

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matters of

International Comparison and Survey Requirements in the Broadband Data Improvement Act)	GN Docket No. 09-47
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Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband Data Improvement Act)	GN Docket No. 09-137
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A National Broadband Plan for Our Future)	GN Docket No. 09-51

COMMENTS – NBP PUBLIC NOTICE #10

The Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) hereby submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission’s (Commission) above-referenced *Public Notice* released October 2, 2009. Given the increasingly significant role of broadband to our nation’s technological and economic advancement, ATIS supports the creation of an information repository or “clearinghouse” whereby broadband best practices would be widely available to all stakeholders interested in gaining insight into broadband infrastructure, broadband deployment and broadband projects.

I. Background

ATIS is a global standards development and technical planning organization committed to providing leadership for, and the rapid development and promotion of worldwide technical and operations standards for information, entertainment and communications technologies using a pragmatic, flexible and open approach. ATIS is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), a private, non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standards and conformity assessment system.

ATIS' membership is diverse, including all stakeholders from the ICT industry – wireline and wireless service providers, equipment manufacturers, competitive local exchange carriers, data local exchange carriers, providers of commercial mobile radio services, broadband providers, software developers, consumer electronics companies, digital rights management companies, and internet service providers. Many of these companies are global in their reach. A number of federal agencies and local governmental authorities also actively participate in ATIS.

Nearly 600 industry subject matter experts from more than 250 ICT companies work collaboratively in ATIS' 18 open industry committees. The output of these committees include standards, technical specifications and requirements, best practices, interoperability testing, guidelines for the assignment of numbering resources, white papers, and technical analyses. The ATIS committees focus on a broad range of priorities for the ICT industry, including network architectures and platforms, the ordering and billing of services, E-911, cyber security, the reliability and interoperability of current and

next generation technologies, the seamless delivery of converged wireline and wireless services such as IPTV over multimedia platforms, and the networks of the future.

II. Development and Maintenance of Broadband Industry Best Practices

In the *Public Notice*, the Commission seeks information on whether and how best to develop and maintain broadband best practices, i.e., creation of a broadband clearinghouse. ATIS, through its Network Reliability Steering Committee (NRSC), has a long standing history of creating and maintaining industry best practices in the area of network reliability for the nation's public communications network. NRSC advises the communications industry through developing and issuing standards, technical reports, bulletins, *best practices*, and annual reports. The NRSC, through its work with the Network Reliability and Interoperability Council (NRIC)¹, initially established in 1992, has developed best practices that are the product of significant research, collaboration, thought and discussion among NRSC participants. These best practices exist as a result of the voluntary efforts and contributions of the industry.

As the Commission explores the development of a broadband clearinghouse, ATIS encourages the Commission to keep several key principles in mind for the clearinghouse to be effective and used as intended. *First*, ATIS notes that the primary objective of best practices is to provide guidance from industry expertise and experience. Best practices are presented to the industry only after sufficient rigor and deliberation warrants designation as a best practice. Hence, ATIS believes that industry involvement through an open consensus-based organization can play a key role in helping to determine which content in the clearinghouse

¹ The NRIC was reconstituted in March 2009 as the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) and its duties among other things include the recommendation of best practices and actions to the FCC to improve the security, reliability, operability, and interoperability of the nation's public safety communications system.

should be designated as a best practice. Without such a review process, the clearinghouse would become a potpourri of broadband information diminishing its intended purpose.

Second, adherence to best practices is and must remain voluntary. Best practices exist primarily because of the voluntary contributions of industry experts. The decision whether or not to implement a specific best practice should be left to an affected organization. Altering the voluntary nature of best practices may have a chilling effect on an organization's willingness to share experiences in a spirit of cooperation and technological advancement. Best practices allow for the latest technologies, learnings and experience to be applied quickly – and nimbly – where as government regulation can be a time-consuming and complex process to create. ATIS believes that it is critical that any clearinghouse recognize that the adoption or implementation of any best practices would be solely on a voluntary basis.

Given the voluntary nature of best practices, ATIS also cautions that a federal government created and maintained broadband clearinghouse may have the unintended consequence of government authorities treating or imposing such best practices as regulations. Hence, ATIS recommends that an industry-neutral organization, such as ATIS that has the proven ability to bring together industry experts and to facilitate the development of best practices through an open and consensus-based process, be responsible for developing and maintaining a national broadband clearinghouse.

Third, the Commission may look to the NRSC's work through the NRIC, as referenced above, as a model for creating a national broadband clearinghouse. The industry's best practices are publically available through an industry-maintained website at

<http://www.bell-labs.com/USA/NRICbestpractices/>.² The NRSC actively maintains its existing best practices on this website and currently has several proposed best practices that it will recommend to the new CSRIC. Currently, there are over 800 best practices on the website, including many existing broadband best practices. These best practices are the result of voluntary broad industry cooperation and involvement that engages technical expertise at various levels. The Commission may want to consider using this website as a forum to maintain new broadband industry best practices. Finally, given ATIS' significant experience in the development of voluntary industry best practices through open and consensus-based processes, ATIS would be interested in serving as such a clearinghouse for broadband best practices.

III. Conclusion

ATIS supports the development and maintenance of voluntary broadband best practice that would enable interested parties and stakeholders to have easy access to broadband information. Additionally, ATIS urges the Commission to ensure that the creation and maintenance of a broadband clearinghouse have appropriate industry-level review particularly by those with the knowledge and expertise to assess the effectiveness and feasibility of a proposed best practice. Additionally, ATIS strongly believes that the broadband clearinghouse would best be maintained by an industry-neutral entity, such as ATIS. ATIS would welcome the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

² The FCC also maintains a similar database of network reliability best practices which can be located at <https://www.fcc.gov/nors/outage/bestpractice/BestPractice.cfm>.

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