

Broadband Adoption, Not Deployment, Should Be Focus of Efforts, Hill Staffers Told

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Any money that Congress might have to spend on promoting broadband would be better spent on adoption efforts rather than on encouraging deployment, according to Alec Ross, executive vice president-external affairs at One Economy Corp.

Speaking this afternoon at a Capitol Hill briefing co-sponsored by the Alliance for Public Technology, Mr. Ross said, "If you have a dollar for build-out and a dollar for adoption, you're more likely to get more people online if you spend it on adoption," in part because broadband service has already been deployed to more than 90% of the population.

Mr. Ross cited a decline from 28% to 25% in broadband penetration among households with annual income below \$25,000 - "the first year in the history of telecommunications" for such a decline in adoption, he said. He said studies by the Pew Internet & American Life Project show that only 12% of those without broadband cite a lack of access, and only 7% cite the cost. Instead, he said, people are afraid of identify theft and loss of privacy, or they "don't understand the value of what goes on online." One Economy demonstrated its "public Internet channel" (pic.tv) aimed at showing people the value of broadband access in their daily lives.