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With the proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner Cable, an emboldened Comcast will suddenly have a presence in every major media market in the United States, stretching from Los Angeles to New York City.

It would turn the behemoth into a titan, expanding Comcast's reach and power in unprecedented ways. Tie in the fact that Comcast also owns NBCUniversal which means it has a movie studio as well as broadcast and cable networks of its own and you're looking at a vertically integrated media juggernaut. One that wouldn't just be in control of our televisions, but would be ready to steer the direction of any future online services as well.

An enlarged Comcast would be the bully in the schoolyard, able to dictate terms to content creators, internet companies, other communications networks that must interconnect with it, and distributors who must access its content.

For consumers, there are numerous concerns. Comcast is already a regular subject of suspicion when it comes to throttling internet speeds it currently sits in the bottom four in Netflix's monthly ISP speed index and the company hasn't been shy about giving preferential data-cap treatment to its own video apps. In theory marketplace competition should already be addressing some of these concerns, but as anyone that's moved recently will tell you, there's already precious little overlap between cable providers as it is. Some geographic regions have just a single provider, while others have an incumbent and a disadvantaged challenger that lacks the incumbent's ability to spend endlessly on infrastructure improvement and content deals. Satellite providers like DirecTV aren't a viable alternative for fast internet service, and most of the country doesn't have access to next-generation services like Verizon's FiOS, which even Verizon itself has said it doesn't care to expand beyond its current market area.

Realistically, there's no way to avoid it: approving Comcast's purchase of Time Warner Cable would essentially rip away the already perishingly tiny hope of new competition ever emerging in the cable landscape, taking what's been a constant frustration for consumers and cementing it into a permanent state of affairs.