

# **TUESDAY MORNING: CHASING THE CLOUDS AWAY**

Hope by this afternoon all the major thoroughfares are clear and transportation nearly back to normal along the east coast. You'd think by now we'd have developed and installed self-maintaining highways that melt ice and snow, right?

For now, let's dig.

## **A former Goldman Sachs exec parts company with CenturyLink**

They called it "creating an environment that was unproductive," and maybe it was – a diversified telecom organization may not be a great fit for an investment banker, leading to some less-than-productive discussions. But a nearly unanimous vote said Joseph Zimmer, retired GS exec, should not apply for re-election to CenturyLink's board of directors. Wonder if the rumored-but-not-completed acquisition of Rackspace had anything to do with this rocky situation?

## **Retail Mixed Bag: Wal-Mart retrenches, Staples rethinks, Shoes.com kicks butt**

The Arkansas-based retailer is closing up its 102 Wal-Mart Express stores, as well as a few of its full-sized stores. Were the smaller stores simply too much overhead, or were they cannibalizing sales from larger stores, or did Amazon finally cut into Wal-Mart's sales enough that Wal-Mart needed to reduce?

Staples, one of the two largest big box office supply retailers, changed up some of its senior management while indicating it may back out of its proposed merger with the other mega office supply retailer, Office Depot. The merger has not received approval yet from the USDOT. This unresolved deal may be a bigger liability in terms of expense by now, especially when all retail sales have slowed down.

Shoes.com is looking for cash to make some acquisitions. This Canadian online shoe retailer is bucking the retail trend with a strong uptick in sales in spite of stiff competition from Zappos and Amazon.

All three retailers mirror a turn-down in consumption – even Shoes.com. If retail was doing well, there'd be less need to close brick-and-mortar stores or buy up market share.

### **Six GOP Senators suck up to ISPs while annoying broadband users**

Quel surprise: a handful of GOP Senators sent a letter to the FCC saying that standard broadband speeds are arbitrary, and most users don't need the current baseline speed.

I'd like to know why some tech media won't name names. Fortunately, The Hill listed the signatories. Senators Roy Blunt (MO), Steve Daines (MT), Deb Fischer (NE), Cory Gardner (CO), Ron Johnson (WI) and Roger Wicker (MS) wrote,

“Looking at the market for broadband applications, we are aware of few applications that require download speeds of 25 Mbps ... Netflix, for example, recommends a download speed of 5 Mbps to receive high-definition streaming video, and Amazon recommends a speed of 3.5 Mbps.”

The stupid, it burns almost as much as the visible corporate whoring. Like nobody in their world has multiple users in a household sharing service or online gamers or emerging technology which does need increasingly higher speeds. Hope these folks aren't on committees for cybersecurity issues – wait, what? Every one of these six dipschitz is on the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet. *~screaming into pillow~*

I can't with this. I must change gears or go insane. Keep the wheels on the road, kids.