



Yellowknifer

SSi Micro's filing to CRTC delays Northwestel's roll out of unlimited internet in NWT communities

by Blair McBride
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The filing of an intervention to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) by Yellowknife-based tech company SSi Micro has delayed Northwestel's roll out of unlimited internet services in Northern communities that was scheduled to be available on Monday.

If its application to the CRTC had been approved, Northwestel planned to offer unlimited residential and business data plans **for \$10 more per month** in Yellowknife, Hay River, Norman Wells and Fort Smith. Whitehorse and Carcross, Yukon, and Fort Nelson, B.C., would also have access to the unlimited plans.

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But Northwestel spokesperson Andrew Anderson said the commission informed the company that more time was needed to consider the application.

“This means the new unlimited plans will not be available (Monday). We continue to get ready,” Anderson said.

David Veniot, spokesperson for SSi Micro, said the intervention, filed on Oct. 27, is part of a years-long fight for “fair competition” in the North.

“Since Northwestel has the only fibre access to the south, we have been asking the CRTC to regulate affordable ‘open access’ wholesale rates for that fibre so that SSi and other providers can offer consumers comparable and competitive choices.”

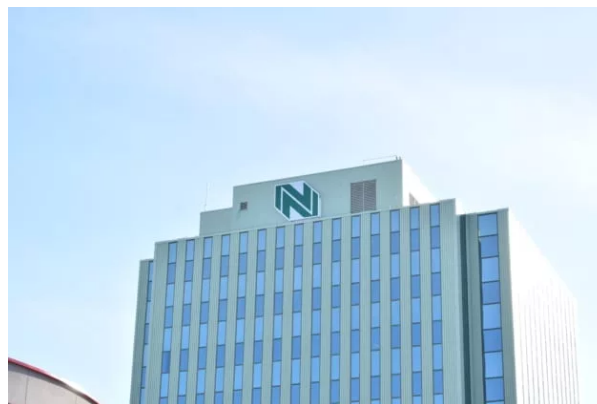
Wholesale rates refer to the price a company would pay to access Northwestel’s fibre connection to the south.

“We would be buying in bulk, a lot more bandwidth than a retail customer, so should expect to get a decent price so that we could use the bandwidth to create our own retail internet plans that could compete (with) what Northwestel is offering,” Veniot explained.

Providing unlimited internet plans before wholesale access rates are set would sharply reduce competition and bolster a Northwestel monopoly, he added.

A CRTC spokesperson said on Tuesday that it’s not known how long it would take for Northwestel’s application to be processed

“It would all depend on how long it takes to complete the public record and the complexity of the issue,” the spokesperson said.



SSi Micro filed an intervention to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission concerning the application of Northwestel’s planned unlimited internet packages in Northern communities.

Blair McBride/NNSL photo

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Government of Northwest Territories

Blair McBride

Blair McBride covers the Legislative Assembly, business and education. Before coming to Yellowknife he worked as a journalist in British Columbia,

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