

**CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
PREPARED REMARKS AT DIGITAL LEARNING DAY TOWN HALL  
THE NEWSEUM  
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Thank you all for joining us here at the Newseum and online across the country.

I want to thank everyone who is stepping up to seize the opportunities of digital learning, in particular Governor Wise and the Alliance for Excellent Education for hosting today's event.

Thank you Xavier for being here and to AT&T for their participation in this initiative. I'd like to also thank all the private sector partners of the Digital Textbook Collaborative, Josh Gottheimer and Jordan Usdan on my team at the FCC, and Karen Cator at the Department of Education.

And finally, thank you to Secretary Arne Duncan for your leadership at the Department of Education and your partnership on digital learning.

At the FCC, our mission is to harness the power of broadband and communications technology to improve the lives of the American people.

Few areas hold more promise for broadband-enabled innovation and improvements than education.

For example, broadband enables distance learning and collaboration, connecting students wherever they are to information, tutors, teachers, and other students.

Studies show technology makes a real difference. Technology-based teaching can reduce the time it takes to learn a lesson by 30 to 80 percent.

The FCC has been working since the early days of the commercial Internet to bring the benefits of online learning to America's schools.

Our E-Rate program – established in the 1990s – has helped connect almost every classroom in America to the Internet. And we recently modernized our E-Rate program to seize the opportunities of mobile connectivity.

Now, it's time for the next stage – or chapter if you will – in education technology: digital textbooks. Digital textbooks are one of the cornerstones of digital learning.

When we talk about transitioning to digital textbooks, we're not just talking about giving students e-readers so they no longer have to carry around backpacks filled with 50 pounds of often out-of-date textbooks.

We're talking about students having interactive learning devices that can offer lessons

personalized to their learning style and level, and enable real-time feedback to parents, teachers, or tutors.

Imagine a student who has trouble doing his geometry homework; the digital textbook automatically inserts a supplemental lesson.

Imagine a teacher who has instant access to the results of a pop quiz; she can immediately see that four of her students didn't understand the concept of photosynthesis and is able to offer an extra lesson.

We've seen digital textbooks adopted in pockets around the country, but adoption is not widespread and too skewed to wealthier areas.

Meanwhile, too many students still have textbooks that are 7 to 10 years old. And some students are using history books that don't even cover 9/11.

It's not just the content of textbooks that needs updating it's the concept. We often talk about how technology has changed everything, but static, hardcover textbooks are what I used in school, what my parents used, what their parents used and so on.

We spend \$7 billion a year on textbooks in this country, but digital textbooks – this massive innovation – remain the exception, not the rule.

We can do better. And I envision a society spending less on textbooks, but getting more out of them.

We all win if the players in the digital learning ecosystem – including publishers, device manufacturers, platform providers, internet service providers, schools – work together to accelerate the adoption of digital textbooks. If they work together to address the obstacles of broadband deployment and adoption, content development, interoperability and device costs.

To date, many of these players have taken important steps.

Costs of the tablets are coming down and many content players, including the long-standing incumbents and new entrants, are working to transition to a digital world.

Connectivity is still an obstacle. About a third of Americans – 100 million people – still haven't adopted broadband at home. Digital textbooks can't work without this home connectivity.

We've launched a major public-private initiative called Connect to Compete, to promote broadband adoption, and we've seen major companies like Microsoft, Best Buy, and the cable companies step forward with significant commitments to promote adoption.

I commend Comcast for their continued commitment to broadband adoption. The

extension of their Internet Essentials program to thousands of additional families will help bring the benefits of broadband to more students and families.

Just yesterday, the FCC approved a measure to modernize our Lifeline program – establishing a Broadband Adoption Pilots to begin transitioning Lifeline from a program that supports phone service to one that supports Internet access.

Apple took an important step last month with its announcement of new textbooks and a publishing suite for the iPad.

Recognizing the need to do more, the FCC partnered with the Department of Education to convene the Digital Textbook Collaborative.

The collaborative enlisted partners from across the digital learning ecosystem to compile best practices on how schools can go digital.

I'm pleased that today the Collaborative is releasing a Digital Learning Playbook.

This Playbook offers information about how to achieve the robust connectivity that is necessary for digital learning inside and outside school. It also details important considerations when implementing digital devices. Finally, it identifies the best practices for making a successful transition to digital learning

This is an important start but there's more work to do. Countries like South Korea, which has announced they are going to all digital textbooks in 2013, are still ahead of us.

If we want American students to be the best prepared to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, we can't allow a majority of our students to miss out on the opportunities of digital textbooks.

Today, I want to challenge everyone in the space – companies, government officials, schools and teachers – to do their part to make sure that every student in America has a digital textbook in the next five years.

Next month, Secretary Duncan and I will be convening a meeting with CEOs in the digital textbook spaces to work toward achieving this goal.

Digital learning is critical to the future of education in our country and to our global competitiveness. I'm pleased that we're taking steps to seize the opportunities before us.