

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler has paying a lot of lip service to preserving the Open Internet but his actions don't live up to his stated ideals. Nor do Comcast's claims of support for Net Neutrality match their actions. Comcast, AT&T, Time Warner Cable, Verizon they all claim to support maintaining an Open Internet but at different times either say they oppose Net Neutrality rules though to prevent ISP discrimination on the basis they are unnecessary - consumers can and will switch from discriminatory ISPs to non discriminatory ISPs so they say but the truth is the market is too concentrated already with a few big phone and cable companies controlling the pipes with a conflict of interest to discriminate against web companies. If web companies have to pay interconnection fees for prioritized access then only those who can afford to pay such fees will succeed among consumers and those who cannot or won't pay such extortion will have their websites slowed down. These incumbents are blackmailing web companies and the public - pay up or some websites will load slower. What made the Internet great is its openness and neutrality - that is equal access for all. All that is needed is to pay for a high speed Internet connection to get online and then users can browse any website they want and all will load at the same speeds. If cable companies can make some companies using more bandwidth for Internet video delivery pay special interconnection fees then that opens a Pandora's box for telecoms to charge companies like Skype and Vonage interconnection fees for VOIP service.

These companies should invest their own profits into maintaining and upgrading their infrastructure not force other companies to pay for infrastructural improvements. In Comcast's case they state they are bound by Net Neutrality anyway (at least for the next few years) and support new rules as long as they do not come with Title II reclassification. The courts have stated if you treat ISPs like common carriers with anti-discrimination rules then you must classify them under Title II. That is the only reason Verizon won its lawsuit in Verizon v. FCC. Network Neutrality is also the First Amendment of the Internet. These incumbents are also seeking to abandon legacy copper wire networks and move to fiber optic and wireless communications networks. Their claim 20th century copper DSL networks for example are outdated and they want to abandon those and upgrade to fiber.

Switching to 21st century technology is a laudable goal but they don't want any regulatory oversight or consumer protections in place for the new technologies. None of the open access and universal access rules for 20th century communications networks mandating competition would apply to 21st century technologies. At least that is what these cable and telecom giants want. We need real Network Neutrality rules, anti-competitive mergers like Comcast TWC, or AT&T DirecTV blocked or if approved only done so with conditions to protect consumers and online video and VOIP competitors and to ensure new technologies have open access and universal access mandates included with forbearance (as needed) for rate regulation rules.