December 21, 2009

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: NBP Public Notice #27
CS Docket No. 97-80, GN Docket Nos. 09-47, 09-51, 09-137

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The 1394 Trade Association (the "1394 TA") respectfully submits these Comments on the Commission's NBP Public Notice #27 addressing Video Device Innovation. Today MVPDs, through their control of the set-top box, keep retail video devices from accessing content that consumers want to watch. The Commission should remedy this problem by mandating bi-directional functionality in order to spur video device innovation. The Commission already has adopted IEEE 1394 as a network interface device standard. The Commission should retain the IEEE 1394 standard and expand its functionality, because IEEE 1394 is versatile, efficiently carries both IP data traffic and HD video traffic, can be upgraded via software, and protects content.[1]

Section 76.640(b)(4) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 76.640(b)(4), established a standard connector for a true bi-directional network, IEEE 1394, with which consumer video devices could be attached to an MVPD set-top box. But after initial market excitement for IEEE 1394, consumers and manufacturers discovered that the cable multiple system operators ("MSOs") were limiting the functionality of the IEEE 1394 bus. Instead of enhancing the consumer experience by making program guide information available for advanced programming and adding remote control commands to control the set-top box from the TV, it became clear to the TV manufacturers that the MSOs were only meeting the very minimum of the FCC mandate

[1] The 1394 TA has previously provided the Commission with specifications to enhance set-top box functionality. *See* Notice of Ex Parte Presentation filed May 15, 2008 by the 1394 TA in CS Docket No. 97-80. The 1394 TA included in its presentation (and in its ex parte notice) information about the importance of a fully functional IEEE 1394 interface in cable operator-provided high-definition set-top boxes, proposed text of a new Commission rule to require support for interactive digital cable products on digital cable systems, and information on the CEA-2027-B standard.

which was to provide, as an output only, the video channel you are tuned to and very little remote control capability.

While the FCC mandate set forth in Section 76.640(b)(4) sets the ground work for interactive capability by requiring the IEEE 1394 technology to be included in every digital cable set-top box, it did not impose functionality requirements to allow the enhanced capabilities that consumers desire from their MVPD or MSO. The Commission should do so now. The 1394 TA believes that there are no technological barriers to enabling bi-directional functionality via software updates to the existing 25 million set-top boxes with IEEE 1394 in consumer's homes today. Contrast this with what happens if the Commission adopts a new standard, and 25 million set-top boxes become obsolete.

IEEE 1394 can efficiently carry Internet protocol traffic (data) at the same time as high definition video traffic. That is why IEEE 1394 should be the Commission's standard for agnostic video devices. Significantly, IEEE 1394 technology can transmit IP protocol as efficiently as Ethernet while maintaining a quality of video and audio streaming services that Ethernet can not.

IEEE 1394 is very versatile. IEEE 1394 home networks have been demonstrated over existing in-residence cabling. IEEE 1394 is highly capable of home networking using the same Category 5 cables as Ethernet, and supporting many other cable options including shielded twisted-pair and optical fiber. IEEE 1394 can also be carried on residential-grade coaxial cable and splitters in full co-existence with established analog and digital cable TV systems, using standards recently completed by the 1394 TA. Set-top boxes, DVRs, and HDTVs with IEEE 1394 employ DTCP content protection. DTCP also includes the localization requirements that provide the content protection firewall between residences on the same MVPD or MSO network.

IEEE 1394 is ideal for home networking and is also being continually improved. The 1394 TA, with the cooperation of the High Definition Audio Video Network Alliance ("HANA"), has demonstrated products and developed technical specifications for innovative video devices to be used in a home network.[2] 1394 is continually improved through the efforts of the 1394 TA and its members. In support of set-top boxes currently in use and being deployed in the U.S. market, the 1394 TA is in the final stages of approving a USA Set Top Box Test Specification (TS2008003) to enable consistent compliance and interoperability testing of devices that work with the set-top box. For consumer education, the 1394 TA has championed the availability of free Linux software that enables easy recording from the set-top box over 1394.

The 1394 TA submits that MSOs and other MVPDs must be required by the Commission to provide bi-directional network access for these innovative video devices which would attach to existing set-top boxes and existing residential networks over the IEEE-1394 connector and network mandated by Section 76.640 of the Commission's rules.

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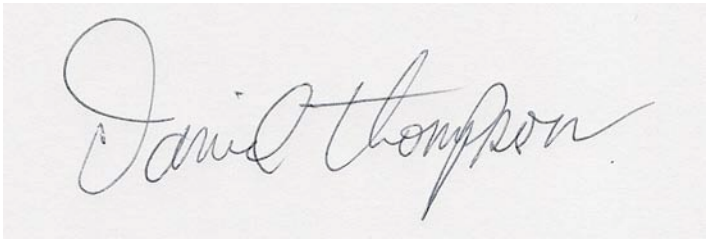
[2] The following specifications and guidelines have been published by the 1394 TA for building consumer HANA products: TS 2009010 Content Protection Specification TC-2008-0001; TS 2009011 HANA 2.1 Content Services Draft TC-2009-0001; and TB2009012 060418 HANA Design Guideline Final Draft.

Respectfully submitted,

1394 TRADE ASSOCIATION



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David Thompson
Secretary, 1394 Trade Association
315 Lincoln, Suite E
Mukilteo, WA 98275
dave.thompson@lsi.com