

I am a legal resident of the United States and a citizen; but I live much of the year in Costa Rica as a legal resident alien. In Costa Rica all "international" communications must go through the government controlled agency call RACSA for short. RACSA also controls the Internet. Because it is government controlled, the prices are kept down. But since it is a monopoly dependent on money approved by the "Asamblea" and controlled by the government comptroller, the equipment and services supplied are pretty lousy. This is a developing country and the latest gadgets and goodies are not high on the list of essential needs that the government must provide. But at least we do have Internet service even where I live in a remote area.

I depend on this service for many things. I am disabled and I pay my bills and order goods through the Internet without having to make special arrangement for a taxi capable of carrying a wheelchair and for an aide to accompany me to do these things. I do all my banking via the Internet. I am also dependent on the internet for communication with my children and friends and family in the United States. Long distance telephone service isn't very good and is very expensive.

I remember when Ma Bell was forced to dissolve its monopoly on telephone service in the United States. The idea was that a free market economy depended on free and open competition. It did work and service improved and prices went down for the consumer and the various competitive telephone companies were very successful financially. It was really a win-win situation.

Now I hear that the government of the USA through its agency the FCC is about to take a giant leap backwards by forcing the growth of monopolies in communication. The new giants that control the wired access to the Internet are being touted as the best to control all access to the internet. Of course, they have been against wireless networks and connections because they fear a lessening of their power and loss of potential income. But a free market economy demands competition and innovation. Without that the United States will cease to be a world leader in IT and will be in the same boat that Costa Rica is now in.

Not only will consumers suffer, but innovation and access by students, investigators, scientists, and low income persons as well will be crippled. The USA is now having to "out-source" intellectual and scientific advancement. By cutting off alternatives to DSL and Cable for today's necessary rapid connections and communications, the United States will be cutting off its future and the wellbeing of millions of Americans. This is a very short-sighted move on the FCC's part to give big business what it wants at the expense of the welfare of the Nation and of the people and the future.

Personally, it will mean that my son, who is long-haul trucker, will be unable to plug into wireless networks as is traveling around the country in order to communicate with me. It will mean that my daughter's business (a popular web site) will suffer because many of the visitors to her site use wireless connections.

It will mean that disabled and older folks living on fixed incomes will be unable to afford the luxury of Internet use on which so many of us now depend. Because those who now control the Internet will feel no need to provide "iffy" alternatives to the tried and true unless there is a certainty of profit. It will prevent the risk-takers and innovators from entering the market.

I found this quote on one site I visited in my quest for more information of the FCC's latest move and I think it says it all: "To restore America's leadership in high speed Internet services, the FCC must ensure that the upcoming auction sets aside at least 30 MHz of spectrum for open and non-discriminatory Internet access. This will guarantee that new entrants have the opportunity to enter the market in competition with incumbent providers . . ."