

I am concerned about the Net Neutrality issue because of the real potential for broadband connections (cable or television companies) to block or discriminate against internet users or applications in order to give advantage to their own services.

The owners of these networks have the right to manage their services concerning congestion. But managing oversteps its boundaries when it becomes blocking or degrading traffic based on identity of the user or application type. This type of discrimination is solely to favor the interests of the network owners.

Potential Problems with this include:

1.
Universities being undermined to develop next generation internet technology, which would end the United State's role as the leader in Internet-based technology
2.
The status quo that many large and small businesses depend on to send email and interact with customers would be compromised. The concept of the market working these issues out has worked. An open, neutral internet has proven itself an effective tool for business and commerce to increase.
3.
The structure of the Internet was to be open and available to everyone. This is a main ingredient to its success. By allowing only a handful of a few powerful interest to determine the scope of the Internet would be to compromise the availability and access to a large population of people. This would create an even deeper and more crippling digital divide than already exists. "Tollbooths and gatekeepers are the exact opposite of what the Internet is all about," said Michael J. Copps, a Democratic commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission. "Down that route consumers can count on paying more and getting less — less content, fewer services and reduced innovation."
4.
By being open and neutral and not in the control of a handful of powerful interest, companies cannot currently skew the Internet toward their own services or ideologies. Without neutrality an incentive is created. Noted by Vint Cerf in a letter to Congressmen Joe Barton and John Dingell on November 8, 2005:
"Telephone companies cannot tell consumers who they can call; network operators should not dictate what people can do online." Recently, however,
 - a. a telephone company blocked its broadband customers from using VoIP telephone service because it could take revenue away from the company's phone services;

- b. a cable company ordered consumers working from home to stop using their broadband connection to log into their employer's virtual private network and tried to sell them a higher-priced alternative service;
- c. an Internet provider in Canada blocked access to a Web site run by the labor union involved in a dispute with the ISP; and
- d. the CEO of SBC told Business Week that companies such as Google, Yahoo, and Vonage would not be permitted to connect to SBC

5.

Congress should adopt a strong principle that ensures that the Internet is open to all lawful uses and should establish strong penalties to enforce this principle.

Thank You

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