

I am writing to strongly urge the adoption of modern network neutrality regulation within the telecommunications industry. It is my opinion (as well as the opinion of other well-informed parties who I have been following in the course of public discussion) that network neutrality legislation is increasingly necessary to enforce the de facto state of network neutrality which has made the internet a revolutionary advancement in communications and commerce. While there have been some anti-regulation advocated within the industry trying to deflect criticism by ascribing bizarre qualities to network neutrality that have never actually been advocated -- such as that the notion that network neutrality also demand "content neutrality", or mandatory censorship -- let me assure you that this is nonsense. In short, network neutrality demands nothing more or less than that each packet transmitted over internet be treated, handled, and routed similarly and equally, without preference. It is a cornerstone of modern telecommunications in many nations, and has been codified as such in nations such as Japan and over most of Europe.

While I value the free market and feel it is capable of ultimately setting the matter, the fact is that internet commerce and proliferation of websites and services for every conceivable sector has been built on the egalitarian nature of the network, and the low expense associated with connecting to it. Failure to pass network neutrality legislation would give telecommunications companies the go ahead to implement their openly-discussed plans for a tiered internet. Many have already stated their desire to charge Google extra fees for the large amount of traffic they must deliver from the search giant, even though Google already pays hefty fees for high-bandwidth connections to serve its clients. Certainly everyone -- especially those old enough to remember the earliest, feeble attempts at internet search -- will agree that Google's superior and cheap service was instrumental in the proliferation of internet businesses in delivering the content users desired.

Internet Service Providers have been quite frank about their desire to charge more for popular services. In my area (and soon across the whole United States), Time Warner has announced that they have implemented "packet shaping" methods that restrict user access to certain types of content, such as streaming video and peer-to-peer file exchange services. They have confirmed that they are intentionally throttling access to specific services that I and other customers have paid for because, for a change, we are actually using all the bandwidth that they originally advertised. Now that they can no-longer double-book customers for the same bandwidth, they have chosen to arbitrarily reduce the level service rather than expand their infrastructure to meet demand. I assure you, allowing them to continue in this manner will only allow the U.S. telecommunications Infrastructure to fall further behind that of the developed world.

The act of packet-shaping -- which network neutrality would address by preventing the ISP from basing service on the type of data being transmitted -- is also a threat to more conventional knowledge-based business, such as finance and even engineering. Again, I speak from experience. As a chief financial officer at J.P. Morgan/Chase, my father frequently worked with sensitive financial

information at home, through a secured, bank-owned computer over an encrypted channel known as a Virtual Private Network (VPN). I myself use Secure Shell (SSH), a similar encryption method to work remotely on engineering data which my employer wishes to keep every bit as safe. If the ISPs had their way, however, then they would simply declare that any encrypted traffic is seen as an attempt to bypass their packet shaping, and thus against their Terms of Service. That is the experience I currently face with Time Warner. Without network neutrality legislation, I guarantee we will see a continuing decline in ISPs' respect for encryption as basic, necessary security for any sensitive transaction.