Remarks of Chairman Julius Genachowski on the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Presentation on FCC Next-Generation Mapping
July 19, 2012

I couldn't be prouder or more pleased with this work.

On my first day as Chairman, I said, "We will use technology and new media to improve overall operations of the FCC – running efficiently, communicating effectively, and opening the agency to participation from everyone affected by the FCC's actions."

We set a goal of becoming a model for excellence in government.

Thanks to our incredible staff, we've made real progress over the past 3-plus years in using technology to open up the agency, and improve its operations.

We transformed the Commission's website to promote broad public engagement through plain language, transparency, and new tools to make it easier for all stakeholders to stay informed and conduct business with the agency.

In transforming the website, we also built a platform that's capable of being quickly and efficiently updated and improved.

And we have an ongoing dialogue with the FCBA, public interest groups and other stakeholders to identify ways to make the site better and better.

The FCC is also the first federal agency to add a developers page with open APIs to its website, making public data available in formats that can help entrepreneurs build innovative applications. Making data more accessible has been a big piece of our strategy to open the agency and better serve the public.

We launched a Data Innovation Initiative to modernize and streamline how the FCC collects, uses, and disseminates data. We were the first federal agency to create the position of Chief Data Officer to ensure better use of data - and thank you Greg Elin for your outstanding work - and we've established a chief data officer in each Bureau and Office.

We also started early doing government-leading work using mapping tools to make geographic data more accessible.

As Mike's impressive presentation demonstrated, the breakthrough with maps is that it allows users to visualize data – making complex mountains of data accessible, understandable, and actionable.

A great example of this work is the National Broadband Map, which we developed with NTIA. The Map identifies what services and what speeds are available in each community – information that is useful to consumers, policy makers, as well businesses

and entrepreneurs. It's the first of its kind, just the beginning, and holds tremendous promise.

And as we saw from this presentation, the Broadband Map is one of many examples of mapping tools that we have developed.

Why does all this matter?

First, mapping tools are improving decision-making within the agency.

During the presentation you saw examples of maps we've used as part of our work on universal service reform and creating the Connect America Fund and the Mobility Fund. I've personally found the maps to be useful, and indeed our team has loaded the maps app onto my iPad.

Second, these mapping tools are a useful tool for consumers.

For example, people can use the National Broadband Map to identify the broadband services that are best for them.

And empowering consumers promotes competition, which is the most effective way to drive better services, lower costs, and ongoing private investment. We've made several important improvements to this map since launch, and we'll continue to do so.

Third, these tools help can spur innovation.

App developers, start-up companies, and other federal agencies can use the data and the APIs to create new products and services – some we can imagine, and many we can't, which is the beauty of creating platforms for innovation.

Thanks to the work of Mike and this great team, we're setting a new bar for how government can use mapping technology to spur innovation and the development of new products for the public.

Our developer day earlier this year attracted over 550 participants in person and online, including 16 agencies across government.

The approach we've pioneered here is the same basic approach outlined by the new Federal Government Digital Strategy, putting data first so that the public can have access to the same data and visualizations we do.

This perhaps isn't a surprise – since the federal digital strategy was developed and announced by Steve VanRoekel, Chief Information Officer of the United States, and recently Managing Director here at the Commission, where his hard work and vision laid the groundwork for much of what we have been able to achieve.

We enthusiastically join in this Administration-wide effort, and take pride in knowing that our team has made us a leader in this area.

Finally, thanks again to Michael Byrne, our first geographic information officer and his deputy, Eric Spry, who led this innovative next generation mapping at the FCC, and all the members their team and of the FCC's new media team, who have worked on this project.