

A free and open internet promotes the spread of ideas

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. An open internet is vital to the spread of information and ideas. I use the internet on a daily basis, and I use it in every way. The internet allows me to research topics for school, topics that are often controversial in nature. Without an open internet, the range of topics I can research and the range of information I can encounter is significantly limited. I often use the the internet to communicate with friends, and relatives, through email or sites such as facebook. I also use the internet for music, I listen to online radio at sites such as Pandora.com, last.fm, as well as stream radio from local radio stations. Additionally, I have my own website, as well as maintain a variety of websites that I have set up for other individuals and businesses.

An open internet makes it easy and affordable for me to do these things, and without it, my ability to reach other people, and access a wide variety of information and ideas would be seriously hindered. With equal and open access to the internet virtually anyone with an opinion and some technical knowledge can express their views and belief for the world too see. This makes for a rich learning environment, in which one can find opinion or fact on virtually any topic.

An open internet promotes the expansion of knowledge and the spread of ideas. An open and equal internet embodies one of the central ideals that America was built on: freedom of speech and expression. The internet is the most widely used medium for the spread of ideas, if we allow large corporations to dictate what we as a people can view, what message does that send?