

## Democracy is what is at stake

The Internet is the last bastion of freely diverse communication. Radio and TV have been de-regulated (both officially and through lack of enforcement) to the point where differing viewpoints are squashed under a sea of propaganda. People running for public office are not afforded the air time that by law, the radio and tv stations were supposed to provide for free. The list of negative situations goes on and on.. and now that the Internet is popular, the rich information mongers who seek profit at the expense of Freedom, Democracy, and Public Welfare - have every intention of doing the same thing they've done with Radio and TV, to the Internet.. only worse, because of the advanced auditing capabilities of fully digital communications.

Currently on the Internet, news from around the world can be broadcast, seen, shared, commented on, and replied to.. news that DOESN'T appear on TV or Radio. Also on the internet, political candidates can post their speeches, policies and campaign messages in a variety of media, all potentially for free.. anyone wondering about what the various candidates are likely to stand for can view this material just as easily as any other candidate, regardless of how much money those candidates have at their disposal. The same is not true for TV and Radio.. or even often, in-person. Candidates are frequently now, barred from attending debates and rallies if they don't have x amount of dollars to PAY for a seat in the debate.. which is horribly corrupt.

On the Internet however, all these viewpoints can still be expressed on a much more equal basis. Aside from the basic Internet connectivity (which really by now should be free for all U.S. citizens.. much easier to build than interstate highways) or hosting charges, there are no other mandatory costs associated with making your views available to others via the Internet. If you have connectivity or hosting through a provider that has a certain transfer rate, that rate is the same for all customers, no matter what the subject matter or content of their messages are. Many providers operate through advertising and allow "customers" to post their text, audio, or video for free.. for all to see at full speed, all the time.

So obviously, rich social oppressors who are friends with the rich owners of media and connectivity companies will want to squash this source of diversity, free expression, free reporting, and free democracy (voting can also happen over the internet!). And what better way to squash than through monetary restriction! More profit for their corporate pals and more oppression of opposing viewpoints for them. A win-win solution for them.. a big fat lose-lose for everyone else on the entire planet.

You at the FCC should also realize that your very jobs are tied into this as well. You're appointed by elected officials. If the officials who appoint you are unable to compete with other candidates who have more money than they do, you'll be out of a job as soon as a richer candidate comes into office... What's more, if the political landscape is further made into a dictatorship, the role of the FCC

will likely disappear completely.. it will just be the Media Broadcast division of Blackwater Homeland Security and will have no need for regulation of any kind.. merely heavily armed raids inflicted upon any persons who are deemed enemies of Broadcast Corporations.

Wouldn't you like to keep your jobs and your role as a regulatory commission? Don't you think that Democracy and Freedom are more than buzz words? Do you CARE about the future of this country? Do you realize that through the Internet is one of the last ways that the defining principles of our Constitution can be practiced?

Well for that to continue, we need some things called equal access, free speech, and what is now being called Net Neutrality. If you allow the telcos and the social oppressors to shut down freedom on the internet.. that's it, game over. The only way freedom within U.S. borders can continue is through underground, grassroots efforts. The technological equivalent to the pony express. TV, Radio, and Internet will be utterly and completely useless for real communication, real news, and real democracy... because diverse viewpoints and diverse candidates will be shut out by the power of the dollar.

---

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.