching them digital skills is critical to reducing unemployment," he added. "There is growing evidence of a skills mismatch in America."

About 66 million U.S. residents have no computer skills, said Hilda Solis, U.S. Secretary of Labor. Solis called for "equality and justice" in access to digital training programs.

To view this complete article visit http://www.cio.com/article/711077/Broadband_Program_Adds_More_Digital_Literacy_Training.

For more information on the Connect2Compete Program visit <http://www.connect2compete.org/>.

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