Micro-windmills can recharge cell phones | NetworkWorld.com

From www.networkworld.com - January 16, 2014 PM

Researchers at the University of Texas at Arlington have designed a miniscule windmill with a micro-generator that can be used to recharge mobile devices.

Smitha Rao, a university research associate, and J.-C. Chiao, an electrical engineering professor, designed the micro-windmills. The two have filed for a patent for the devices, which are about 1.8 mm at their widest point.

A single grain of rice could hold about 10 of the tiny devices, and the researchers believe hundreds of them could be embedded in a cell phone sleeve for recharging purposes. Once the sleeve is on the phone, a user would simply wave the device in the air or set the phone in a windy place to get the tiny propeller blades turning, allowing the micro-generators to produce electricity.

The windmills compared to a penny. The wind generators are about 1.8 mm at their widest point.

The researchers' work attracted the attention of Taiwanese electro-mechanical fabrication company WinMEMSTechnologies, which has the researchers brainstorming on designs.

"The company was quite surprised with the micro-windmill idea when we showed them the video of working devices," Rao said in a statement. "It was something completely out of the blue for them and their investors."

The idea for the windmills was originally a blend of origami concepts and conventional wafer-scale semiconductor device layouts created so the complex 3-D moveable mechanical structures can be self-assembled from two-dimensional metal pieces using planar multiplexer electroplating techniques.

"The micro-windmills work well because the metal alloy is flexible and Smitha's design follows minimalism for functionality," Chiao said in a statement.

Click headline to read more—
in the 1990s," and arguing that more regulation is harmful.

Not so, said Jessica Gonzalez, executive vice president of the National Hispanic Media Coalition, who has testified before the FCC and other government bodies representing Latino civil rights in the age of the internet. She spoke with The Real News about her concerns.

Responding to the former FCC commissioner McDowell’s comment, Gonzalez said, "We hear this one all the time. The truth is that network neutrality is important in ensuring what the Court even recognized was a virtuous cycle of innovation that happens online, edge providers creating opportunities not just for people to tell their stories, but also economic opportunities at the edge." She added, "And that’s exactly why the net neutrality rules are so important. They ensure equality and fairness on the internet, and they are a catalyst for economic growth."

Gonzalez cited Verizon’s intentions to break Net Neutrality if the FCC’s rules were removed, and explained why that’s bad for Latinos on the internet.

Click headline to read more--

PA: Commissioners support KCnet broadband grant application | Lock Haven Express

From www.lockhaven.com • Today, 11:40 AM

The Clinton County commissioners took two actions Thursday in support of KCnet’s application for a grant, the money of which would greatly expand broadband network capabilities throughout the Northern Tier.

There aren’t any guarantees, however.

This is the third year the Keystone Community Network - better known as KCnet - has entered into the competitive grant process in an effort to obtain $1.5 million for expansion. The first two efforts were turned away.

The Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) is a Pennsylvania grant program administered by the Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects.

The commissioners approved a resolution yesterday designating the county as “grantee” of the RACP funding.

That means the county government has agreed to act as a pass-through agency for any financial resources if KCnet’s grant application is successful.

We Fight Today for a Better Tomorrow | FreePress.com

From www.freepress.net • Today, 11:29 AM

Monday marks the official commemoration of what would have been Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 82nd birthday. For many around this country (and the world) it will be a day of remembrance, reflection and service to others.

For my 6-year-old daughter, it is a day off school.

Like many kids her age, she asks a lot of questions. She wanted to know why it was a holiday, so I explained to her who Dr. King was, and why we as a nation honor his legacy. I did this at a level that a 6-year-old can understand, and I hope she’s learned something different about the man who will be remembered today.
Iowa: QC chamber pushes broadband | Quad City Times

From qctimes.com - Today, 11:33 AM

Fresh off their first weeks of the 2014 session, Quad-City area legislators got a reminder of the business community's wish list Friday.

Among the priorities: extending broadband Internet capacity and filling the skills gap.

The meeting Friday was the first of a series of the sessions that legislators were to take part in over a two-day period.

Today, the public also can get face time with them.

Quad-City Chamber of Commerce president Tara Barney said of the need for broadband expansion is important not only in Iowa's rural areas, but in cities, too.

"A lot of our businesses need huge capacity," she said. "We're talking about data centers and initiatives now that are using big, big, big capacity."

In his Condition of the State address last week, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad called for property tax breaks to encourage development of "ultra-high speed" Internet capability. He also encouraged repurposing the Iowa Communications Network to allow for private purchase.

Connect Iowa, a nonprofit that partners with the state's economic development agency, says 98 percent of the state's homes have access to basic Internet speeds, but it drops to 82 percent of 6 megabits per second. Fewer than half have access to speeds of 50 megabits per second.

Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix, who was in the Quad-City area for the session, said there is widespread interest but noted it is early in the session.

"We need to know more about what the governor's proposing," Dix said afterward. "Clearly, I think there's broad interest there in just making sure we're providing incentives to the private sector to make those investments."

Net neutrality is dead. Bow to Comcast and Verizon, your overlords | LATimes.com

From www.latimes.com - Today, 10:09 AM

Advocates of a free and open Internet could see this coming, but today's ruling from a Washington appeals court striking down the FCC's rules protecting the open net was worse than the most dire forecasts. It was "even more eminently disastrous than anyone expected," in the words of one veteran advocate for network neutrality.

The Court of Appeals for the D.C. circuit thoroughly eviscerated the Federal Communications Commission's latest legal attempt to prevent Internet
Internet Governance 2020 -
Geopolitics and the Future of the
Internet | State.gov

From www.state.gov • Today, 10:14
Am
Remarks
Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda
Deputy Assistant Secretary and
U.S. Coordinator for International
Communications and Information
Policy, Bureau of Economic and
Business Affairs

Center for Strategic and
International Studies (CSIS)

Washington, DC

January 23, 2014

Thank you very much. I appreciate the invitation to help frame and initiate the discussion of the experts on the panel will conduct. It is an impressive panel with folks that have lived through the more than decade long debate over Internet governance, what it means, and where it is headed. I am familiar with their work and it helps inform my own.

Let me start at the end and work my way backwards. Last week, FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn and I visited Mexico to conduct a series of meetings on bilateral and multilateral technology and telecommunications issues. In the process we took the opportunity to visit with a group of young entrepreneurs who were using technology and the global Internet as a platform for developing new businesses using the assistance and guidance provided to them at Telefonica's tech accelerator, an organization called WAYRA.

As government officials, we were the only people in the room wearing suits and we raised the average age somewhat, but we were thrilled to see what was happening and what these young Mexican entrepreneurs were doing. They were working on innovative ways to link parents with teachers, retailers with customers and doctors with patients. The ideas were innovative, the energy was high, and the enthusiasm boundless.

As public servants, those of us in this Administration work with our friends and colleagues at home and abroad to create a legal and regulatory framework domestically and internationally that enables the kind of optimism and pursuit of happiness that we saw at Wayra in Mexico.

Underlying the capacity of those young people to innovate and reach the world without having to jump through regulatory hoops or ask anyone for permission are two concepts U.S. policymakers and others seek to preserve — an open Internet, governed by a broad range of decision makers, including industry, government and civil society and free-market competition in telecommunications networks.

The subject of this panel is (1) how to understand and help evolve the framework of Internet governance to increase the inclusion of those who feel that they are left out and (2) how to defend the concepts of diffuse, multistakeholder governance from challenges to its legitimacy and from efforts to change the way the Internet operates in a manner that would make it harder for those young people in Mexico — and others in the world like them — to succeed.

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Net Neutrality Through
Regulation and Competition | The
Inquisitr.com

From www.inquisitr.com • Today, 9:34 AM

Net Neutrality through regulation and competition might sound like mixing

scooped by Chuck Shenwood, Senior Associate, TeleDimensions, Inc.

‘A FEMA-level fail’: The law professor who coined ‘net neutrality’ lashes out at the FCC’s legal strategy | WashPost.com

From www.washingtonpost.com | Today, 9:57 AM

Back in 2003, when he was a law professor at the University of Virginia, Tim Wu wrote the definitive paper on net neutrality. The information scholar coined the term in an essay proposing how regulations could keep the internet free and open for everybody.

On Tuesday, a U.S. appeals court struck down the Federal Communications Commission’s net neutrality rules.

Wu, now a professor at Columbia Law School, spoke with The Washington Post about the ruling and its effect on internet access and about what the FCC should do next.

Click headline to read the interview with Tim Wu—

more...

Merit Collaborates With OARnet and Local Community in Hillsdale, Michigan | community broadband networks

From www.navigator.org | January 21, 14:20 PM

A recent press release from the Merit educational and research network in Michigan announces a new connection to its Ohio sister, OARnet.

Member entities and local communities now enjoy better redundancy, expanded reach, and better services. Local communities continue to benefit from the presence of the middle mile infrastructure.

The network helps local Hillsdale College to cut connectivity costs; the Merit announcement quotes Hillsdale College leadership:

“Hillsdale College has been a Merit member since 1982,” stated David Zenz, executive director of information technology services for Hillsdale College, “and it was always a dream to figure out some way to eliminate expensive data circuit costs to free up funds to purchase more bandwidth. In 2008 The City of Hillsdale, the Hillsdale Intermediate School District, Hillsdale College, and Merit figured out how to do just that.”

Through a long-term collaborative effort, Merit, the City of Hillsdale, Hillsdale Board of Public Utilities (BPU), Hillsdale College, and Hillsdale County Intermediate School District (ISD) came together to establish the Hillsdale Community Network. Each entity now benefits from lowered connectivity costs, better infrastructure, and improved opportunities.

A 2009 story from Merit, describes the situation at ISD:

Open Letter From Security Researchers Explains How NSA Has Weakened Our Communications Infrastructure | Techdirt.com

From www.techdirt.com • January 24, 2014 6:45 PM

Among the many problems with President Obama’s weak statement concerning NSA surveillance was the fact that he didn’t even address the serious issue of the NSA undermining cryptography with backdoors. The White House’s task force had included a recommendation to end this practice, and the President appeared to ignore it entirely.

Now, a large group of US computer security and cryptography researchers have sent a strongly worded open letter to the President condemning these efforts (and his failure to stop the program).

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Broadband comes up at Minnesota State Economic Competitiveness Summit | Blandin on Broadband

From blandinonbroadband.org • January 24, 8:47 PM

It was interesting to attend the DEED Conference this week – State Economic Competitiveness Summit. Danna Mackenzie, new director of the Office of Broadband facilitated a session on broadband and economic development that included Wade Fauth of Blandin Foundation.

The Blandin Foundation blog posted excerpts from Wade’s talk...

Click headline to read more--
Civil Liberties Board Completely Destroys Arguments For Bulk Metadata Collection: Program Is Both Illegal And Unconstitutional | Techdirt.com

From www.techdirt.com - January 24, 5:36 PM
As expected, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) has come out with its quite scathing report concerning the federal government's interpretation of Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act.

The full report is quite readable and well worth reading, no matter how familiar you are with the program. If you're not familiar, it lays out all the details. If you are familiar, it still may fill in a number of useful gaps as well.

While the full recommendations and conclusions were not supported unanimously by the board, the majority did agree that not only is the program unconstitutional, but that it involves a gross misinterpretation of the law. The executive summary makes the point pretty clearly:

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Scooped by Chuck Sherwood, Senior Associate, TeleDimensions, Inc

Two U.S. Jurisdictions Among World's Most Intelligent Communities | GovTech.com

From www.govtech.com - January 24, 6:02 PM
Two U.S. jurisdictions — Arlington County, Va. and Columbus, Ohio — made the finals in the run-up to "Intelligent Community of the Year," an international competition designed to showcase those communities that use information technology to build prosperity and solve social problems while enriching local culture.

Each year, the New York-based Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) selects 21 communities, then narrows it to seven. Finally, in July, one community takes the top prize, but everyone benefits from shared best practices and innovation.

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Scooped by Chuck Sherwood, Senior Associate, TeleDimensions, Inc

S. Korea to spend $1.5 bn on 5G 'movie-in-a-second' service | AFP

From www.google.com - January 24, 5:27 PM
South Korea, already one of the most wired countries on earth, Wednesday announced a 1.6 trillion
The Logan Journal recently reported that the Russellville Electric Plant Board (EPB) now offers gigabit service to local businesses. The article notes that NetIndex, an online tool to measure download and upload speeds, recognizes EPB as the first Gig city in Kentucky. To learn more about the community and its network, we talked with Robert White, General Manager of EPB.

The community of 7,000 is the county seat of south central Logan County, Russellville is located in the center of several other larger communities: Nashville, Bowling Green, Hopkinsville, and Clarksville, Tennessee. Manufacturing has been a large part of the local economy for generations, but community leaders recognize the vulnerability of a narrow economic base. In order to encourage a versatile economy, Russellville invested in its telecommunications utility.

The community wants to encourage small business while simultaneously providing manufacturers the connectivity they need. Leadership sees the ability to remain competitive directly tied to their network. In addition to the economic development opportunities a fiber network can provide, communities like Russellville rely on electricity revenue from large consumers. Retaining the large electric consumers that also provide jobs in the community it a must.

Russellville’s electric utility created a strong advantage when it was time to venture into telecommunications. EPB had already established a strong relationship with its Russellville customers, says White, and locals felt they could trust their municipal electric provider.

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OH: First 'Bid for Better Broadband' Customers Now on Network in Columbus | SYS-CON Media

From www.syscon.com - January 24, 00 PM

Capaciti Networks, a wholly owned division of Competitive Companies, Inc., today announced its first "Bid for Better Broadband" business wireless installations in Columbus, Ohio. "Bid for Better Broadband" is the industry's first initiative which allows business owners to name their own price and pick their own broadband plan.

"We are fortunate to have successful sales and installations after only a month with 'Bid for Better Broadband' rolled out on the website," said William H. Gray, President and CEO of Capaciti Networks. "The early adopters of our better broadband are happy with the service and we’re ahead of our plan in acquiring new customers."

"Bid for Better Broadband" is available on Capaciti Networks' website at www.capacitinetworks.com and offers either preset or custom plans up to 100 Mbps.

"After struggling for the past couple of years with unreliable and overpriced internet access provided by the three largest telecom companies, I jumped at the opportunity to try out Capaciti's service at my downtown office," said attorney Kevin M. Maloney of Columbus, Ohio. "I am pleased to report that I could not be happier with the results." He also said, "I am finally now under the best reliable high-speed internet service that you provide.
who leads the Media and Democracy Reform Initiative at Common Cause.

On Wednesday, Copps wrote a blog post titled, "The Buck Stops At the FCC," calling upon the commission to "reclassify broadband as "telecommunications" under Title II of the Communications Act." The effect of that move would be to designate Internet service providers as "common carriers," making them subject to increased FCC regulation.

Such a move would bring fierce opposition from telecommunications companies and their friends in Congress. But the FCC's previous failure to reclassify broadband blew up in its face when a court ruled that the agency couldn't impose anti-blocking and anti-discrimination regulations on ISPs because they aren't classified as common carriers.

"The good news is that the solution is pretty simple," Copps wrote. "It doesn't require a new telecommunications statute replete with time-consuming years of legislative horse-trading and special interest lobbying. All it requires is an FCC big enough to own up to its previous mistakes and courageous enough to put our communications future back on track."

Net Neutrality Dies With a Whimper, Not a Bang in Canada | DSLReports.com

From www.dslreports.com - January 24, 4:18 PM
As we've been discussing, if ISPs are going to violate network neutrality now that we have no protection rules, it won't be by the outright blocking of content or services, given that would bring down the hammer of government intervention. Instead, more subtle ways of being anti-competitive are going to be the norm: anti-competitive behavior will be buried under faux-technical necessity (see Verizon's incessant blocking of competing products and services) or the guise of "innovative" pricing – whatever keeps most consumers generally confused and apathetic and therefore regulators and the press quiet.

In the States AT&T's "sponsored data" is a perfect example, promising users "free data" that doesn't count against their cap, while really giving AT&T significantly more power while giving deeper-pocketed content companies an advantage over startups and small companies. AT&T erects entirely arbitrary and artificially low limits then erects tolls to bypass them; regulators stand mute. Congress sits mired in partisan gridlock, and network neutrality quietly dies under a smattering of consumer applause.

In Canada, Professor Michael Geist (via Techdirt) points out that ISPs there, already having received government approval to aggressively gouge users (and of course profit from the bandwidth they steal), have already implemented their very own "sponsored data." It's the thin edge of the wedge.

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Colbert On Net Neutrality | Multichannel.com

From www.multichannel.com - January 24, 4:50 PM
Comedy Central's Stephen Colbert took aim at the D.C. court's network-neutrality ruling on his show Thursday night (Jan. 23), a decision he joked created "the new paradigm of holding content hostage," and which he cited as being reported by the Internet's "frenemy," television.

The bit included urging viewers to rise up against the cable companies, but his rallying cry was cut short when the picture broke up and displayed one of those annoying buffer icons as though the stream were being degraded online. After that, his tune changed to one of lauding praise for cable.

That was followed by an interview with "The Master Switch" author and Columbia law professor Tim Wu, taking claim for coming up with the term "network neutrality" and saying cable and phone companies want to impose a toll on the Internet to reach their customers. "The cable and phone companies position is 'we would like more money,' " he said. "And last time I checked I think they have enough money."

WI: Sun Prairie project could bring 'Super Internet' to residents, businesses | Channel3000.com

Scooped by Chuck Sherwood, Senior Associate, TeleDimensions, Inc.

Why Do Washington, D.C. Residents Pay the Highest Internet Costs in the Country? | DCist.com

From dcist.com - January 24, 4:39 PM

Guess what, D.C.? You're paying a lot of money to connect to the Internet.

Internet costs in D.C. are higher than any other city in the country, a report from The WhitePine Index reveals. According to the report, D.C. residents are paying an average of more than $60 dollars a month to connect to the Internet. That's nearly $20 more than the national monthly average.

So why does it cost so much?

Well, there's a simple answer and a not-so-simple answer. One explanation is that D.C. has the fastest broadband speeds in the country. The most recent "State of the Internet" report from Akamai—a cloud services provider—shows that D.C. has the fastest broadband speed out of any state in the U.S., with an average speed of 11.4 Mbps in the second quarter of 2013.

Getting Internet speeds like that certainly isn't cheap. But Patrick Lucey, a policy program associate at the New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute, thinks the answer isn't so simple. "It could be a reflection of people in D.C. subscribing to faster service so they're paying more," he says, "but it's also clearly a reflection of the different places that people have different services available."

Right now, Comcast is the dominant Internet and cable service provider in D.C., and it has been for years. But while Comcast is available everywhere in the city, competing service providers RCN and Verizon FIOS are only available in certain parts of the city. Before the Cable Act of 1992, cable companies could sign exclusive franchise agreements with entire towns or areas to provide blanketed service, essentially monopolizing their business in different areas. Because of that, Comcast has much more physical infrastructure than RCN or FIOS to connect residents in D.C. with service.

Up until 2007, service providers were allowed to sign exclusive deals with entire apartment buildings or complexes to create micro-monopolies. "The FCC has since banned those, but their legacy still leaves challenges for competitive choice," Lucey says. "Even though they can't physically exclude other companies from buildings anymore, it doesn't necessarily change the wiring on the ground for most buildings."

In order for companies like RCN and FIOS to be more widely available, they'd have to build out their own physical infrastructure to individual residents, which, of course, isn't cheap. "They'd have to build out their own pipes to your house instead of being able to jump a competitor's network or if there was municipal, publicly owned infrastructure everyone could use to," Lucey says.

However, the idea of creating municipal broadband networks—publicly owned broadband infrastructure—is an idea that still needs a lot of work.