

Chairman Dingell at the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet hearing entitled "Digital Future of The United States: Part V: Future of Video"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET HEARING ON "DIGITAL FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES: PART V: FUTURE OF VIDEO"
May 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for holding this hearing. I also want to welcome the distinguished panel of witnesses who appear before the Subcommittee today.

This hearing is the fifth in a series of oversight hearings that examine the digital future of the United States. Each of these hearings has focused on how digital technologies are changing the communications marketplace.

Like many of my colleagues, I have embraced new digital technologies. My iPod holds the kind of music not heard enough on the airwaves -- classical music. And I hope that I can find a way to watch the History Channel more than I do now. I suspect a few of the witnesses could help me with that.

Today's hearing focuses on digital video. I will pay particular attention to the impact of digital video on local media outlets. This Committee has worked in the past to see that local media outlets, including television broadcasters, adequately serve their local communities. It is clear that the advent of digital video is both an opportunity and a challenge for local broadcasters. It is an opportunity to better serve local communities with increased coverage and more delivery options. It also presents challenges to a business model centered on advertising.

The growth of internet video, and the upcoming Digital TV transition, will make more content available to consumers through many avenues: over-the-air, cable, satellite, the Internet, and wireless handsets. I am interested in how this growth could affect consumer access to programming, no matter how they receive it. And not only must we examine consumer access to programming, but also what the growth of digital video means for those who create it.

Broadband is just starting to flex its muscles in the market. A successful broadband policy will foster increased investment by both network operators and those who provide content over those networks.

I have been witness to more than a few fundamental changes in communications technology. I have seen video move from black-and-white to color, to HD, and to fiber optic cables and cell phones. The core principles of localism, diversity, and competition in the local market have guided our decisions in the past, and must continue to do so now.

No matter the method or manner of delivery, those who provide the media have always -- and will always -- assume important responsibilities to America's citizens.

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