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COMMUNITY FOCUS '99

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Abstract:

Since the Telecom Act was signed, cable rates have risen at a rate nearly four times that of inflation nationally. [...] as the Rochester community sprouts more wires, drawing together people from all corners of the region into one connected mass, we will look at the technology have-nots who have not been caught in technology's web, the poor and unskilled who are finding themselves shut out of the economic and social mainstream as it moves increasingly to the electronic realm.

Full text:

Whole Wired World

Technology's increasing reach bears close watching

Three years ago next month, the president signed a sweeping reform of telecommunications laws designed to speed innovation and boost competition in such industries as telephone service, cable television and electronic media.

In reality, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 has ushered in an unprecedented era of industry mergers and consolidation, higher consumer prices and concentration of media ownership.

Now, some members of Congress, disgruntled competitors and consumer advocates are calling for reform of the 3-year-old reforms. The Editorial Board will focus in the coming year on these proposals and other complicated issues centered on technology's growing reach into our everyday lives.

What will the new millennium (which arrives on Jan. 1, 2001, not next year, no matter what popular opinion holds) bring in the way of innovation? How will questions of on-line privacy and Internet indecency be resolved? Will the continued explosion of e-mail and voice mail and fax machines, of automatic tellers and pay-at-the-pump gas stations, of distance learning and on-line communities add to the isolation and depersonalization that many now fear?

We will also explore the implications of cable television consolidation and the pending expiration of federal rate controls. Since the Telecom Act was signed, cable rates have risen at a rate nearly four times that of inflation nationally.

And, as the Rochester community sprouts more wires, drawing together people from all corners of the region into one connected mass, we will look at the technology have-nots who have not been caught in technology's web, the poor and unskilled who are finding themselves shut out of the economic and social mainstream as it moves increasingly to the electronic realm.

Please share your ideas, your concerns and questions with us as we explore the electronic frontier together. Technology; Communication; Telecommunication; Telephone; Computer Northeast

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