

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 710

To promote interoperability in the evolving information infrastructure ensuring maximum competition, innovation, and consumer choice, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 6 (legislative day, APRIL 5), 1995

Mr. KERREY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To promote interoperability in the evolving information infrastructure ensuring maximum competition, innovation, and consumer choice, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Communications Inter-
5 operability Act of 1995”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

8 (1) the rapid convergence of communications,
9 computing and video technologies holds the promise

1 of bringing revolutionary improvements in the deliv-
2 ery of a variety of information and other commu-
3 nications services to the American public;

4 (2) interoperability will promote competition
5 among technologies, providers, and media, leading to
6 the greatest choices, lowest prices, highest value, and
7 maximum innovation;

8 (3) interoperability at key interfaces of the de-
9 veloping information infrastructure of the United
10 States will ensure that existing and new components
11 work together easily, quickly, and transparently as
12 the components of today's telephone system;

13 (4) interoperability will help ensure that the in-
14 formation and communications infrastructure of the
15 future will be accessible to the broadest number of
16 people, both users and vendors of products and serv-
17 ices;

18 (5) open interfaces at critical connection points
19 are essential to achieving interoperability and the
20 smooth transfer of information throughout the sys-
21 tem; and

22 (6) the development of an interoperable infor-
23 mation infrastructure based on open interfaces is in
24 the interest of all Americans, and the Federal Gov-

1 ernment should act as a facilitator to achieve this
2 goal.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 As used in this Act:

5 (1) INTEROPERABILITY.—The term “interoper-
6 ability” means—

7 (A) the ability of two or more systems
8 (such as devices, databases, networks, or tech-
9 nologies) to interact in concert with one an-
10 other, in accordance with a prescribed method,
11 to achieve a predictable result;

12 (B) the ability of diverse systems made by
13 different vendors to communicate with each
14 other so that users do not have to make major
15 adjustments to account for differences in prod-
16 ucts or services; and

17 (C) compatibility among systems at speci-
18 fied levels of interaction, including physical
19 compatibility.

20 The compatibility described in subparagraph (C)
21 should be achieved through open interface specifica-
22 tions.

23 (2) INTERFACE SPECIFICATIONS.—The term
24 “interface specifications” means the technical pa-
25 rameters for the manner in which systems, products,

1 and services communicate with each other and may
2 be limited to that information necessary to achieve
3 interoperability, leaving the implementation and re-
4 maining product design to the creative abilities of
5 competitive suppliers.

6 **SEC. 4. PROMOTING INTEROPERABILITY.**

7 The Federal Communications Commission, and other
8 appropriate Federal Government agencies (such as the
9 National Institute of Standards and Technology), shall
10 monitor the voluntary industry standards processes, and
11 assist private sector standards bodies in the identification
12 and promotion of open and interoperable interface speci-
13 fications as needed.

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