



Next TV
NCTA: Mobile
Access May Not Be
Robust Enough for
Remote Learning

Associated Press
Nielsen, networks
clash on stats
showing fewer
viewers

Fierce Video
Orby TV, defunct
satellite service, still
owes millions to
programmers
Allentown Morning
Call
If you start getting
more robocalls and
text messages,
here's why

Next TV
Now Hear This: Rep.
Eshoo Presses FCC
on Calm Act
Enforcement

Associated Press
Facebook users can
appeal harmful
content to oversight
board

TVNewsCheck
Tirico To Host NBC
Coverage Of Tokyo
Games From
Outdoor Set

Associated Press
Pa. voters to weigh
in on government
pandemic power
struggle

The FCC is encouraging the public to use its broadband speed test app, which not only provides users the data on their home and mobile broadband speeds, but sends the data to the FCC as well.

That came in a release Monday appropriately titled: "FCC ENCOURAGES PUBLIC TO USE ITS SPEED TEST APP TO MEASURE THEIR BROADBAND SPEEDS." The FCC is trying to collect more accurate data on broadband availability so it can produce more accurate maps to help guide the billions of dollars it regularly hands out in broadband deployment subsidies and the billions more it will be handing out under COVID-19 aid packages.

It could also help guide the Biden Administration's apparent new focus on the definition of broadband availability, which includes not just where service is available, but whether it is fast enough and affordable enough. Acting FCC chair Jessica Rosenworcel signaled that was part of the effort as well, saying the test will help the FCC determine where broadband is "truly" available. "To close the gap between digital haves and have nots, we are working to build a comprehensive, user-friendly dataset on broadband availability," she said. "Expanding the base of consumers who use the FCC Speed Test app will enable us to provide improved coverage information to the public and add to the measurement tools we're developing to show where broadband is truly available throughout the United States."

The FCC app is available in the Google Play store and the Apple App Store. The FCC said it will protect the "privacy and confidentiality" of the data. The app promotion came the same day the Biden White House was pushing its infrastructure bill by suggesting that broadband availability included speed, cost and competition, not just service reaching homes. – ***Next TV***

YouTube TV is less than a year removed from a 30% price hike and now the live streaming TV service is rolling out some deep discounts to attract new subscribers. **TV Answer Man's Phillip Swann** spotted at least two different discounted promotional deals, one that knocks the price down to \$45 per month for the first month and another that sets the price at \$55 per month for the first three months.

The deals appear to only be available to new users, and the price reverts back to \$65 per month after the promotional period. The new deals from YouTube TV come along shortly after the service was announced as a partner for T-Mobile, which is offering YouTube TV for \$10 off per month for 12 months to its current TVision subscribers and wireless customers. YouTube TV is also available at discounted promotional rates for Verizon's Fios and 5G customers.

Last year, YouTube TV raised its monthly rate from \$50 to \$65 shortly after adding eight Viacom channels including Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, BET and MTV. "We don't take these decisions lightly and realize how hard this is for our members. That said, this new price reflects the rising cost of content and we also believe it reflects the complete value of YouTube TV, from our breadth of content to the features that are changing how we watch live TV," the company wrote in a blog post.

Earlier this year, YouTube TV said it will introduce a new add-on option that gives subscribers access to 4K content. The company didn't specify a launch date or a price for the add-on 4K package but it say that users will be able to download 4K content to their DVR to watch later offline. The option will also add unlimited concurrent streams at home. Google said YouTube TV ended the third quarter of 2020 with more than 3 million subscribers but hasn't provided an updated count since October. – ***Fierce Video***

There may be nothing more nerve-wracking for a member of Congress than redistricting, when the once-a-decade redrawing of district boundaries injects a dose of uncertainty into their political careers.

In Pennsylvania, redrawing the districts to correspond with population shifts identified by the 2020 census will have a particularly unpredictable effect on congressional districts, since the state is expected to lose a district. That means there will be 17 districts for 18 incumbent U.S. House members from Pennsylvania when next year's elections roll around, raising the question of whose district will disappear and whose political career could be upended. "I think the first question that everybody asks is, 'Is anybody retiring?'" said Ryan Costello, a former three-term congressman from Chester County.

By the end of April, the U.S. Census Bureau is releasing the first numbers from the 2020 census, including the state population count that determines how many congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets. If that confirms projections that Pennsylvania will lose a seat, it will be the 10th consecutive decade that the Keystone State has lost clout in Congress and presidential contests as its population growth continues to lag behind the nation's.

A new map of districts must win approval from the Republican-controlled Legislature and Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, and the districts they draw could have a dramatic effect on the political careers of the state's 18 U.S. House members. If each of the 18 wants to run for another term in Congress, two of them will have to run against each other. What they have to look forward to is a bare-knuckled political exercise in a state Capitol where partisan disagreements over how the pandemic and last year's election were handled have sown a particularly poisonous atmosphere.

A new map is necessary before it is time to circulate petitions to get on next year's primary ballot. If Wolf and lawmakers can't agree on one, the state Supreme Court will do it for them. "What is this map about? Power," said Jim Burn, a former state Democratic Party chair. "I would fall out of my seat if (Wolf and GOP lawmakers) worked it out. That's why I think the court will have to take the lead in working it out again."

Courts have gotten involved in at least the last three redistricting rounds, to some extent, including ordering the map redrawn in 2018 after ruling that Republicans had unconstitutionally gerrymandered it six years earlier to benefit their party's candidates. What makes Republicans nervous is that the state Supreme Court has a 5-2 Democratic majority.

The most practical place to eliminate a district is where the population is stagnant: northern and western Pennsylvania. But by all accounts, it is too early for backroom political fights over which district must disappear. "Everything's speculation and conjecture at this point," said Sam DeMarco, chair of the Allegheny County Republican Party.

Redistricting data necessary to drawing districts that are equal in population — they include counts of population by race, Hispanic origin, gender and housing at geographic levels as small as neighborhoods — isn't expected to be released by the Census Bureau until August, at the earliest. As a result, the question of how the new map will look hasn't come up too often in conversations, said Democratic U.S. Rep. Brendan Boyle, of Philadelphia.

Rather, the discussion tends to revolve around whether next year's primary will be pushed back because of the delay in census data or whether courts will ultimately decide the next map, Boyle said. Of particular interest is speculation that a member of Congress — if not several — will run for higher office and thus reduce the number of incumbents lobbying state lawmakers for favorable district lines.

In next year's election, Pennsylvania has two very attractive lures for ambitious politicians: a U.S. Senate seat and governor's office that are opening up in 2023. Typically, partisan map drawers strive to give each incumbent of their party a district where they live and have at least a reasonable shot at winning another term. If an incumbent decides to retire or run for higher office, map drawers become far more likely to eliminate that district, or at least

substantially change it to accommodate the wishes of incumbents who plan to run again. "That seat then gets a little bit deprioritized," Costello said, "because each of the political parties is going to go to bat for each of their incumbents first, not for a seat that nobody's in." – ***Pennlive***



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