Universal Service In A Competitive Local Exchange Telecommunications Environment - Donald Gale

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The telecommunications industry has evolved into a very competitive industry since 1980. Aggressive competition is the norm in the long distance, equipment, operator services and many other segments of the industry. The remaining segment of the market without widespread meaningful competition is the "last-mile" wireline service to the customer premise. Incumbent local exchange carriers enjoy a monopoly to serve nearly all residences and most business customers, collecting over 99% of all local exchange service revenues. Using their monopoly status, incumbents have developed a cross-subsidy system which uses the rates paid by some customers to lower the rates paid by others to support a policy known as "universal service." This policy has resulted in telephone service reaching 94% of America's households. Carriers claim that this policy cost them $20 billion annually, potential entrants claim the true cost is as low as $4 billion and the rest is profit.In the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress ordered the end of the local exchange monopoly and opened the local markets to competition. Congress also specified the continuation of universal service, specified that telephone penetration should be increased and specified that the universal service concept will be applied to America's schools, libraries and rural health centers. Congress also specified that, unlike today, all carriers will contribute fairly and equitably fairly to the universal service fund and that all carriers providing local service, including new competitors, will be eligible to receive support from the fund. The cost to meet these requirements in a competitive environment totals $7.2 billion, or 5.1% of net carrier revenue.This thesis addresses the definition of universal service and the services that should be eligible for support, the new competitive environment, how to collect the universal service support fund, and how to best distribute the funds to customers targeted to receive support from the system: those in high-cost areas, low-income consumers, and schools and libraries for advanced communications services.Author: Gale, Donald Publisher: Dissertation.Com Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: Universal Service in a Competitive Local Exchange Telecommunications Environment Pages: 00176 (Encrypted PDF) On Sale: 2013-01-01 SKU-13/ISBN: 9781581123227 Category: Technology & Engineering : Telecommunications

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