

Dear FCC Commissioners & Staff:

I represent a regional ISP called BluegrassNet based in Louisville & Lexington, Kentucky. We actively service 3,000 customers, of which, 1,000 are small to medium sized businesses throughout the region.

These businesses rely on BluegrassNet not only for bandwidth to the Internet, but for a complex array of integrated services ranging from webpage hosting, database deployment and maintenance, custom VPN, security management and network screening, all the way to server colocation and management. In many cases, it is IMPERATIVE that we deliver custom network configuration and engineering support to make our customers' businesses applications run.

A large and CRITICAL factor in the delivery of these technologies is the ability to transfer data at higher rates of speed. BluegrassNet relies on the DSL network in place by BellSouth in Louisville, KY and Verizon in Lexington, KY to run the IP Network over. IP Network being defined as 'The Internet that runs OVER and ON TOP of the telephone or cable lines'. In other words, we need have to have control of the routers, switches, and other equipment involved in delivering 'Internet' to these businesses. The reason for us having control of this layer is that the Internet layer and associated computer and equipment management is more complex, more specialized, and requires many different levels of service for the customers' sake. This is NOT something the local phone company or cable company can do. They can not deliver these services because each customer is different and requires custom service which large, one-size fits all ISPs can not, and will not deliver at any price.

I cannot speak for the rest of the United States, but in Kentucky there is only ONE DSL network, and that belongs to the local ILEC. Up until this point, BluegrassNet pays both ILECs (in the respective markets we work in) hefty monthly fees for a DS-3 to the respective Bellsouth and Verizon DSL networks, and then a per connection fee at each customer site. We PAY the ILEC for this service. We DO NOT have any other alternatives for broadband connections between the end-customers and BluegrassNet at this time. The cable company will not open their network, and there are no other DSL providers in the market. The only other recourse would be traditional T-1 service which would increase monthly rates by exponential amounts, and cause all the businesses that rely on us for VPN and other services to abandon these technologies they've embraced due to costs.

Any ruling that would allow either the telephone company or the cable company to withhold access to their networks, or selectively choose who gets to use their networks, would be extremely detrimental to BluegrassNet and our customers. The end result from the consumer standpoint would be shoddy service, abandoned productivity-increasing technologies, and in the end... higher prices.

It is my opinion that DSL should be viewed as any other telco service, where everyone pays the same price and everyone has access to the network if they're willing to pay that price. This is especially important in those parts of the country where we are still limited to the ILEC/Cable Company monopolies in delivering broadband services.

Please take these issues into consideration when contemplating any ruling that would effect evenhanded delivery of DSL services from the ILECs. Let the ILECs' ISPs beat the independent ISPs in the open marketplace because they're 'better than us' rather than beating us because they 'cut us off'.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Schippert
CEO, BluegrassNet
502-589-4638

Sincerely,

Norman Schippert
520 S. 4th Street, Suite 400
Louisville, KY 40202