Google Asks FCC for Four 6-MHz Unlicensed Channels in 600 MHz Band

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In a series of meetings with FCC officials, Google representatives have asked the Commission to open four 6-MHz channels for unlicensed use in the 600 MHz band following the Broadcast Incentive Auctions.

According to a filing [1], Google specifically requests unlicensed spectrum use in "any guard band separating broadcast and LTE licensees; any duplex gap separating LTE uplink and downlink operations; the reserved wireless microphone channels on a shared basis with wireless microphone users; and Channel 37 on a shared basis with WMTS and radio astronomy users."

In clarifying an issue brought up by Julius Knapp, Chief of the Office of Engineering and Technology, regarding sharing channels with wireless microphone operators, Google said "geolocation databases have the capability to accommodate 'breaking-news' reservations for a limited number of shared channels."

During previous meetings with the FCC [2], Google has advocated for unlicensed spectrum use in the guard and duplex bands outlined in the down-from-51 band plan for the 600 MHz spectrum auction.

Google has an interest in securing use of low-band spectrum without having to face off at auction against large incumbent wireless providers like Verizon. At CES in 2012, Google senior policy counsel Rick Whitt alluded to guard bands and duplex gaps as "beachfront spectrum" that could become "public beaches [3]."

The FCC hopes to reallocate from broadcasters as much as 120 MHz of 600 MHz spectrum in auctions scheduled for 2015. Competing band plans from Verizon/T-Mobile, AT&T and Ericsson all include at least a 10 MHz duplex gap between downlink and uplink spectrum as well as varying size and placement of guard bands.

Google last year gained FCC approval to operate a TV white space database that would help allow unlicensed TV spectrum to be used for public wireless broadband.

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[1] http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7521088830

[2] http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7520962657
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