

It really is time that the government once again start weighing the interests of the People against the interests of corporations. The pendulum has swung much too far to the side of corporate entities, particularly in regard to the People's airwaves.

The result is poor and expensive internet service where I live in Cambridge, Massachusetts -- supposedly a national hub of high technology. Note that Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson made the very first long-distance telephone call three blocks from my house in 1876, at the very time my house was under construction. Yet their descendent company, Verizon, is unable to provide DSL service much better than ordinary dial-up (baud rate of about 150-170 bps maximum).

If you look towards recent anti-trust decisions, the Supreme Court has increasingly looked towards economic arguments over per se violations, as they decided in this most recent session as well. That is precisely the point here; our airwaves must be protected from the corporate malfeasants that have stifled innovation and competition in Internet markets. Good economic policy dictates that the FCC set aside substantial quantities of spectrum for open access.

It's embarrassing how the US now lags virtually all European nations and many third-world ones in the speed, cost, and availability of internet access. To restore America's leadership in high speed services, the FCC must ensure that the upcoming auction sets aside at least 30 MHz of spectrum for open and non-discriminatory Internet access. This will help assure that new entrants have the opportunity to enter the market in competition with current providers -- who are doing quite a poor job currently.

It would be a tragic and historical error to hand over these airwaves to the same phone and cable companies that dominate the wireline market. More competition and innovation is needed, not yet more public resources going to status quo companies whose performance is oriented towards short-term profits and not service.

Believe me, even though I live adjacent to the campus of M.I.T., with a 5cm fiber-optic cable running under the street within 10 feet of my basement -- I cannot get decent internet service from existing suppliers. They ballyhoo baud rates one to five orders of magnitude greater than what they actually deliver (although I pay for the undelivered speeds) -- yet no amount of time speaking to their customer service reps can get them to provide the service they claim.

Thus this new wireless spectrum must be open and neutral so that America can have an adequate Internet, as many of the current service providers have done a terrible job in developing the system thus far, in comparison with their counterparts in other nations.