

I've grown up with the internet. When I was a young boy in the early nineties Ethernet standards we just bring solidified and most network communications were either lan or the occasional dial-up 14.4 kb connection that my neighbor used to play video games or access BBS boards. Windows 3.1 was the first platform I used to access the open internet and it expanded my horizons with unlimited access to information I couldn't even have fathomed before.

Over the years, networked computers replaced so many gadgets in life that in hindsight, the pervasiveness of technology is staggering. The first thing to go was the card catalog at the library, but even the books themselves have been supplanted by digital text. I've seen television, radio, maps, diaries, art, telephones, and even face to face meetings as well as countless other personal effects of American life become technology centric and fully dependant on the internet.

I first understood the internet through the window of a browser, but as more protocols became mainstream enough for them to enter my wheelhouse, I soon understood the internet in surprisingly even more simple terms: as a telecommunications portal for digital data.

As a consumer of internet services, I've seen the industry change as the internet has evolved as well. Obviously AOL was a huge player in the days of dial-up, but even when I went to college in the mid 2000s I was tasked with finding a service for my mother to use so we could communicate via email. At that time, we purchased dial-up as a service. We still needed a land based telephone line just to dial in to the server and the email and DNS provided was part of the package. Shopping later for broadband services offered cable, DSL, or fiber based services, but eventually cable and fiber squeezed out DSL and dial-up as they simply weren't competitive anymore, but more importantly, broadband changed the availability of the internet defacto. Only with broadband was I able to use VoIP services and share pictures and videos with my family at home in any meaningful way. It seemed like a golden age until the cable based ISPs decided to territorialize the market and I was left with only one awful company (Charter communications) in central Wisconsin. Their service had constant downtime, they had nonresponse customer service, and they were far too expensive unless you packaged other services that I frankly didn't want. Eventually they got sick of their terrible reputation and reinvested in their infrastructure, retrained their customer service, and actually became one of the best telecommunications companies I've ever been in business with.

All of this happened while regulations were constantly increasing. I see no reason why deregulation will enhance the consumer experience for me. As a measure of value, all that I want from an ISP is a fast reliable connection to the same internet that everyone else in the world is connected to (except countries with a censored internet like red China). I want the only thing limiting my access to free data to be the baud rate.

If US ISPs are allowed to shape traffic at their whim, purchasing internet will be as arbitrary as buying channel packages from cable television with overlapping contracts and blackout territories. New protocols and emergent technologies access the open internet every day and letting the ISPs out of regulation allow them to shape, throttle, block, and limit their access to me

the end user. ISPs have no business deciding what digital information passes through their networks when the consumer has paid them for access.

If the FCC actually wishes to protect the American consumer while supporting the philosophy of capitalism, they should keep the ISP pool open to competition between companies for the services that they actually provide: data rate and reliability. Just because some of the data passing through their networks has more actual value than others (streaming studio movies vs YouTube videos, AIM chats vs financial service data) doesn't mean the ISPs have the prerogative to compartmentalize the data and incentivize consumers to access certain services offered vs others just because they pay the ISP. Capitalism is meant to allow the consumer to support a company in an open market where consumer choice decides if a company is worth spending our money on. It isn't supposed to allow one service provider from monopolizing a territory and then selecting which other services it will allow the consumer to access.

Capitalism is based on the theory that competition is encouraged and there are no entry barriers to the market. This is obviously an ideal and cannot be perfectly adhered to, but as a government agency who oversees very powerful companies who deal in a telecommunications service that permeates almost every facet of our lives, the FCC owes the American people the regulation over ISPs they keeps them accountable to the consumers, not the deregulation that will only act to make them more profitable without actually providing more services.