

We became a Dish Network subscriber when shortly after my family and I moved to Bainbridge Island seven years ago. Even though we lived in a newer development half a mile from the cable company's central office we were unable to obtain cable from the franchised local provider. The cable company records showed that when the underground utilities were laid in our area they didn't show up to install the cable. To get cable after the fact the cable company quoted me a price of \$1800 to run the cable in from the street 150 feet away. Hardly a deal.

Dish Network offered us a means to get better than cable quality TV at a fraction of the cost it would have cost had cable been the only option. Furthermore the quality of customer service and technical support far surpassed that of the cable companies I had the misfortune to deal with in the past (TCI, Viacom, Northland). And the price I pay has consistently been no more than, and often less than what is charged by the local cable companies.

As for the video and sound quality there is no comparison between Dish and cable. Gone are the cable outages, fuzzy or distorted pictures, and bad sound. Instead Dish subscribers enjoy the benefits of digital technology, an advantage that cable subscribers are forced to pay extra for. Plus there has always been more programming choice for Dish customers. Having experienced the difference you couldn't pay me to go back to cable.

The cable industries (along with their media company owners) interest in preventing the merger between Dish Network and Direct TV has less to do with protecting the public's interest and more to do with protecting their control of media content and distribution. It's about money and their fear of what real competition will mean to their bottom lines. Don't be fooled or persuaded by their rhetoric or their tainted campaign money that this merger will harm consumers. To the contrary, the proposed Dish and Direct TV merger will force big cable co