

Making volunteer services easier for everyone

Since the FCC removed basic protections for equal access to the internet in 2005, I've been stunned at the shameless greed exhibited by executives and shareholders of phone and cable companies. They have shown no compunction in stating their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and destroy the very notion of a free and accessible internet. Consistent with this ruthlessness and lack of responsibility to their fellow citizens – no matter their financial class – those with corporate power fail to recognize the importance of such freedom for democracy, and think nothing of the many ways in which their plans would discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. But most fundamentally, it is key to the many ways in which each of us can offer what we know and what we have to others in need and less fortunate.

My story is still in progress, hopefully to be in operation soon, but it has required a great deal of preparation and effort. My most specific concern is the terrible plight of our military vets returning from the front lines, especially the ones who have suffered injuries, and most particularly the two most frequent diagnoses: head injury and PTSD. I am intimate with these two diagnoses through my professional training and practice, and I have been working to develop a program that will allow practitioners around the country to offer their services pro bono to returning soldiers who have fallen through the disturbingly many cracks in the current VA system. The type of gatekeeper system proposed by the net service providers would completely defeat the purpose of this and other, similar, volunteer and charitable organizations that rely on the current brilliance of net freedom and accessibility.

I agree with EVERYONE who uses the internet: 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. Such craven gluttony, though disturbingly typical of corporate power, would corrode the foundation of the Internet, and diminish us all, especially as a democracy.