

Preserve the vision of our Founding Fathers!

Along with millions of other Internet users, I am indebted to the "Save the Internet" web site for their excellent presentation of the facts and to Commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein for their support of stronger Net Neutrality protections. Kudos also to U. S. Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Olivia Snow (R-ME) and their cosponsors for the proposed Internet Freedom Preservation Act, S. 215. We can hope that this bill will gain sufficient momentum to be enacted into law.

No one can deny the fact that broadband carriers have significant expenses, but, as noted in S. 215, they are free to recover them by direct charges to the end user, for service based on defined levels of bandwidth or on the actual quantity of data flow over the end user's connection. Allowing broadband carriers to charge content providers would destroy the Internet as we know it. It would give the broadband carriers and their owners, not atypically giant corporations with their own interests, undue influence over the user's Internet experience. This would flagrantly violate the concept of neutrality, a fundamental feature of the Internet's design.

"The neutral communications medium is essential to our society."

–Tim Berners-Lee, Inventor of the World Wide Web

What a brilliant and timeless justification for a very important First Amendment guarantee!!!

"Allowing broadband carriers to control what people see and do online would fundamentally undermine the principles that have made the Internet such a success...."

–Vint Cerf, Co-Developer of the Internet Protocol

As pointed out on the "Save the Internet" web site "The choice we face now is whether we can choose the content and services we want, or whether the broadband barons will choose for us."

After hours I work as an advocate for the restoration of Palestinian rights and for a just and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I've written letters that have been published by domestic and foreign newspapers. I've written letters to elected officials and to the State Department. I've participated in on-line discussions in response to articles in The Washington Post. In all of these activities, accurate information is absolutely essential.

Experience has shown that one cannot rely on the mainstream media. A recent example, one of many, further reinforces this assertion. On June 10, thousands attended a long planned and widely publicized rally on the West lawn of the Capital Building in opposition to 40 years of Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory. Speakers included numerous dignitaries, among them, Ambassador Edward Peck and the parents of Rachel Corrie. The Washington Post provided no

coverage whatsoever of this event. In contrast, lesser known publications here in the U. S. and abroad provided Internet coverage.

I'm very fortunate to belong to a group of church members who are profoundly concerned by the continuing crisis in the Middle East. We maintain a rather lengthy list of favorite web sites that offer useful information. It's very likely that many of these web sites are financially challenged and find it difficult even to maintain an Internet presence.

Our government should not allow broadband carriers to impose, directly or indirectly, additional financial burdens on these or any other content providers. We can justifiably regard an offer of a "favorable transmission speed" for a fee as an indirect imposition of a financial burden. Such an offer is far too suggestive of a protection racket shakedown.

We cannot give broadband carriers the power to decide who can place data on the Internet and who cannot. We cannot give them the power to become gatekeepers.