

DELIVERING WIRELESS BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY TO ALL AMERICANS

This is Why I Can't Have Nice Things (or high-speed internet)

By: Mark Warchol, VP of Marketing, Interop Technologies



As I think about the broadband inequality that can be found throughout the U.S. today, I feel compelled to comment on this issue from a consumer viewpoint rather than from my position within the technology industry. More specifically, from the viewpoint of someone without high-speed internet access. Contrary to some definitions of "rural," I do not live in an area where it would be obvious that we were underserved, but still, we are. So, as I watch yet another obnoxious 5G commercial via my digital antenna because I can't get cable at my house either, I'll attempt to gain your understanding of both my frustration and bewilderment of my crappy internet plight by using a media-buying matrix. Because after all, I'm a "marketing guy."

I mention 5G because it's a poignant example for my objection or at the least my opinion of my broadband situation. Mobile/internet technologies have the power to change everything with each major advancement (Wi-Fi, High Speed Internet, 5G Networks, etc.). Technology can change everything for everyone; or it has the power to do so in very meaningful ways. Very few industries possess the same tectonic power as

the mobile industry because no matter where you live, we all live on our mobile devices. But first, let me explain where I live.



Designated Market Area or (DMA) 61

Advertisers look to the DMA matrix when they purchase airtime for their next radio and television spots to capture the most reach (aka pops to you mobile carriers) for their campaign, or to obtain the most broadcast influence. The importance of a DMA is statistical in nature and is a straightforward numbers game for advertisers. Here is the math: 50% of the U.S. population can be purchased with DMAs 1-25. DMAs 1-65 will net you 75% and purchasing the top 100 markets will get you a cool 90% of the U.S., leaving the remaining 10% of the population distributed over the remaining 110 DMAs (#s 101-210) or the seemingly most rural or underpopulated of the media markets. I live in DMA 61; well in the top half of all DMAs. To put this in perspective, my house is 16 minutes from an international airport, 9 minutes from two MLB stadiums and only 5 minutes from a Starbucks. I'm also only 2 minutes from a neighborhood with 1200

Mbps home internet speed. So why can't I download a PDF before my Grande mocha latte gets cold?

The answer is quite simple; they don't care if I have it. The broadband providers have determined that our lonely neighborhood with 40 homes on four streets "are not worth the additional infrastructure costs needed to deliver the service." Yet we are seemingly important enough to advertise to on radio and television? On their service map, my neighborhood is literally the hole of a doughnut encircled by four, 800-home communities where we only represent 1.25% of what the neighboring community's populations offer in revenue potential. Local government policies don't help either as our private roadswere never paved by the county with accompanying utility infrastructure, as all paved county roads are. This has been a 15-plus year fight for my neighbors and me. Now, I'm not making the argument that companies shouldn't make money, but in today's tech-centric, mobile-enabled, life changing universe, high-speed internet is more necessity than luxury. It's used to pay bills, telehealth doctors, zoom schoolwork, work remotely, and even shop as the growing mobile economy pushes us online, paperless, and to stream everything, while some of us remain at the mercy of others. Shouldn't suppliers try to offer the best prices, operators offer the latest services, and governments remove the most hurdles for life changing technologies to impact the most lives? Well, that's the argument as I see it (when my power isn't out).