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Public Comments on Broadcast Licensee-Conducted Contests:========

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VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Subject: Comment on Proposed Rule by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to amend the Contest Rule
Docket ID: FCC-2014-0482
The justification for the amendment is reasonable. Entercom is correct in that nowadays, people obtain a majority of their information from the Internet. This is likely because people live extremely busy lives and are no longer able to leisurely sit in front of a radio or television to obtain relevant information about what is going on in the world around them. Living such active lives, people find enjoyment by participating in contests offered by various broadcasters. However, it is extremely hard to absorb all of the material terms of a contest, when presenters speak as quickly as they do. This may be because airtime is so expensive that they want to get the most out of what they pay for; however, such practices can be very misleading to the average listener. In addition, disclosures during television programs are primarily in fine print, which creates a problem for the viewer.

Entercom's petition addresses the big issue about when people access radio and television programs: people tune in and out at different times, during programming, that they may miss material information. Broadcasters are not guaranteed that a listener is available for the entire pitch of an offer. This proposal attempts to resolve that issue. By informing people that they may be able to access relevant, additional information online, may reduce any misleading practices, regardless of whether or not the broadcaster was intentionally deceiving listeners. This is beneficial because it allows the immediate flow of information and it does not bog down uninterested listeners. Additionally, it allows people, at a later date, to access information that interests them. If they are preoccupied when they are first made aware of a contest, and are unable to write down important information, they can access it a later time.

I do have concerns about listeners who do not have access to the Internet. This proposal does not resolve issues that they may face. Additionally, the proposal does not address the problems that listeners come across when tuning in midway during a broadcast. Also, the proposal does not ensure that listeners will become aware that additional information is posted on a website for them to access.

Another concern relates to small businesses who offer these contests, but who do not have websites of their own. The proposal allows for these companies to post the requested information on a site operated by a state broadcasters association. However, this brings up questions of liability and maintenance. If the company itself does not have immediate access to the site, and terms and conditions change, does this lack of immediate access pose similar potential problems to the listener that existed prior to the proposal?

The concerns I addressed are not major and I still support the amendment to provide immediate access to additional information online.

February 16, 2015
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