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|  | Federal Communications Commission  Washington, D.C. 20554 |

December 31, 2018

**VIA ECFS ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554  
  
Re: Measuring Broadband America Program (Fixed Collaborative), GN Docket No. 12-264  
  
Dear Ms. Dortch,  
  
On November 29, 2018, Members of the Commission Staff met with representatives of broadband providers, public interest groups, companies, and other organizations for a collaborative meeting to discuss plans pertaining to the fixed Measuring Broadband America (MBA) program.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Walter Johnston, Chief, EMCD/OET welcomed all the collaborative members and proceeded with a roll call of all the participants in the room as well as those on the teleconference bridge. He then introduced Ms. Roxanne Robinson, Global Head of Client Services at SamKnows to present the agenda for the meeting.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. **7th and 8th MBA Report Status Update:**

Mr. Johnston changed the agenda slightly in order to include a brief update on the status of the 7th and 8th MBA reports. Based on his meetings with the Commission, he was informed that the two MBA reports would be included as a part of the Technical Appendix for the Wireline Competitive Report which would be voted on December 15. The exact release date had not yet been decided but it is likely to be prior to December 15. Mr. Johnston had requested that the ISPs be provided enough time to look at the two reports and provide feedback to the FCC before the reports are released to the general public. He had, so far, not received any response on that request.

1. **9th MBA report timeline:**

Ms. Robinson mentioned that she had sent out validation requests to all the ISPs on November 28 asking for responses by December 12. She had received intimation back from all the ISPs that this deadline was sufficient for them. The validations are meant to check the exact download and upload speed tier of each participating panelist. For ISPs using multiple technologies, SamKnows has requested that ISPs also specify the access technology used to connect to the individual panelist’s home. Additionally, SamKnows has also requested that the same deadline of December 12 be used by the ISPs to provide subscribership numbers for each of the tiers as a percentage of the total subscriber number for the ISP. SamKnows has already obtained the latest set of 477 data from the FCC which also contains the subscriber numbers for each of the tiers as presented by the ISP to the FCC. Once all the validations are received and processed SamKnows plans to start work on the 9th MBA Report and will provide a first draft of charts to the FCC by January 12, 2019.

1. **Preliminary Reporting Dates:**

SamKnows has tentatively set the time frame of 25 September (inclusive) to 25 October 2018 (inclusive) as the period under which the MBA data would be validated and then used to create the charts for the ninth MBA Report. This proposed time period avoids the dates in early September when parts of North Carolina and Florida were affected. It also avoided the increased traffic resulting from latest IoS release which also took place in early September. SamKnows plans to make one final review before confirming the period of 25 September- 25 October inclusive as the validated time period for which the raw data would be used to create all the charts and data analytics for the 9th MBA Report. Ms. Robinson requested the ISPs to let her know if they had any concerns with these set of dates as the validation period. Mr. Johnston reminded the carriers that according to MBA policy an ISP would need to show inconsistencies or problems with the network during the chosen time frame that were beyond the ISP’s control in order for a new set of validation dates to be considered.

1. **MBA Recruitment:**

Mr. Johnston noted that for the previous year the recruitment period had started late as a result of contract renewal issues. Since there were no such issues for the coming year, SamKnows will be starting the recruitment efforts early and is committed to increasing the number of panelists to at least 100 per tier. Ms. Robinson stated that SamKnows had experienced difficulty in retaining volunteers and that many of them were hesitant to connect the whiteboxes supplied to them due to concerns about the legitimacy of the program and worries that the whitebox could disrupt their service. As a consequence SamKnows, working closely with the FCC, is committed to creating press releases and blog posts on the MBA program to get more publicity for the program. Additionally, SamKnows is creating a new website to let volunteers know what the aims and objectives of the MBA program are, to let them knowwho are the stakeholders for the program, what the benefits are to the volunteers who participate in the program and also to provide participants with useful and practical information on setting up the whiteboxes they receive from Sam Knows. The aim of this web page is to engage volunteers and to retain them for a longer time. A few slides were presented by Ms. Robinson to show draft pages on the new website. SamKnows would be sending details of the proposed new website to all the ISPs and requested them to check the design and contents of the proposed website and to send SamKnows any feedback they may have to help improve it.

1. **Any other business:**

In response to Mr. Johnston’s query whether any of the participants had any questions or something else they would like to discuss, Mr. Alec MacDonell, Telecommunications Systems Specialist, Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB), rose to thank the Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) and SamKnows for the development and update of the data collection software efforts which had been used by the WCB for setting various benchmarks in the new Connect America Funds (CAF) limits which had been conveyed in various public notices. There has been a dearth of publicly available data on data usage of consumers and the MBA program has been one of the few places where such data has been made publicly available. This is extremely useful for the Commission to provide valid numbers to base its regulatory policies on. Mr. Johnston reciprocated the vote of thanks by pointing out that this was a two-way street and that the OET and the MBA program had benefitted just as much from the help provided by the WCB and its staff in improving the MBA program.

Mr. Henning Schulzrinne, professor at Columbia University, asked if the raw and validated data would be released along with the 7th and 8th MBA Reports. Mr. Johnston responded by mentioning that the aim is to release the data close to the issuance of the Reports but that there is typically a short period of time after the Reports are made public before the data is published. Mr. Schulzrinne noted that Mr. Johnston was retiring by the end of the year and thanked him for his services to the FCC and to the MBA program.

Mr. Johnston concluded the meeting by thanking all the attendees for their active participation. He expected that not all the participants may be available to attend the last meeting of the MBA on December 20, and consequently wished everyone a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year.

Sincerely,  
  
/s/ Rajender Razdan  
  
Rajender Razdan, Electronics Engineer,  
Electromagnetic Compatibility Division/OET  
Federal Communications Commission

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1. A list of attendees is attached to this filing in GN Docket No. 12-264. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SamKnows presentation is attached to this filing in GN Docket No. 12-264. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)