

Discover Thomson Reuters



FCC approves TV technology that gives better pictures but less privacy

FCC chief plans to ditch U.S. 'net neutrality' rules

Tenc Face

#BUSINESS NEWS NOVEMBER 16, 2017 / 12:25 PM / 5 DAYS AGO

FCC approves TV technology that gives better pictures but less privacy

David Shepardson

4 MIN READ



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. regulators on Thursday approved the use of new technology that will improve picture quality on mobile phones, tablets and television, but also raises significant privacy concerns by giving advertisers dramatically more data about viewing habits.

Thanksgiving Day holiday shoppers line up with television sets on discount at the Target retail store in Chicago, Illinois, November 28, 2013. REUTERS/Jeff Haynes/File Photo

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission voted 3-2 to allow broadcasters to voluntarily use the new technology, dubbed ATSC 3.0, which would allow for more precise geolocating of television signals, ultra-high

definition picture quality and more interactive programming, like new educational content for children and multiple angles of live sporting events.

The system uses precision broadcasting and targets emergency or weather alerts on a street-by-street basis. The system could allow broadcasters to wake up a receiver to broadcast emergency alerts. The alerts could include maps, storm tracks and evacuation routes.

The new standard would also let broadcasters activate a TV set that is turned off to send emergency alerts.

Current televisions cannot carry the new signal and the FCC on Thursday said it was only requiring broadcasting both signals for five years after deploying the next-generation technology.

Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc last month called the new standard “the Holy Grail” for the advertiser because it tells them who is watching and where.

But Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan said the new technology “contemplates targeted advertisements that would be ‘relevant to you and what you actually might want to see.’ This raises questions about how advertisers and broadcasters will gather the demographic information from consumers which are necessary to do targeted advertisements.”

[nL2N1N11R0]

Democratic Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel said the new technology would force consumers to buy new televisions. “The FCC calls this approach market driven. That’s right — because we will all be forced into the market for new television sets or devices.”

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai defended the proposal, calling concerns about buying new devices “hypothetical.” He added five years is “a long time. We’ll have to see how the standard develops.”

One issue is whether broadcasters will be able to pass on the costs of advanced broadcast signals through higher retransmissions fees and demand providers carry the signals.

The National Association of Broadcasters, which represents Tegna Inc, Comcast Corp, CBS Corp, Walt Disney Co, Twenty-First Century Fox Inc and others, petitioned the FCC in April 2016 to approve the new standard.

“This is game-changing technology for broadcasting and our viewers,” the group said Thursday.

Many companies have raised concerns about costs, including AT&T Inc and Verizon Communications Inc. Cable, satellite and other pay TV providers “would incur significant costs to receive, transmit, and deliver ATSC 3.0 signals to subscribers, including for network and subscriber equipment,” Verizon said.

Many nations are considering the new standard. South Korea adopted the ATSC 3.0 standard in 2016.

Reporting by David Shepardson; Editing by Lisa Shumaker, Chris Sanders and Grant McCool

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

[Apps](#) [Newsletters](#) [Reuters Plus](#) [Advertising Guidelines](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy](#)

All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See [here](#) for a complete list of exchanges and delays.

© 2017 Reuters. All Rights Reserved.

BREAKING NEWS [David Cassidy, 1970s teen heartthrob of 'the Partridge Family,' dies at age 67 - media](#)