If you live out in the less densely inhabited regions of America, chances are very good that high-speed internet in your area is pretty hard—if not impossible—to come by. That could soon change thanks to a team from Rice University who have hacked currently unused, Ultra High Frequency (UHF) TV spectrum into a...
"The holy grail of wireless communications is to go both fast and far," lead researcher Edward Knightly, professor and chair of Rice's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, told an assembly of researchers at the Association for Computing Machinery's MobiCom 2014 conference in Maui, Hawaii. "Usually, you can have one or the other but not both. Wireless local area networks today can serve data very fast, but one brick wall and they're done. UHF can travel far, but it hasn't had the high capacity of WiFi. This provides the best of both worlds."

The team's transmitter array. Image: Rice University

The scheme would utilize the newly-freed UHF band's broad and solid coverage range combined with a "multiple-input, multiple-output" (MIMO) array of antennas to create a wireless pipe that offers both benefits. Rural users would simply need a suitable antenna and modem to access it.
Based on over-the-air experiments in a range of indoor and outdoor operating environments, we found that UHF-band multiuser MIMO compared favorably and produced high spectral efficiency as well as low-overhead wireless access," Knightly said.

There are a number of regulatory, financial, and technological hurdles to be cleared before this system could be deployed, but it could change the lives of millions of middle Americans if it happens. [Rice]
Suing people isn’t easy. Suing the President of the United States of America, however, is huge pain in the ass. But that hasn’t stopped a group of Twitter users from filing suit against Donald Trump. These free speech advocates were all blocked by Trump after tweeting things he didn’t like. Now they’re claiming this violated their First Amendment rights.

It might not be as crazy as it sounds. The Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, which is representing the plaintiffs, claims that Donald Trump’s personal Twitter account is a public forum that the president uses on a daily basis. The institute said as much in a letter to Trump last month and threatened legal action if the president didn’t unblock his critics on Twitter. On Tuesday, the Knight Institute and seven plaintiffs took that legal action. The lawsuit reads:

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The @realDonaldTrump account is a kind of digital town hall in which the president and his aides use the tweet function to communicate news and information to the public, and members of the public use the reply function to respond to the president and his aides and exchange views with one another.

Obviously, there are other ways to view Trump’s tweets, but that’s not the point. The point is the fact that the president is silencing American citizens who are simply expressing their constitutional right. It’s not like Trump is being sneaky about blocking his critics either. Here’s the tweet that got one of the plaintiffs blocked by the president:

It’s hardly a surprise that Trump would want people to stop from reminding him that the FBI is investigating his campaign’s dealings with Russia during the 2016 election. Whether Trump is blocking these people in order to shut them up or simply as a childish attempt at retaliating against their criticism is unclear for now. It doesn’t really make a difference, though.
Trump isn’t the only one who tweets from his personal account. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer and White House Social Media Director Dan Scavino are also named in the suit. You’ll recognize Spicer as the clown who was hiding “among” the bushes while trying to avoid the press after Trump fired James Comey. Dan Scavino is less of a household name, but he’s the guy who broke the law with a tweet last month. Scavino is also likely the mastermind behind that Trump tweet showing the president clotheslining a man with the CNN logo as his head. The story behind that specific tweet and its aftermath, however, is its own twisted saga.

The new lawsuit’s demands are pretty simple. The plaintiffs want Trump to unblock them and prohibit Trump from blocking anyone else who tweets things he doesn’t like. Oh, and also pay for their legal fees, which will surely be substantial since Trump has a decades’ old habit of suing people out of existence.

That said, it’s unclear how long the lawsuit will take and what Trump’s lawyers will use
One argument could include the idea that Trump’s personal account shouldn’t be treated as an official communications channel. This probably won’t work, since Trump used Twitter to announce his nomination of Christopher Wray as the new FBI director. The National Archive also instructed Trump not to delete tweets because doing so violated federal record-keeping laws, making a strong case that his personal Twitter account is considered an official channel. Finally, Trump himself pretty much admitted that it was in a tweet last week:
And so now you have another batshit crazy presidential scandal to keep up with. It’s all part of a much bigger scandal, though, the one that involves a former reality TV star with a disregard for the truth and no prior political experience running our country and waging war on the media. Even if his...
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