



FCC Seeks Comment on Collection, Use and Dissemination of Data

The FCC collects a lot of data from broadcasters, and broadcasters spend a lot of time and money preparing and submitting this data. Last month, the Commission initiated an examination of its data practices "...to improve the way the Commission collects, uses and disseminates data," and broadcasters now have an opportunity to comment on these practices. An important goal of this effort, according to the FCC, is to "...eliminate unnecessary data collection while ensuring that the FCC has the information needed for sound analysis and policy making."

Three Public Notices were released simultaneously last month by the FCC's Wireline Competition, Wireless Telecommunications and Media Bureaus announcing this initiative. Included in each Public Notice is an Internet link to a "working inventory of data items to help facilitate comments" in the form of a downloadable Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The Media Bureau's spreadsheet lists 140 separate forms and rule provisions which involve data collection, an excerpt from which is shown in the table below. Of particular interest in this spreadsheet are Internet links to what are called "Recent Supporting Statements" for the vast majority of these items.

Included in these Supporting Statements is a plethora of information regarding the item in question, including the justification for the data collection effort (for example, under which FCC rule part it is required), and annual statistics on the number of respondents as well as estimated "in-house" costs (incurred by the broadcaster's employees) and other costs incurred by the broadcaster in submitting the data, for example, fees paid to consulting engineers and outside counsel. As can be seen from the figures in the table (which are taken from the Supporting Statements), broadcasters are collectively spending a lot of money on data collection efforts required by the FCC.

In the Public Notice, the Media Bureau asks for comments and recommendations on the following:

- The utility and rationale for each of its existing data collections. Specifically, which data collections it should continue collecting; what alterations should be made to specific data items collected; and, which data collections the Bureau can eliminate without reducing the effectiveness of its decision making;
- Additional data that commenters believe the Bureau needs to inform Commission policymaking activities. The Bureau requests that commenters focus their efforts on identifying data that the Commission has not previously recognized it must obtain, rather than reiterating the need for collections that already are under consideration. Commenters should identify and explain in detail the rationale for:
 - additional data that should be collected;
 - the method(s) through which the Bureau should collect the data (for example, via purchase from third parties, primary research, new forms, etc.);
 - expected costs and burdens to the Bureau, industry and the public; and
 - any confidentiality or other issues that would impact the Bureau's collection or reporting of the data;
- How the FCC may improve collection and analysis processes for existing collections. In particular, the Bureau seeks recommendations on how it can reduce production burdens by use of technology or improved practices. Commenters should identify and explain in detail the rationale for:
 - data collections that could be improved (including OMB PRA number, if applicable);
 - proposed improvements and how they could be implemented;
 - expected reduction in burdens or cost savings to the Bureau, industry or the public;
 - data analysis and practices that the Bureau should undertake, the capabilities required to do so and the

anticipated benefits each proposed improvement provides to the Bureau's data collection, use and analysis; and

- any confidentiality or other issues that would impact the Bureau's implementation of the proposed improvements;

FCC FORM NO.	TITLE	ANNUAL STATISTICS TOTALS		
		NO. OF RESPONDENTS	"IN-HOUSE" COST	CONSULTANT/ATTY/ OTHER COSTS
301	App. for Const. Permit for Commercial Broadcast Sta.	4,453	\$946,995.70	\$85,096,314
302-AM	App. for AM Broadcast Sta. License	380	\$134,624	\$10,075,600
302-FM	App. for FM Broadcast Sta. License	925	\$150,732.80	\$417,250
314, 315	App. for Consent to Assignment of Broadcast Sta. Const. Permit or License, FCC Form 314; App. for consent to Transfer Control of Entity Holding Broadcast Sta. Const. Permit	4,820	\$886,758.67	\$51,744,650
316	App. for Consent to Assignment of Broadcast Sta. Const. Permit or License or.....	750	\$59,138.40	\$711,150
317	Annual DTV Report, FCC Form 317; Section 73.624(g)	1,815	\$523,591.20	\$181,500
323	Ownership Report for Commercial Broadcast Sta.	9,250	\$1,833,050	\$26,940,000
340	App. for TV Broadcast Sta. License; Application for Const. Permit for Reserved Channel Noncommercial Educational (NCE) Broadcast Sta.. . .	1,560	\$322,136.00	\$27,894,950
345	App. for Consent to Assign Const. Permit or License for TV or FM Translator Sta. or Low Power Television Sta. or to Transfer Control of Entity Holding TV or FM....	1,700	\$128,229.36	\$2,678,025
346	App. for Authority to Construct or Make Changes in a Low Power TV, TV Translator or TV Booster Sta.	3,500	\$308,350	\$10,493,000
347	App. for Low Power TV, TV Translator, TV Booster Sta. License	300	\$17,930.25	\$36,000

● How it may improve dissemination of reports and analyses it produces. In this regard, the Bureau also seeks comment on how it should implement the National Broadband Plan recommendations that (1) the Commission have a “general policy of making the data it collects available to the public, including via the Internet in a broadband data depository, except in certain circumstances such as when the data are competitively sensitive or protected by copyright,” and (2) “the FCC should implement a process to make additional data that is not accessible by the public available to academic researchers and others, subject to appropriate restrictions to protect confidentiality of competitively sensitive materials.” Commenters should identify and explain in detail the rationale for:

- Bureau reports or data for which access or dissemination could be improved;
- proposals for improving access or dissemination, (for example, how to handle data which is claimed to be proprietary in nature);

- expected burdens, costs, or cost savings to the Bureau, industry or the public;
- any confidentiality or other issues that would impact the Bureau's implementation of the improvements.

Interested parties may file comments on or before August 13, 2010, and reply comments on or before September 13, 2010. Filings in this proceeding should be captioned "MB Data Review," and filed in MB Docket No. 10-103. The full text of the Media Bureau Public Notice (including instructions for filing comments) is available on the FCC's Web site at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-1195A1.pdf. Links to all three Public Notices and data collection spreadsheets are available at <http://reboot.fcc.gov/data/review/>

Mark your Calendars!
The 60th Annual IEEE Broadcast Symposium
Westin Hotel • Alexandria, Va.
October 20-22, 2010



The 60th Annual IEEE Broadcast Symposium will feature a full and varied technical program with a day of tutorials dealing with ATSC Mobile and IBOC issues along with presentations from around the world on important and significant new developments in radio engineering, ATSC Systems and DTV Transmission issues. A panel on spectrum issues related to

the FCC's Broadband Plan will feature experts from the broadcast industry and government.

Luncheon keynote speakers include Jim Martin, Director ISR Programs, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense and James E. O'Neal, broadcast historian and technology editor for New Bay Media's TV Technology. The Welcome and Manufacturer's Receptions provide an excellent opportunity for attendees to meet, mix, and discuss contemporary broadcast engineering issues.

The symposium will be attended by broadcast engineers, consultants, equipment manufacturers, government regulators, and educators. The Broadcast Symposium offers Continuing Education Units (CEU) for attending technical sessions. Registration and Technical Program information for the IEEE Broadcast Symposium can be found at: <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/society/bt/>.



Advanced Television Systems Committee

The Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) is holding their 1st Symposium on Next Generation Broadcast Television one day prior (October 19) to the IEEE Symposium at the same location. Abstracts for papers are due by August 6. Additional information on the ATSC Symposium may be found at <http://www.atsc.org/cms/>.

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