



Media Minutes

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TRANSCRIPT

The Digital Landscape of Indian Country

As the Federal Communications Commission prepares a national broadband plan, Native Americans want to be part of the discussions. Tribal lands have been largely ignored by federal policymakers.

A new study, *New Media, Technology and Internet Use in Indian Country*, surveyed more than 120 tribes living in 28 states about how the Internet is being used – for blogging, political research, driving directions, uploading photos and video and text messaging.

The results showed that Native Americans are using the Internet at higher rates than their counterparts in the rest of the country. But Traci Morris of Native Public Media, who co-authored the report, points out that while Indians are using the Internet at higher rates, it doesn't mean they have easy access on Indian lands.

Traci Morris: *It does mean that the people are resourceful, and they're finding ways to gain access. Whether they're driving to hotspots, they're driving a long distance to hotspots, whatever they're doing, they are reaching out and seeking access to the Internet in that way.*

Loris Ann Taylor, executive director of Native Public Media, says that the six successful digital projects surveyed in the study were community-centric.

Loris Taylor: *You have tribes here who are investing their own money into deploying broadband, because in many circumstances they don't qualify for the federal funds that are supposed to help deploy broadband out into rural and remote communities.*

The tribes made sure that the major institutions, like tribal government, schools, law enforcement, health centers and radio stations were connected first. These projects, ranging from providing Internet service to building computers to the tribal members to creating digital communities, can serve as a model for other tribes as well as non-tribal communities.

The study recommends the creation of a tribal broadband plan within the national broadband plan. It says tribal entities should help with planning and mapping. A national FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force and a tribal office at the FCC are also recommended.

Loris Taylor: *If you have 564 Native nations in this country who are federally recognized, and more tribes that are going through the recognition process, then there's a real need for the FCC to have an office to make sure that there's some consultation going on with these nations.*

To read the report, go to nativepublicmedia.org.

Net Neutrality: Coming to a City Council Near You

The debate over Network Neutrality, the fundamental principle that keeps Internet Service Providers from discriminating against lawful web sites, content or applications, has moved from the halls of Washington to city council agendas in New York and San Francisco.

Last week, the New York City Council held a hearing on a resolution to back strong Net Neutrality protections to “ensure that the Internet will continue to foster innovation, increase competition, and spur economic growth as well as making the Internet faster and more affordable for all.”

Testifying at the meeting were several public interest advocates who discussed the significance of the city's resolution. Art Brodsky, communications director of Public Knowledge, was among them.

13:15 Brodsky: *It's important to all the Internet users, it's important to all the developers to have an open vibrant and non-discriminatory Internet. To the extent that you can influence the Congress of the United States through your voice up here in this committee and the council as a whole you'll make a very good contribution to preserving this open environment which is so important.*

Also testifying was Tim Karr, campaign director of Free Press. He presented the council with over 4,000 signatures from concerned New Yorkers who support Net Neutrality.

17:20 Karr: *Much is at stake for the tens of millions of Americans who rely upon the Internet every day. Despite the debate, I don't believe anyone on the panel or in this room would dispute two notions: First, over the past 40 years, the Internet has emerged as an unprecedented tool for spreading innovative ideas, increasing public participation in our democracy, fostering economic opportunity – even in the most overlooked communities. Second, I don't believe we'd disagree that we need sound public policies to encourage faster, more open and affordable internet access for everyone in the country... We need to pass the right policies, right now.*

Brodsky warned the council not to get “distracted.”

15:35 Brodsky: *You'll hear a lot of things about the threats to the economy about Net Neutrality; you'll probably hear some engineering mumbo-jumbo about how you can't have a non-discriminatory Internet. All Net Neutrality means is that you can't play favorites.*

San Francisco is considering a similar resolution in support of Net Neutrality. Both city councils are expected to vote on the resolutions in the coming weeks.

To learn more about Net Neutrality, visit www.savetheinternet.com.