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**ANext Generation Internet®
Chairman=s Opening Statement
Commerce Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space
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I would like to welcome all of our guests here today as the Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space convenes its first hearing of the millennium. It is rather appropriate I believe that the Next Generation Internet (NGI) should occupy this prestigious position. After all, the Internet is one of the most significant developments of the last decade. Its significance is not limited to the new industries that it has created, nor the new educational opportunities that it affords.

The impact of the Internet goes beyond those things. With the development of electronic commerce, the Internet has radically altered the economic landscape of this country. Advances in industries are taking place at a faster and faster pace. At the heart of this exponential rate of change are two things: computers and communications. More and more we are seeing that computers and communications means the Internet.

If you had to find a prototypical success story, it could very well be the Internet. There are in fact, multiple dimensions to its success. It was and is a successful public-private collaboration. It demonstrated successful commercial application of technology developed as part of federal mission-directed research program. It showed a successful transition of an operational system from the public to the private sector. Perhaps most of all, it is a prime example of a successful federal investment.

In some respects the Internet is now *Asuffering@* from *too much* success. With the advent of tools that have made the Internet easy to use, there has been an explosion in the growth of network traffic. As computers become more powerful, applications more sophisticated, and the user interfaces become easier to use, we can look forward to an even greater demand for network bandwidth.

As we marvel about the revolutionary advances of the Internet and its ability to improve our daily lives, we often forget that the Internet is reaching its maximum potential because of the constraints on its speed, reliability, accessibility, and versatility. Therefore, now more than ever, we must look to the future and invest in the next generation Internet. If we want to experience the miraculous rewards of telemedicine and distance learning in our lifetime, we must, as a nation, continue to invest in research and develop advanced networking technologies.

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Since the enactment of the original ANext Generation Internet Research Act², which I introduced in 1998, the National Science Foundation has connected over 170 universities and facilities to a testbed providing a 100-fold increase in network performance. And the Department of Defense is currently deploying a testbed with 1000-fold increased performance at over twenty sites to support networking research and applications deployment. As we applaud the success of the first three years of the NGI initiative, we must also realize its current limitations.

In the review of the first two years of NGI, the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee recommended that the program should continue to focus on the utility of NGI's gigabit bandwidth to end-users, its increased security, and its expanded quality of service. More importantly, the committee shared Congress's concern that no federal program specifically addresses the geographical penalty issue -- the imposition of costs on users of the Internet in rural or other locations that are disproportionately greater than the costs imposed on users in locations closer to high populations. I must admit that this is a great disappointment for myself and my colleagues who fought to combat this geographical penalty through the authorization of NGI in 1998. Unfortunately, the White House did not take us seriously.

We will hear today from two panels experts. The first will consist of the President's Science Policy Advisor, Dr. Neal Lane, and other administration leaders who will testify about the ongoing R&D projects and programs being performed at their respective agencies. They will also address budgetary issues and highlight new initiatives that the White House is undertaking this year.

Our second panel will offer a different perspective. Two innovative private industry pioneers will address the endless possibilities of the Internet and its potential to transform and save lives. However, we will also hear from two prominent university presidents who offer a different view of the next generation Internet. Their institutions, their students, and their faculty are being left behind. While scientists throughout the country have made tremendous inroads during the past few decades, the digital divide makes the truth clear and simple: we are leaving many of our fellow Americans behind. Internet2, a powerful consortium of over 150 universities and colleges, charges an exorbitant entry fee which precludes participation from both universities that will testify before us today. I have introduced legislation with Senator Rockefeller and other colleagues to eliminate these geographical barriers.

I would like to focus our hearing today on the President's new budget request for the NGI and Large Scale Networking programs. I hope that the administration will be able to help the committee understand the nuances of these programs, despite the constant name changes from year to year. Thank you.