

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

Since the broadcast flag would prevent non-compliant devices to play back and possibly, to record flagged content, I believe it would impose both a financial burden and restrict fair use rights that I now enjoy. Content providers are paid at the time of the original broadcast. I don't think the public should be forced to buy new equipment, or lose the ability to record for later viewing/listening, or move the content to a different media, such as a car or even another room, just so providers can create a NEW right to charge consumers every time they wish to use content that was freely distributed for a profit already.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? I don't think there is sufficient evidence to know this. However, the danger certainly exists since the reported purpose of the flags is to prevent "illegal" copying and transmission over the Internet, which uses much the same protocols as home networks.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

Again, there is insufficient knowledge of proposed standards. Given the industry's strong support for the Hollings bill, which would require ALL digital devices to contain hard-wired copyright protection devices, I would certainly suspect that legacy hardware would become incompatible with flagged media and compliant devices.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

I believe it would seriously retard innovation by forcing all manufacturers to adhere to a quickly outdated, legislated set of standards.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Unknown. However, if new equipment must be purchased, the impact on consumers will be highly significant. Many will not be able to afford digital content. The gap between technological haves and have-nots will continue to broaden.

Other Comments:

The publishers must not be allowed to force the entire consumer population to give up fair use rights they currently possess because they wish to cling to old, self-advantageous business models. Indeed, they are attempting to create entirely new rights for themselves to control the time, location and use of the content they provide. They are even attempting to create the new opportunity to ensure a profit for themselves for every single use of their content. That should NOT be allowed. The FCC should be concerned with the needs and rights of the public, not publishing companies which are in no danger of failing to make a profit.