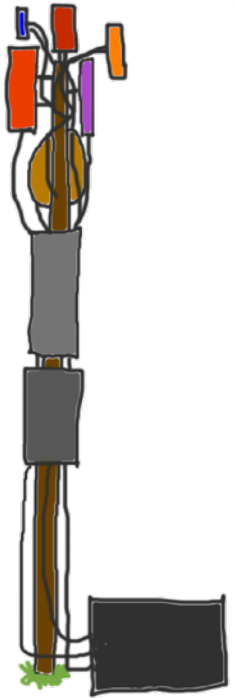


# 5G technology can't possibly close the "Digital Divide." Anyone who says otherwise is badly misinformed. Here's why.

In state after state, the telecom industry is seeking to fast-track approvals for its powerful new "small cell" antenna installations that are required for deployment of new 5G technology. The industry is sick and tired of delays caused by local governments trying to protect the safety and well-being of local residents with local zoning laws.

The new antennas will allow **AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile** and others to enter the highly lucrative video streaming business without having to run a physical cable into peoples' homes or apartments. This has nothing to do with on-line education or improving access to the internet for low income and rural customers. The telecom industry is hoping a new generation of affluent "cord cutters" will **switch** from their current cable subscriptions to new wireless subscriptions.

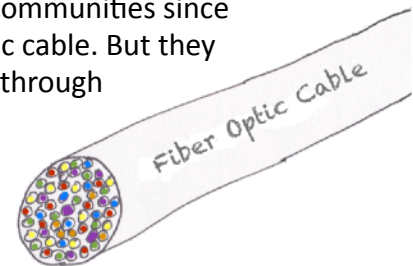
The sad fact is **it's not worth it for telecoms to install their expensive antennas in underserved communities**. People in these minority or economically challenged areas aren't likely to sign up for expensive monthly subscriptions to Netflix, Hulu, Disney + and other services, which is where the real money for the telecoms lies. And it's a lot more expensive to maintain a wireless connection than a wired connection.\*



## The digital divide is an economic problem that 5G technology cannot and will not solve.

The telecoms are promising that the the deployment of the new antennas required for 5G will close the digital divide, but here's the true story: they've been promising to stop "**digital redlining**" and connect minority and rural communities since at least the 1990s when they began to replace old copper lines with fiber-optic cable. But they never did connect those folks, even though they collected the money to do it through extra fees on telephone bills. Wireless networks are **unregulated**.

The way to close the digital divide is with a superior technology that is faster, more reliable, more affordable, less prone to hacking and is 100% safe for everyone. A lot of the infrastructure is already in place. It's **fiber-optic to and through the premises**, or "**FTTP**." Community-owned fiber is the solution.



5G technology and the proliferation of small cell antennas can't possibly close the digital divide, and anyone who says otherwise is either badly misinformed or deliberately misstating the facts.

\* [NPR's Marketplace, March 1, 2021](#)

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