

Hi, I'm a graduating student of Systems Design Engineering at the University of Waterloo. I'm not a specialist in telecommunications network engineering, so I will keep my comments brief.

I think that if possible, some of the newly freed spectrum should be set aside for either municipally owned networks (similar to municipal WiFi, but more feasible), or unlicensed use. The pervasive use of WiFi today is the result of availability of unlicensed spectrum. Some might argue that it's better to take the big money that private companies will pay to license the spectrum. However, their willingness to spend money is predicated on their anticipation of extracting revenue from Canadian society. Handing out monopolies over spectrum usage may not necessarily be the cheapest way to provide network access to Canadians. That should be the ultimate focus of any policy related to spectrum allocation.

For the spectrum that isn't set aside, open access rules should be put in place as a condition of sale. Although this may result in lower bids up front, the savings to Canadian society that result from the increased competition will more than make up for this up-front cost. If we don't take care to enable competition and innovation, we'll just set ourselves back a few years. Given the rising competitive pressures that result from the global economy, we absolutely can't let ourselves fall behind other countries by allowing a few private companies to potentially stand in the way of beneficial progress (as they will, if it suits their interests).

Finally, I think it's important that we use the revenue that results from these auctions to support public network infrastructure initiatives. Our system of regulated private investment in network infrastructure clearly has not been producing the best outcome for the public. It's important that we regain a globally competitive position in terms of the quality of our network infrastructure, and I think that ambitious public investments in high speed networks are the way to do this.

Thanks for listening,
Simon Ruggier