



FCC Chief Kevin Martin Wants People to Have Access to Semi-Decent Broadband

It is not often that a clear voice resonating with logic and common sense comes through to a demanding public. It is even less often that voice stems from a large governmental arm's highest officer. Yet, this is exactly what Kevin Martin, the Chairman for the Federal Communications Commission, is doing. Per the FCC's site, Chairman Martin "has recognized that broadband technology is a key driver of economic growth," and that "the ability to share large amounts of information at ever-greater speeds increases productivity, facilitates commerce, and drives innovation." Stressing the need for communication changes, he recognizes broadband as the best solution for education, career, and even entertainment purposes and believes the biggest challenge lies in rural areas and the need to "shrink the distance" between these isolated areas and advanced communication stations. If this sounds like a tall order to fill, that is because it is. But Chairman Martin pulls it off year after year.

As part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the FCC and Chairman Martin are directed to:

- Broaden broadband deployment technologies.
- Redefine broadband to include any capable high-bandwidth services.
- Ensure no monopolies exist that eliminate healthy growth and competition.
- Facilitate an environment conducive to broadband technologies.

For several years, Chairman Martin has reiterated, time and again, the need for every American home to have access to broadband. In fact, in 2006, the FCC was close to meeting President Bush's goal of broadband access for every American household. Indeed, America has more broadband subscribers than any other country and in 2005 alone, subscriptions increased by 60 percent. In 2006, it was estimated that nearly 85 percent of American households had access to DSL, cable, or both.

Surprisingly, the country closest to the statistics America enjoys is Korea, and in some areas we trail Korea's efforts, though many insist this view is only the slant provided by the population numbers and other demographics.

The FCC is the federal overseer for telecommunications, both wired and wireless, the cable industry, cellular and digital services, and any other mass-media communications arenas. This agency ensures guidelines and compliances are in line to protect consumers against price gouging and issues such as regulating nudity and language not suitable for children on television outlets.

The FCC, in recent years, has not only taken on the challenging area of broadband, but is now working to improve the speeds at which these services deliver information. It

often walks a fine line that will not discourage competition nor hinder growth for those companies in this sector. One of the most notable changes over the past few years is the deregulation of DSL. This was done in yet another move to ensure healthy growth and competitive environments. Mr. Martin states, "To give more Americans access to broadband, we need to encourage this kind of infrastructure investment, not discourage it with burdensome regulations." This is by far the healthiest and most robust approach to take, which will serve the purpose of providing high-quality and faster broadband speeds without discouraging these growth efforts. In an interview with a Korean newspaper in June of 2008, Mr. Martin renews his commitment to a continued promotion of the Internet industry and refers to it as the "engine of productivity and innovation." This information, under the direction and guidance of Chairman Martin, will help stabilize the [job market](#) in the telecommunications sector and will in fact be a large factor in its growing [employment opportunities](#) as well. A recent report indicates many local junior colleges are not only filling their classrooms with current courses that will serve the telecommunications field well, but are expanding the available courses and classroom sizes. This is one of only two fields that are enjoying stability in course loads, but are showing solid signs of growth. The other field is nursing. And if you need further convincing, consider this: During the first half of 2007, high-speed Internet lines increased by 22 percent for a total of nearly 20 million new lines. Further proof includes 121 million Internet users in 2001 that had grown to over 178 million by last year. Finally, at the end of 2008, 99 percent of all public schools have at least wired Internet services. Indeed, the FCC has its work cut out and Kevin Martin has created his niche and is demanding what is best for the country as a whole. You might be interested to know that one of the most recent efforts via the FCC has banned exclusive contracts for apartment buildings. This will further encourage competition and reduce the chances of monopolizing. This is yet another effort that will culminate



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So what is next for Kevin Martin? It appears as though he is not going anywhere. Since 2001, his approach to his

responsibilities as chairman of the FCC has created a formula that provides a win-win for providers and customers alike.

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