

Miss Linda

As an EDUCATOR, I find the Internet a valuable tool. It allows me to find pictures and information that my students would never encounter in our small town. I can prepare lesson plans or, at a moment's notice, we can follow a discussion tangent and find the information right NOW!

As a CONCERNED CITIZEN, I use the Internet to keep abreast of important issues, to contact my local, state, and federal representatives. Via the Internet, I can make my opinion heard, and hope that my voice will contribute to, and help improve, my country.

As a BLOGGER, I use the Internet to discuss the issues that concern me, and read the writings of like-minded writers, or consider the opinions of those who have different views. The use of the Internet helps open my mind, sharpens my thinking, and keeps me from being insular in my world outlook.

As a FAN of various TV shows, I use the Internet to participate in fandom discussion communities, made up of people from around the world. Through the Internet, I converse with people from England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Australia and Canada on a regular basis, with occasional forays into Sweden, Russia, and Mexico.

I pay my ISP a fair fee for access to the Internet; why then should I pay extra to travel to different sites? In the course of a month, I may visit 150 sites or more; if the monthly fee for each site was as little as \$1.00, I could not afford my current Internet use -- and I make a decent wage. A family that has less disposable income would be shut out completely; the result would be that their children have fewer educational opportunities, and the adults have fewer chances to research ways of improving themselves for better job opportunities. A fee structure placed on the Internet would widen the division between 'poor', 'middle class' and 'rich' in America -- which is contrary to our stated belief that any person, with sufficient work, can improve his or her position in life. We should be removing obstacles from in front of people who try to improve themselves, not throwing more in their path.

The phone and cable companies already get their "fair share" of the financial pie; it is unconscionable of them to demand extra fees for access to specific sites, or to force specific sites to pay extra charges so that potential customers will have easy access. The 'bottom line' of the phone and cable companies, and the pockets of their stockholders, are not more important than continued easy access for everyone -- no matter how little money they have -- to the rest of the world via Internet.

This is a plea to the FCC -- do NOT allow broadband providers to block or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic simply because of who owns it, or where it comes from, or where it is located. The Internet is the greatest exercise of free speech that the world has ever seen; don't allow

corporations to gag us, just to line their already-overflowing coffers.