

From the desk of Michael Osowski

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

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FCC Mail Room

Dear Chairman Pai:

Following the recent uproar over net neutrality guidelines, and the push from prominent internet companies (Facebook, Google, etc.) to promote the current FCC position (the **2015 Open Internet Order**), I decided that I would advocate for a position. I had to first conduct research to fully determine on which side of the issue I fell.

Using any previous ruling as a basis for the extent and prevalence of internet activities is misguided. The technology is rapidly surpassing anything policy-makers could have envisioned even ten years ago. When the 1998 Telecommunications Act was approved by President Clinton, more than 90% of American households maintained landlines. By 2014, that number had dropped to just over 50%, the bulk of that drop occurring between 2004 and 2014 (statistics from the CDC and the US Census Bureau). Considering a drop of nearly 40% in just ten years, it's conceivable that landlines be irrelevant within the coming decade.

That leaves primary communication capabilities entirely reliant on wireless and internet infrastructures. And the cost-benefit analysis must be equitable and profitable for companies providing such services, as well as for consumers using those services. However, the term service can be misleading in the context with which it is used.

Right now it's apparent that the focus is on internet as a service. In reality it is more like the route on which services are provided. When the term "communication superhighway" was popularized by then-Vice President Al Gore in the 1990s, it was more than mere hyperbolic language. Consider the free flow of traffic on the web, and how advertisers can set up banners (much like billboards) for visitors and users to see. It is just as beneficial for all users to have access to any sites, much the same way that roads allow clear paths throughout the United States. Limiting net neutrality, the very principle of which is the requiring the same speed and terms with which all internet traffic travels, could be devastating to entire markets of the internet.

In all situations of early, unregulated technological advancements, consumer backlash has led to governmental oversight and regulatory policies and agencies. The **Communications Act of 1934**, regulating telephony in its nascent stages. Likewise, the **Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act ("Cable Act") of 1992**, protecting consumers of unfair practices in cable pricing, and made way for competition in the home entertainment market.

Protection acts are created to ensure fairness and promote new entries into the marketplace. Both the **Cable Act** and the **2015 Open Internet Order** were policies enacted *in response* to problematic regulation (the former rectifying policies introduced in the **1984 Cable Communications Policy Act**, the latter tackling the **Telecommunications Act of 1996**).

Even in the post-Communications Act era, new technologies led to competitors entering the market, thus *improving* the experience for users nationwide. For instance, the advent of microwave technologies created improvements in long-distance communications. Under the former monopolistic environment, such competitors may have never been able to get a foothold, and innovations may have been stalled, or even stifled.

When new technologies are introduced to usurp the internet as the primary means of communication, and it certainly will, though as to what form it is going to assume is as of yet unclear, policy changes will be necessary. But at this time *it is in the Country's best interest to maintain net neutrality*.

Any rollback of net neutrality could greatly alter the communication landscape of the nation going forward. Knowing this, prior to 2015 the FCC made previous attempts at introducing net neutrality policy. The Courts rejected two earlier attempts *and told the agency that if it wanted to adopt such protections it needed to use the proper legal foundation - Title II*. Which they turn responded did, by creating the **2015 Open Internet Order**.

The argument that the Title II classification reduces the amount of infrastructure investment is flawed. Francis J. Shammo, former-Executive VP and CFO of Verizon, told shareholders at the 2014 fourth quarter holdings call that the change "does not influence the way [they] invest." That they would continue investing in networks and platforms, increasing their infrastructure.

Additionally, there are free speech concerns over the adoption or eradication of any guidelines that would prevent companies from blocking or limiting content from websites they deem questionable. As there are currently few alternatives to accessing websites, companies could, in theory, completely undermine entire business models that operate solely on the internet.

After reviewing both sides of the argument, ***I support a strong net neutrality, backed by the current Title II regulations concerning the oversight of ISPs.***

I truly hope that you will maintain these standards, and promote an internet that is open to all, where ideas can be freely shared, as is the purpose of our democratic society.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Osowski', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Osowski

cc: Sen. Bill Nelson
Sen. Marco Rubio
Rep. Ron DeSantis