

Citizen Grass Roots Organizing

The internet has revitalized grass roots, community organizing in this country. The League of Women Voters speculates that the cost of publications and mailings was putting them out of business in the nineties until the internet saved them. In my own local experience I am involved with half a dozen or more organizations which communicate, write documents and educate a large coterie of individuals who would otherwise not be involved. Currently in Michigan a group from all over the southern lower peninsula work steadily on election reform legislation, persons who met via the internet, have learned to work together because of it and stay in touch. If corporate owners now determine that their commercial customers get priority in their service, groups like ours will be immediately and irreversibly impacted. We depend on quick communication; things change quickly and only with a medium that is fast and reliable can we work as NGO's with the professional politicians, administrators, etc.

We get our real news from the internet, as well. One can certainly not depend upon the corporate media, either broadcast or print anymore, to get timely, in-depth news to the public in a timely fashion. If I only read my local or even state newspaper, even the New York Times every day, half of the news I learn about would not be there. The television and radio are often worse (BBC and NPR excepted). Our country has been saved, in a sense, by an alternative source of communication and information. It will stifle that informed public and active organizing capacity to allow corporate media to stratify their services and put the non-business customers in the slow lane. I strongly advocate Net Neutrality be retained and assured.

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.