

Why Net Neutrality is essential to my business

Dear elected official,

I am writing you as the not only the Chief Executive Officer of Convertec Corporation, an Idaho headquartered company, but as a concerned citizen.

One of the lines of business that we offer is Voice over IP (VoIP) communications service to not only the household user, but for companies of all shapes and sizes on a national basis. An important element of our business is the ability to rely on the principals of network neutrality and non-interference with regards to how different types of internet traffic are treated.

I am deeply concerned about not only the inconsistency of the various ISPs in following network neutrality principals when considering how they manage or, mis-manage their networks, but about the blatant and outright admission that by companies like Comcast and Time Warner that they knowingly de-prioritize voice traffic from competitors VoIP products resulting in poor call quality, choppy, and even dropped calls.

Its monopolization and disregard for accepted principals at its finest ladies and gentlemen, Plain and simple. They openly admit to this type of behavior, thereby hindering small businesses'™ ability to deliver a quality product and service to the end users. What bothers me is that many elected officials will state that small business is the engine that drives our economy, but in the same breath say that there is nothing that can be done. I wholeheartedly disagree.

My company, by itself, provides telecommunications services to hundreds of local residents and businesses of all sizes. Now, if I were to just go under or an ISP decided to block traffic from competitive VoIP providers completely the result would be a major interruption in our local economy due to our clients being unable to reliably conduct business over the phone.

The sad thing is, that if this behavior is allowed to continue, other ISPs will emulate the example that Comcast and Time Warner have set. When this happens, I can almost guarantee that we will go under as far as our VoIP business is concerned. Im a fervent follower and believer of network neutrality issues, and have written my elected officials before regarding carriers and their treatment of Local Number Portability (LNP).

Below I have included an excerpt from a news story dated 1/20/2009 that clearly shows one of the ISP's (Comcast) blatant disregard for established network neutrality principals, and disdain for anything the FCC wants to do about it. I urge you to take a look at this matter, discuss it amongst yourselves, and find a way to enact legislation that protects small businesses trying to compete with innovative technologies that bring consumer choice to an overly monopolized sector of our economy.

“The charge is that Comcast is giving preferential treatment to its own phone service at the expense of its competitors. The FCC is pointing to Comcast’s own documentation on the service, which state VoIP calls are placed over a separate network away from the Internet and thus less prone to congestion problems.

What this means is that network management policies put into effect by the cable provider could essentially degrade service from competitors such as Vonage, while leaving its own VoIP service unaffected. This could leave VoIP calls sounding “choppy,” Comcast has admitted. If this is true rather than some marketing gobbledegook, Comcast’s phone service would then fall under a different set of telecommunications policies that are reserved for regular landline service.

Essentially, it would be considered a phone company like any other and thus would also be subject to regulation and fees of the landline providers.

“This letter is a positive sign that the FCC’s Comcast decision was not a one-and-done action on Net Neutrality – an open Internet cannot tolerate arbitrary interference from Internet service providers.

Congress and the FCC must close any legal loopholes that permit anti-competitive behavior to thrive.”

Regards,

Adam M. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
Convertec Corporation