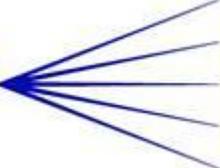


CONSUMPTION OF VIDEO IS EXPONENTIALLY GROWING BANDWIDTH DEMAND 52% ANNUALLY

DON'T WORRY WE ARE BUILDING THE NETWORKS

To learn more call Allan Wilayto - awilayto@gdt.com

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The Washington state Senate passed a bill Tuesday requiring internet service providers (ISPs) to treat all information and content zipping through their networks equally.

House Bill 2282, which passed the Senate 35 to 14, creates so called net-neutrality regulations that require ISPs to handle all websites equally. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Drew Hansen, D-Bainbridge Island, prevents service providers like Comcast or AT&T from allowing those who are able to pay more faster service. The bill prohibits ISPs from throttling broadband speeds or slowing down websites or content they decide shouldn't reach customers at the same speed as other sites, applications, services or content. The regulations also require ISPs to disclose their management practices, performance and commercial terms. Enforcement of the regulations falls under the state's Consumer Protection Act.

Sen. Reuven Carlyle, D-Seattle, has been a longtime supporter of net neutrality and said this is an issue that cuts across all walks of life. "It really matters to people. It crosses the chasm of democracy and civic life," he said. "The very idea that we could somehow face serious throttling of the internet and a lack of access is terrifying for everybody."

The action in Olympia this session comes after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ditched federal net-neutrality regulations last year. Washington isn't alone. States from California to Massachusetts have introduced similar bills. Hansen, who worked on the bill with Rep. Norma Smith, R-Whidbey Island, said that Tuesday's vote, which the **House passed on 93-5 on Feb. 9**, shows there is strong bipartisan support for net neutrality, and that states can and should step in when the federal government doesn't. "With this bill, Washington state residents will enjoy benefits of net neutrality protections we have come to rely on even after the FCC rolls them back nationally," he said.

The bill received some opposition from ISPs. They argued they are committed to net neutrality, but that any regulations needed to happen on the federal level so as not to have a patchwork of rules from state to state. It's not clear yet if the broadband companies will challenge the rules in court, but Hansen says if they do, it goes against their stated support of an open internet. Carlyle echoed the same sentiment. "They don't get to turn around and say that elected representatives shouldn't ensure the access they say they believe in," he said. The bill now goes to Gov. Jay Inslee to sign.

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Inslee was an outspoken supporter of net neutrality during his time in the U.S. House of Representatives. – **Seattle Times**

TiVo Corp has started evaluating a wide range of strategic options including the possibility of going private, the set-top box maker said on Tuesday. The San Jose, California-based company's shares were up 11 percent at \$15.15 in after-hours trading. "TiVo's stock price is at a level that the company and its board do not believe reflects the true value of the business," the company said.

The company is also considering options such as acquisitions and merging with leading players and has engaged LionTree Advisors to assist in the evaluation, it said. TiVo sells subscriptions directly to customers with its video recorders and also licenses its technology to cable TV operators that rent recorders to subscribers.

The announcement comes two months after sources **told The Street** that multiple buyers have expressed interest in acquiring Tivo. The company has made several executive appointments last year, including that of AT&T Inc executive Enrique Rodriguez as chief executive. On Tuesday, TiVo also reported an 88 percent rise in fourth-quarter profit to \$18.4 million, or 15 cents per share, as it recorded a tax benefit of \$26.6 million due to changes in the U.S. tax law. – **Reuters**

Verizon may not have any new expansive Fios expansion plans, but where it has rolled out FTTH, Fios broadband penetration is above 40%. Matt Ellis, EVP and CFO of Verizon, told investors during the Morgan Stanley Technology, Media & Telecom Conference 2018 that broadband subscription rates will likely rise further. "I expect that Fios broadband penetration number to continue to increase over the next couple of years," Ellis said.

During the fourth quarter, Verizon added 47,000 Fios internet connections and lost a net of 29,000 Fios video connections. The telco said the lower video additions continue to reflect the shift from traditional linear video to over-the-top offerings. As of the end of 2017, Verizon had 5.9 million Fios internet connections and 4.6 million Fios video connections.

While Fios video has continued to decline in recent quarters, Ellis said that Verizon sees an opportunity to sell existing and new Fios broadband customers higher speeds to support their over-the-top video appetites. "If the customer decides to cut the cord on the video piece, I am not getting the video revenue anymore and I do have a significant cost component that goes away," Ellis said. "When those customers cut the video cord, the quality of the broadband component becomes more important."

At the same time, Verizon is finding ways to control operational costs by enabling the customer to provision services and rectify issues themselves. Ellis said that by giving customers tools to get what they need without having to speak to a customer representative is paying off. "We continue to manage the cost side of the Fios business and the team has done a great job of taking costs out of the business over the past few years," Ellis said. "It really was a step change we saw last year in the number of times customers need to call us to do things." Ellis added that when customers use self-service, "the app is a great example of how we do two things: it takes costs out of the business and makes customers happier because they do things themselves." – **Fierce Telecom**

U.S. Senate Democrats launched efforts on Tuesday to win a vote to reinstate Obama-era rules guaranteeing an open internet, suggesting it would be a major issue in the 2018 mid-term elections. Democrats remain one Republican senator shy of winning a majority in the Senate to reverse the Federal Communications Commission's order to undo the 2015 open internet rules.

Even then the effort would not likely pass the Republican-controlled House of Representatives or survive a veto by President Donald Trump. The FCC in December voted 3-2 to reverse Obama-era rules barring service providers from blocking, slowing access to or charging more for certain online content.

The new FCC rules, once effective, would give internet service providers sweeping powers to change how consumers access the internet but include new transparency requirements that require them to disclose any changes to consumers. Last week, a coalition of 22 state attorneys general refiled legal challenges intended to block the Trump administration's repeal of net neutrality.

The FCC published its order overturning net neutrality last week, a procedural step that allows for the filing of legal challenges. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has said often he is confident the order will be upheld. The repeal of the net neutrality rules was a victory for internet service providers like AT&T

Inc, Comcast Corp and Verizon Communications Inc, conferring power over what content consumers can access. On the other side, technology companies including Alphabet Inc and Facebook Inc have thrown their weight behind the congressional bid to reverse the repeal.

Democrats said on Tuesday that the issue would be big in the mid-term election, especially among younger internet-savvy voters. New York Senator Charles Schumer, the Democratic leader, suggested that under the FCC's approach internet providers could block a young couple from watching Netflix programming or a college student watching an educational video. Schumer said Americans should blame Republicans for slow internet service "while Democrats fought to fix it."

Republicans have said the FCC vote would eliminate heavy-handed government regulations, encourage investment and return the internet to pre-2015 rules. Under Senate rules, the earliest the Senate could vote on the issue is March 15 and they must seek a vote by June 20. Senator Edward Markey, the chief sponsor, said Democrats are undecided on when they would force a vote. Democrats, who control 49 seats in the 100-person chamber, have the backing of 50 senators for repeal, leaving them one vote short of a majority. Democrats need 51 votes to win any proposal in the Republican-controlled Senate because Vice President Mike Pence can break any tie. –

Reuters

