



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI ANNOUNCES MAJOR EFFORT TO INCREASE WI-FI SPEEDS AND ALLEVIATE WI-FI CONGESTION AT AIRPORTS, CONVENTION CENTERS, AND IN HOMES WITH MULTIPLE DEVICES AND USERS

FCC Action To Free Up New Spectrum For Wi-Fi Will Kick-Off Government-Wide Effort To Expedite Ultra-High-Speed, High-Capacity Wi-Fi And Support U.S. Innovation Economy; Increasing “Gigabit Wi-Fi” Spectrum by 35%

Will Provide For Higher Speeds and Greater Capacity At Major Wi-Fi Hubs, Allowing For Multiple HD Video Streams

Washington, D.C. – While speaking at the 2013 International CES, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski announced today that the Commission will soon kick-off a government-wide effort to increase speeds and alleviate Wi-Fi congestion at major hubs, such as airports, convention centers and large conference gatherings. In addition, this would also increase speed and capacity for Wi-Fi in the home where multiple users and devices are often on the network at the same time. This will increase and free up the unlicensed spectrum available for ultra-high-speed, high-capacity Wi-Fi - known as “Gigabit Wi-Fi” - by up to 35 percent. This effort will enable higher data speeds and greater capacity – most notably, improved HD video distribution capability.

Chairman Genachowski said that the FCC will take the first steps next month to unleash up to 195 megahertz of spectrum in the 5 gigahertz band. This would be the largest block of unlicensed spectrum to be made available for expansion of Wi-Fi since 2003.

Chairman Genachowski said, "We all know the frustration of Wi-Fi congestion at conferences and airports. Today, the FCC is moving to bring increased speed and capacity to Wi-Fi networks by increasing the amount of unlicensed spectrum for Wi-Fi. As this spectrum comes on line, we expect it to relieve congested Wi-Fi networks at major hubs like convention centers and airports. It will also help in homes as tablets and smartphones proliferate and video use rises.

“When the FCC helped pioneer Wi-Fi nearly thirty years ago - through an innovative spectrum policy that relied on unlicensed use - no one knew the potential it held. But that FCC-created platform for innovation gave us cordless phones, Bluetooth, and Wi-Fi, benefitting consumers and our economy massively. We'll keep nurturing today's Wi-Fi as we also develop a next generation of spectrum policies to drive our mobile future for our innovators and our economy.”

Because the 5 gigahertz band is already used for other purposes by both federal and non-federal users, the effort will require significant collaboration with other federal agencies. Chairman Genachowski committed the Commission to move expeditiously to complete the proceeding.

In addition to efforts like today's announcement to improve on existing Wi-Fi networks, the Commission has taken steps in recent years to unleash the potential of next-generation unlicensed spectrum. Next-generation unlicensed spectrum is in lower frequencies than existing Wi-Fi, and enables wireless communications to travel longer distances and better penetrate barriers like walls and provide improved coverage over hilly terrain.

In 2010, the Commission provided for operation of unlicensed devices in the unused spectrum between broadcast TV channels, called white spaces. Unlocking this valuable spectrum is opening the doors for new industries to arise, creating American jobs, and fueling new investment and innovation.

In addition, as part of the effort to implement the world's first incentive auction, the FCC proposed to ensure that a significant amount of low-band unlicensed spectrum recovered from TV broadcasters will be available on a consistent, nationwide basis for the first time.

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