

Comment on Restoring Internet Freedom

I am writing in support of maintaining Net Neutrality. Net Neutrality is fundamentally about freedom of speech. We need to ensure that we have a completely open and competitive landscape on the internet. The internet must continue to be a level playing field.

Without Net Neutrality, powerful carriers may be able to effectively tax innovation and culture by degrading the quality of service (QoS) of those who cannot afford it. Such actions would have been highly suspect before broadband arose, but now appear possible given the FCC's deregulation of its provision. In the absence of common carriage rules, several problematic possibilities may arise. For example, HBO programs may be delivered ten times as fast as Univision ones, and wealthy churches' programming may be transmitted with crystalline clarity. Users may find their connection to YouTube suddenly lost whenever they try to watch something that has not been pre-approved by a consortium of content owners. Indeed, in many cases carriers are also content owners or distributors, and have a vested interest in diminishing the attractiveness of free services through their own offerings. In response to such possibilities, leading activists have lobbied the FCC to impose —net neutrality rules on major carriers designed to assure nondiscrimination in the delivery of service.

It is true that business comes with competition. But revoking the net neutrality rules will entail online discrimination. This will result in a tiered internet model; a model that will profit huge companies and essentially destroy entrepreneurs. It will stifle the kind of innovation that can build massive followings before even leaving the garage. The internet-based companies that serve today, have largely benefited and aided from the neutral and free nature of internet as we know it.

Sanctioning the creation of "fast lanes" could lead to providers choking off controversial views to protect their own financial or political interests. This indicates that revoking neutral internet rules will also throttle the freedom to express opinions, or rather the right of being heard. Net neutrality is also essential to maintaining a genuinely open marketplace of ideas.