

Keep Internet highways free and equal -- No tolls!

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

In the area of NEWS, it is particularly important that equal access continue to be available for all independent news websites and blogs. I currently get 50% of my news from internet sources, and the other 50% from independent radio (KPFK, Los Angeles). I stopped relying on television for news in 1994. It is mostly useless propaganda, without the depth of coverage necessary to understand what is going on in the world. Bill Moyers said that what has happened to corporate-owned television and radio amounts to CENSORSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE BY MONOPOLIZATION OF THE MEANS OF INFORMATION. Please don't let that happen to the internet. Free and open access to information, so that we have an informed electorate, is foundational to our democracy.

I am self-employed, running two small businesses. For my holistic healing practice, I rely on my website to provide information about my services and client referrals. My other business relies on fast communication and transmission of real estate documents (I'm a Notary Public, accepting e-docs over the internet). Neither of my small businesses is in a financial position to pay premium rates to ensure fast service.

In my holistic healing practice, I also function as an EDUCATOR, and it is critical that I have unlimited access to the world wide web to research all available information on studies and research related to my field, alternative health care. I certainly don't want my search results limited by big pharma or managed healthcare.

I also like to do a lot of RESEARCH related to my personal interests, in a variety of fields, including new physics, Buddhist spirituality, and many other obscure areas, and the internet has made amazing amounts of information available, mostly on independent, low-budget websites to which I would like to have continued, unfettered access.

As far as pornography and other garbage information available on the world wide web, I would rather there not be censorship of any kind, and would rather have all possible search results delivered to my

web browser, and have the option to decide for myself whether or not something is of interest to me. I don't need or want a "Big Brother" to screen my information.

In most of the fields in which I do research, I also am a member of online communities, where I can discuss things with people who have related interests. And in my personal life, I now use e-mail heavily to communicate with long-distance relatives, and send photos back and forth. I also have been using internet dating for several years, and nearly got married to a man I met on a dating site. I have formed deep and lasting friendships with many fabulous people I would not have met if it wasn't for the internet.

I also use the internet heavily for POLITICAL ACTIVISM (as evidenced by this letter, which I would not take the time to write on paper and mail with a stamp), and demand that my communications continue to flow freely to my elected representatives and other decision-makers in positions responsible to the people of this nation.

I became so angry with the Verizon telephone company that I cancelled my service, and I now rely exclusively on the internet for VOIP telephone service, with a cell phone as backup.

As you can see, my access to the internet affects nearly every area of my life. It is now as important a public resource as streets, highways, electric service, municipal water service, and the gas company.

Please do not allow any kind of censorship or limitation of internet access to the world wide web. It was originally developed with funds from a government grant, and although it may be currently funded by private companies, it needs to be regulated as public property, with no discrimination, and equal access for all.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Andrea Sea Namaste

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