I'm a fan of the concept behind the FCC's National Broadband Policy. I've been of the position for a long time that the internet is a stable utility and like phone, electricity and water, it should be available to everyone. So there is no question we need to roll out broadband internet to everyone.

The question I have is why 100mbs ?

While 100mbs is much faster than most people have available to them we know 3 absolutes when it comes to internet speed:

1. The true speed is only as fast as the weakest link between you and the destination site.

2. Pretty much everyone shares their internet connection at some level, so your throughput /speed is also impacted by other people who are sharing the onramp you are using to the net.

3. The more bandwidth you have available to you, the more ways you will find to use that bandwidth, Which means that at some point between now and not too soon after you get your 100mbs, its not going to seem like much.

Just ask all those people using all that bandwidth in all those other countries that we are comparing ourselves to. Japan, Korea, pick a country, all get more bandwidth for less money. Are they all screaming for joy about their good fortune ?

Of course like everything else, from chips to beer, if everyone else has more of what we want at a cheaper price, we want more of it at a cheaper price too. Right ? Of course right.

BUT, and here is the rub. Is there anything that has come of all that bandwidth that we envy and wish we had ? We hear about speeds and pricing from other countries, but I haven't heard of applications coming out of those countries. In a recent NYTimes Op-Ed a Harvard Law School Prof argued his reasons why other countries broadband speeds were faster and cheaper,but he never mentioned a single example of any benefits derived from faster and cheaper bandwidth. Should the FCC aspire to make sure we can all get to TMZ.com faster than before ?

Of course we would all like more for less, but the FCC is talking about spending BAZILLIONS of dollars over the next 10 years. The question I have is WHERE DOES IT GET US ?

Are we building 2 lane highways when we can expect that 2 lanes wont be enough for the things we really want to do ?

As I wrote in my last blog post, I truly believe that with more bandwidth and more specifically more throughput comes unique and amazing applications. But we already know that 100mbs is not enough to do amazing.

We already know that people are planning to pollute the bandwidth with TV and TV like video. More Gilligan's Island Reruns and The Benefactor on demand or maybe in a fulltime streaming loop..**Maybe up-ressed to Ultra High Def 3D. All you need is 100mbs of throughput and special glasses to get it. Now that would make the FCC Broadband money well spent, wouldn't it ?**

There are already plenty of people (I know you hate the fact that its not you) in corporations and educational institutions that have 100mbs of throughput available to them. Have you heard of all the amazing developments coming from that bandwidth ? Neither have I.

There are some cool things happening with Internet 2, but its going to take more than 100mbs to get them. Which is exactly why the FCC plan has destinations that will get 1gbs of bandwidth. In other words, they will be able to talk to each other, but not share those same apps with you.

The point is that there is some amount of bandwidth/throughput to your home, that when available will open up a new world of applications. Remember, when we went from modems to broadband we didn't see new applications as a result. We saw better use of the same applications from the incremental speed. We need to find out where the new applications come from.

Before we peg 100mbs as the speed to which all bandwidth providers should aspire, we need to find the water mark at which bandwidth creates new applications and we need to see some of them.

So maybe before we start digging more trenches and upgrading equipment the FCC should focus on applications and providing some funding, or holding an open forum for high bit rate applications. Once we have some application to learn from, the people building the networks can better design them.

The last thing we need is for 2020 to roll around and the national discussion to be "Who's bright idea was it to build out to only 100mbs and leave 40pct of America unable to use these new DNA sequencing application that can readily save lives, and forget about point to point XRays and Virtual Education. To name a few.

There is a way to get beyond 100mbs. I will wait till I talk to the FCC to share my thoughts. This is one I want to keep.