

TO: Eric Ralph, Economist, FCC WCB  
FROM: John B. Horrigan, VP Policy Research, TechNet  
DATE: November 23, 2010

RE: **Reviewer Comments on FCC “Broadband Decisions” White paper**

I have reviewed the comments of Dr. Janice Hauge and Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee on the draft of the FCC’s white paper entitled “Broadband Decisions.” Each reviewer makes a number of helpful comments about the paper, specifically regarding ideas for additional analysis and thoughts about additional questions that might have been pursued in the survey.

Dr. Hauge suggests that multivariate analysis might be undertaken a number of instances to more deeply analyze relationships among the variables. Although those suggestions are worthwhile, the purpose of this paper is to publish basic survey results (i.e., topline responses to questions and some cross-tabulations). Her comments do not undercut the validity of such findings reported in the paper.

Dr. Hauge also asked for additional explanation of the weighting approach used on the raw survey data. The survey firm who conducted the survey for the FCC, Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI), provided the following information in response to Dr. Hauge’s comments.

Overlapping dual-frame surveys combining landline and cell phone samples pose complex choices in terms of methodology and weighting. While the survey industry has been executing dual-frame designs for more than three years, there is not an industry consensus on the balance between the two samples or the weighting approach to be used. Weighting overlapping dual-frame designs inherently involves more choices and the use of more parameters than simpler designs. For this sample design, PSRAI chose to include all interviews completed on cell phones, and not just cell phone-only adults (i.e., an overlapping design). This choice was grounded in PSRAI’s experience that those who are cell phone-mostly have internet adoption and usage patterns that differ both from landline-only interviews and cell-phone-only interviews.

Weights were necessary to account for the overlapping sample design and to bring the sample demographics in line with known population parameters. Dr. Hauge points out two groups in particular whose proportions change significantly from the unweighted to weighted results (college graduates are weighted down while cell-phone only users are weighted up). This is very typical of dual-frame samples of the general public. The reason that college graduates are typically weighted down is because that group is the easiest to reach by telephone and therefore they end up being over-represented in both landline and cell phone samples. The cell phone-only group typically is under-represented in dual-frame samples because cell phone interviewing is significantly more expensive than land line interviewing. Therefore, most researchers do fewer than the optimal number of cell interviews simply for economic

reasons. The weighted versus unweighted percentages for college graduates and cell phone-only adults are in line with industry experience on dual-frame designs.

With respect to Dr. Turner-Lee's comments, she also suggested paths for additional analysis, such as reporting how responses to some questions varied by income. Again, the purpose of this paper is to report basic results, and nothing in these comments undercut the validity of the data reported in the current draft. Dr. Turner-Lee also made several comments about conclusions drawn in the paper, pertaining to the impact of the recession on broadband adoption and people's perceptions about the difficulty of switching. In both cases, the text appropriately is qualified. In the latter case, the paper presents the cross-tab analysis suggested.

As to the three year time horizon for asking about switching: That time-horizon is admittedly arbitrary and it was chosen in order to elicit a reasonable incidence of switching in the general population without taxing the respondents' memory too much (e.g., by asking the respondent to call a switching event that was, say, 4 or 5 years in the past).

To address the reviewers' suggestion that more analysis be conducted, the FCC will post to its website the survey data (in SPSS format, i.e., a format compatible with a popular statistical software) and questionnaire. With that done, interested members of the public will be able to conduct additional analysis if they so choose.