

A life-changing experience

In the waning years of the last century, I was living in a small village in the east of Iceland. I found the Internet, which was comparatively very primitive at that time - people were still using Pine as an email system! - was a lifeline to my home in the US.

Through the Internet, I encountered a whole new field of endeavor. I met several professional mentors who guided a major career decision. When my situation in Iceland ended, I was able to use the net to choose a university, arrange my move home, and begin training to become a speech-language pathologist. When I completed my training, I used the Internet to find a job.

I now live in Kenai, Alaska, where I work in a dreadfully underserved field in a relatively remote part of the US. I truly believe that this would not have been possible without an open and free Internet.

Parts of this huge state use the Internet to aid in the delivery of specialized services such as special education, medical advice, and homeschooling. The Internet binds our rural people closer to the heartland of the US than any other single force. It is crucial in helping to keep the hinterlands populated, and to keep this population in touch with the rest of the country. Don't cut us off!

As this petition states, "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."

Sincerely,

Louise B. Heite