

Philadelphia Inquirer
[The taming of the dingo: Wising up on net neutrality](#)

Los Angeles Times
[Op-ed: Republicans' net neutrality bill hints at a middle ground](#)

Dow Jones
[Sprint: No objection to possible broadband reclassification](#)

Los Angeles Times
[Are you ready to go without the Dodgers on TV again next season?](#)

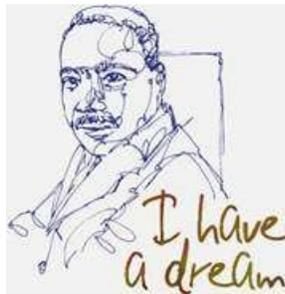
Philadelphia Daily News
[Tom Wolf's moon, stars, challenges](#)

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
[Gift ban would benefit Wolf & GOP](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer
[Lots of familiar faces in Wolf administration](#)

pennlive.com
[Op-ed: Enjoy the honeymoon while you can, Gov-elect Wolf - the hard work starts Wednesday](#)

Philadelphia Daily News
[Editorial: The Freeze Must Thaw](#)



The way people watch TV continues to change. More people are cutting the cord and dumping cable for online video streaming services like Netflix. For the first time ever, cable companies have more Internet broadband subscribers than TV service subscribers, according to the Leichtman Research Group. Watching live sports online, however, has been elusive until now. Dish Network Corp. recently unveiled plans to sell a package of channels including ESPN that are streamed over the Internet starting at \$20 a month. The availability of ESPN as part of the Internet package addresses a major reason people were reluctant to cut the cord — live sports.

Top 10 Reasons Why Ironton Telephone Should be your Telecom Partner:

1. Over 105 Years in Business
2. Over 15 Years Porting Experience
3. Partnered with Several PA MSO's
4. Certified in PA, many other States and Canada.
5. Supports All Current & Future Technologies (NCS & SIP)
6. Interconnect Connections, 911 and Trunking in Place
7. Number Resources for All Areas Available
8. Local, Long Distance & 800 Services
9. Business Grade Cloud Based Phone Systems
10. Level 1 and Level 2 Support for MSO's

Call Today For More Information

610-799-0232

Or email us
cbrady@ironton.com

www.ironton.com

Larry Shewack, general manager of Service Electric in Wilkes-Barre, doesn't think Dish is offering enough variety in sports channels for people to be ready to "cut the cord," however. "Everyone watches something different," Mr. Shewack said. "One channel of sports isn't going a to be a major changer. People watch a lot of sports, multiple channels of sports. I don't think it's enough sports to go that route." NFL games are still blocked on mobile devices because Verizon has those rights.

While the industry technology is moving toward streaming and the Dish package offers ESPN, Mr. Shewack said he expects it will be many years before there is any real effect. "I think you would see more if there was more sports available," he said. "I don't think you're going to see that any time in the near future."

Mr. Shewack said a popular Service Electric package starts at \$39 for basic Internet and cable. He has been seeing the younger generation move toward

streaming through players like Netflix, but he doesn't think there is enough programming available to satisfy everyone. "People watch many things. It's surprising what people watch," Mr. Shewack said, adding streaming still does not offer enough variety. "People like to watch a lot of stuff that is not available on the Internet."

Dish said it isn't worried that its current subscribers will cancel satellite service in favor of the cheaper Internet package. Rather, Dish is hoping to lure those who don't pay for TV channels at all because they find it too expensive. "A lot of big incumbents don't like change, but everything else is changing around you," says Joe Clayton, Dish's CEO. "Technology is broadening the consumer viewing opportunity, and they are taking advantage of that."

Sony Corp. also has an Internet television service, PlayStation Vue, expected to debut by the end of March, with channels from Viacom, Discovery, CBS, Fox, NBCUniversal and Scripps. HBO and Showtime already have announced plans for stand-alone Internet offerings, and CBS launched one in October. Those are limited in live sports, though, given that ESPN has rights to many of the leading leagues. The \$20 price for Dish's basic package will be far cheaper than what people would pay for a cable or satellite. Dish said its average monthly bill is about \$85.

Dish says it keeps the Internet service cheap by excluding most over-the-air network channels, which can be costly for pay-TV providers as broadcasters demand higher fees. An Internet service also won't require special equipment, such as a satellite and receiver dishes. For those who want more than the basic channels, Dish will offer various add-ons for \$5 each, including extra channels for sports and a package for kids. The catch: Only one person can watch at a time. Family members who want to watch different channels simultaneously will need separate subscriptions.

Comcast also has continued to innovate and expand its offerings to reach new and potential customers. In 2013, Comcast introduced Internet Plus, offering broadband speeds with a smaller television package that includes the broadcast nets, HBO, and Streampix. In 2014, the company began partnering with universities and colleges to offer a streaming product to students that is available on their favorite devices anywhere on campus. A Comcast spokesperson would not comment on Dish's Sling TV announcement. – **Scranton Times-Tribune**

Charlie Ergen of the Dish Network will apparently beat several contenders (Verizon , Sony) in delivering a cable-like TV package to sell over the Internet. As announced, the product will be called Sling TV when it debuts in a few weeks. For 20 bucks a month, users will get ESPN's two main sports channels, plus 10 others, including CNN, Turner and Disney .

The first question that comes to our perhaps persnickety mind: Why didn't ESPN cut out the middleman and offer itself over the Web for 20 bucks? ESPN, we suspect, is the only reason anybody would buy Mr. Ergen's package. The second question is the one everyone has been asking: Does this commence the unraveling of the traditional cable bundle? A Comcast executive, Neil Smit, was not quivering in his spats at an investor conference last week. He noted that, after counting the price of a broadband subscription, Sling TV wouldn't be cheaper than basic cable plus a Comcast Internet subscription.

Yes, but not everybody is paying for Internet. More Wi-Fi sharing is going on than carriers like to admit, and even more will be going on as Comcast and

others continue to roll out millions of Wi-Fi hot spots. That's millions of access points, across town or across the country, that anyone can tap by using, say, their parent's or friend's or a perfect stranger's cable logon.

Traditional cable is not just at risk from low-budget cord cutters and cablephobe young adults. Cable operators underestimate their risk at the high end too. Millions of cable's best customers are already paying for a top-tier cable bundle, plus Netflix, plus Amazon Prime, etc. The heftiest part of this bill, the traditional cable package, begins to seem the most dispensable, especially with HBO and ESPN available independently over the Web. Here we must correct a misconception common in the media. This is not a shift to "a la carte" TV, the supposed nirvana of paying for only the channels we watch.

Those who confuse the decline of the traditional cable bundle with "unbundling" ought to ask themselves what Netflix is if not a bundle of programming. Rather, we're seeing the beginning of the decline of "linear TV," or what we call channels in the traditional sense, which increasingly are useful only to deliver live news and sports. Truth be told, sports already is the only thing keeping many people paying for cable or satellite.

Of course, as Mr. Ergen, a former professional poker player and operator of the country's second-biggest satellite broadcast service, rightly calculates, satellite customers won't be the first to be cannibalized by "over the top" Internet-based TV services. Satellite skews rural and exurban. Many satellite subscribers wouldn't be satellite subscribers if they weren't already far from the broadband infrastructure that would connect them to Sling TV.

In the longer run, though, Sling TV is a package Mr. Ergen can distribute over the huge amount of wireless spectrum he has been quietly and mysteriously buying. An elephant on the couch for the tech world has always been when, if and whether wireless would become an effective substitute for fixed broadband in the home.

Cable operators laugh off the idea, though less convincingly with each passing year. Federal regulators resolutely ignore it because it would put in doubt their know-it-all assumption that broadband is a natural monopoly needing close supervision. In fact, everything the Federal Communications Commission currently puffs itself up about—net neutrality, cable mergers, last-mile competition—would be a non-issue in a world of fixed-wireless convergence.

And listen to the players. Comcast's Mr. Smit says his company is extremely keen on its Wi-Fi build-out even if it's not sure yet how to monetize it. AT&T and Verizon seem to have no doubt, judging by their public statements to shareholders, that their cellular networks in the future will be handling large amounts of video. Simply as a product of rising speeds the distinction between fixed and wireless is tending to evaporate. Already, plenty of Americans choose to watch TV on tablets even when a big screen is nearby. The development of TV products aimed at these wireless-only or wireless-first customers is the force that will really blow up the traditional cable bundle. —

Wall Street Journal

Congressional Republicans unveiled draft legislation on Friday that would ban broadband providers from blocking, slowing down or speeding up access to specific websites but avoid using utility-like regulations to do so.

The bill from Senate Commerce Chairman John Thune of South Dakota and the leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee is designed to protect net neutrality—the principle that all Internet traffic should be treated equally—without applying the part of telecommunications law that regulates

common carriers. "By turning the FCC away from a heavy-handed and messy approach to regulating the Internet, this draft protects both consumers who rely on Internet services and innovators who create jobs," Mr. Thune said in a statement.

President Barack Obama has called for the utility-like regulations, and many expect the Federal Communications Commission to go that route when it circulates proposed net-neutrality rules next month. Net neutrality supporters said the draft shows Republicans are now seeking a compromise after fiercely opposing any net neutrality rules for many years. "This is a huge political shift. We now have bipartisan consensus around the key points," Public Knowledge Vice President Harold Feld said in an interview. "This is clearly a direct result of the enormous political pressure that has come not just from the president, but from small business and the grass-roots, constituencies that Republicans care about."

However, he and other net-neutrality supporters said the plan doesn't go far enough. The bill would explicitly ban broadband providers from blocking or slowing down websites or applications. The providers would also be banned from taking money to make some websites load faster than others, known as paid prioritization, and must publicly disclose data about the performance of their networks. The FCC has been grappling with how to regulate broadband providers since a federal court threw out the agency's last set of net neutrality rules last January. In November, President Obama called for the agency to implement the strongest possible rules by regulating broadband as a telecommunications service under Title II of the Communications Act.

The broadband industry believes such a change would stifle investment and saddle them with outdated regulations designed for the landline phone network. The draft bill would require that broadband remain a lightly regulated information service and would prevent the FCC from expanding its existing legal authority over providers beyond what is needed to police net neutrality. The latter provision could prevent the FCC from overturning state laws that ban cities and towns from building their own broadband networks, as President Obama urged the agency to do on Wednesday during a speech in Iowa.

Democratic Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts criticized the bill, calling it "a legislative wolf in sheep's clothing" that would help the broadband providers more than consumers. "Rather than pursuing this damaging legislative proposal, the FCC should use the clear authority granted them by Congress to vote on strong net neutrality rules in February and reclassify broadband under Title II. The future of the Internet as we know it depends on it," Sen. Markey said in a statement.

Many congressional Republicans had been staunchly opposed to any net-neutrality rules, so the new measure is seen as a compromise in that it would include such regulations without applying the utility regulations. It is unclear whether the measure would get enough support to pass Congress, or whether President Obama would sign it.

Net-neutrality supporters are already concerned that while the draft bill would ban sites from paying for faster speeds, it could also tie the FCC's hands when it comes to preventing other types of anticompetitive conduct that could arise in the future. Mr. Feld argued the bill doesn't go as far as the previous net neutrality rules thrown out by the court. "This would be a step backward," Mr. Feld said. "I recognize that these guys are trying to put something out there. But we are nowhere near close enough at this stage to be able to say this is acceptable." – *Wall Street Journal*; also see [*Washington Post*](#) and [*Los Angeles*](#)

Times



127 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717.214.2000 • bcaps.com

**First in Broadband.
The Future of Broadband.®**