

Because of its widespread reach and interactive nature, the Internet has become the 21st century's central venue for the expression of ideas, the sharing of information, and even the creation of small businesses. Allowing telecom companies to choose what information they deliver and at what relative speed opens the door to massive violations of free speech and anti-competitive measures against anyone the companies consider a threat to their profits or worldview.

It also allows for the creation of a dark side of advertising, in which companies try to outbid each other for the right to slow or block their competitors' content on a given ISP. If this is allowed to occur, larger online businesses could essentially choke out smaller ones by preventing them from receiving enough traffic to survive.

We are already seeing telecom providers' true colors in their dealings with cable customers. Their constant rate hikes and Time Warner's recent blackmail of their customers, essentially holding Fox channels hostage to gain justification for higher rates, show us that these companies cannot be trusted to act in the public interest. Do not allow them to be the ones who control who can speak in the public squares of the future. Ensure net neutrality and set heavy penalties for companies who violate it.