

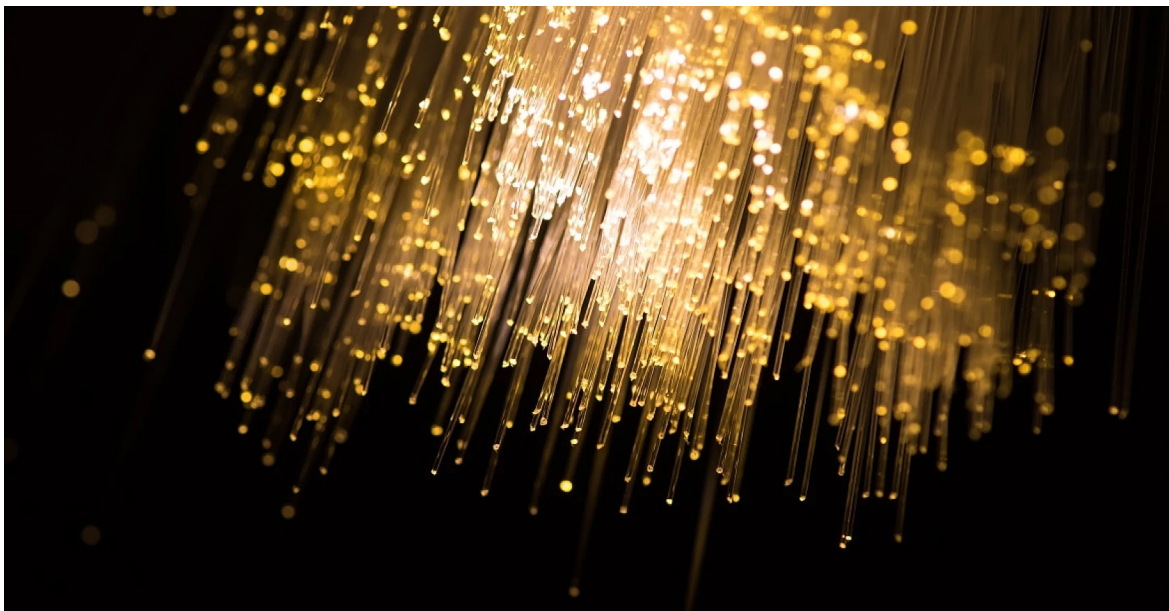


**BROADBAND AND NETWORK**

## **A Lack of Competition Among ISPs Can Cause Ripple Effects**

A surprisingly large number of locations across the United States have little to no competition among Internet service providers, which can lead to expensive — and not always great — service.

September 26, 2024 • [Skip Descant](#)



Areas with poor or no **broadband** service often also suffer from a lack of competition among Internet providers, which can also lead to higher costs for consumers.

“Only about 60 percent of all locations nationwide have competition,” remarked Joe Ross, senior partner and co-founder of Televate LLC, which provides Internet consulting services for government. Ross was speaking on a Sept. 16 panel organized by Broadband Breakfast, a news and policy organization focused on broadband technology.

“There’s still a huge number of households and businesses that don’t have any kind of serious competition at their locations,” he added.

This means that out of the more than 3,100 counties across the nation, in 1,000 of them less than 20 percent of the locations have what can be seen as a competitive broadband landscape, said Ross.

“The vast majority of rural counties have very little competition, while the urban areas, and the suburban areas, have high levels of competition,” he added.

A lack of competition for service generally comes hand-in-hand with higher costs for consumers and poor infrastructure, say industry watchers. And for too many households the cost of a monthly Internet subscription is still too much of a challenge, said Sunne Wright McPeak, president and CEO of the **California Emerging Technology Fund** (CETF).

When Californians were asked about the primary reason they aren’t online, 35.6 percent of those surveyed said affordability was keeping

them from getting online. Only 2.7 percent reported a lack of infrastructure, said McPeak. The rest of those not enrolled had a variety of reasons, including concerns about online safety and digital literacy.

To help close the infrastructure access gap, the state is involved in a massive buildout of middle-mile broadband, bringing Internet infrastructure to some of the most remote parts of the huge state. However, given that the state Legislature has not come up with a replacement for the expired [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP), a federal initiative that provided subsidies to lower-income residents to use toward monthly broadband subscriptions, costs could continue to play a sizable role in keeping households offline.

“If we just build, they will not come,” McPeak remarked. “There has to be a strategy that couples adoption with deployment.”

A lack of competition among Internet service providers in an area can lead to subpar service, say experts. But sometimes, that’s not the reason a particular device in a home is experiencing slow upload and download speeds, said Bryan Darr, vice president of government affairs at Ookla, an Internet speed-testing service.

Older home equipment such as the Wi-Fi router can impact Internet speed, he explained.

“A lot of customers are getting a faster package, sometimes paying for a faster package, and aren't actually experiencing those speeds,” said Darr, speaking on the Broadband Breakfast panel.

“Each of these different things, understanding what’s going on in the customer’s home, what’s going on in the network that they subscribe to, and then what’s going on on the larger Internet, are all independent

measurements that need to be taken into account to fully understand what's happening out there," he added.

Tags: [Broadband](#)[Network](#)



## Skip Descant

Skip Descant writes about smart cities, the Internet of Things, transportation and other areas. He spent more than 12 years reporting for daily newspapers in Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and California. He lives in downtown Yreka, Calif.

**SEE MORE STORIES BY SKIP DESCANT**

**Stay on top of the latest state & local government technology trends.**

Sign up for GovTech Today. Delivered daily to your inbox.

**FREE NEWSLETTER SIGN UP**

---

**Most Read**

**Tech Helps to Address Transit Challenges in New York**

---

**Taylor Swift Fandom Helps Simplify Student Assessment Tool**

---

**Veritone Boosts Its Midwest Presence Via New Tech Deal**

---

**Department of Labor Taps AI to Support Inclusive Hiring**

---

**What does it look like when a drone goes into a hurricane?**

---

**Stay on top of the latest state & local government technology trends.**

Sign up for GovTech Today. Delivered daily to your inbox.

Email Address\*

**FREE NEWSLETTER SIGN UP**

**Events**

**About**

**Webinars**

**Privacy & AI**

**Papers**

**Contact**

**Explainers**

**Advertise**

**Sponsored: Articles and Q&A Videos**

**Sponsored: In Case You Missed It**

**Industry Academy**

**Industry Navigator**

**Stay Up To Date**

Get smart with GovTech. Your guide to technology in state & local government.

**SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS**

**GET THE MAGAZINE**

©2024 All rights reserved. e.Republic LLC

California Residents - Do Not Sell My Personal Information

