

Before the FCC decided to pursue Net Neutrality protections, Fox News Channel's Glenn Beck warned his audience that the government was "trying to take over the media." Beck later said that Net Neutrality would "wildly affect your life and free speech" by forcing a "Marxist utopia" on the Internet.

Fiction: "Net Neutrality will defeat efforts to close America's digital divide."

David Sutphen, co-chair of the AT&T-funded Internet Innovation Alliance, says that Net Neutrality is a "distraction" that "only concerns those already online." Sutphen calls Net Neutrality rules "divisive new regulations," which could have "unintended consequences" for those seeking to bridge the digital divide.

Fact: There's evidence that Net Neutrality encourages buildout

AT&T and Comcast claim that unless they can discriminate online, they won't be able to close the broadband gap. But history shows otherwise. During the two years that AT&T operated under Net Neutrality rules, required as part of its BellSouth merger, the company recorded gross profits of more than \$140 billion. In those same years, AT&T invested billions to build out networks and reach new communities. When the Net Neutrality conditions expired, AT&T reduced its investment.

Quote:

"The reasoning [of Net Neutrality detractors] seems to be that if we give broadband providers the legal authority to discriminate on content, which will allow them to increase their profits, they will suddenly become benevolent and invest in expanding their networks or lower broadband prices. The reasoning is just not borne out by reality. These companies... haven't " except when forced " made broadband more affordable for poorer communities."

" James Rucker, ColorofChange.org

Fiction: "Net Neutrality is a solution in search of a problem."

Industry front group Americans for Prosperity wrote that there hasn't been "a single significant incident of egregious behavior" by phone and cable companies, " adding that Net Neutrality is "a solution in search of a problem."

Fact: The problem is real. The solution is Net Neutrality.

High-profile violations of Net Neutrality include Comcast's efforts to block popular file sharing applications and Madison River's blocking of Internet-based telephone services. AT&T has met with motion picture and record industry execs over a proposal to spy on all online communications and throttle those they deem "illegal." ISPs have also talked about using new discriminatory technology " called deep packet inspection " as a way to filter content and impose new tolls on users.

Quote:

"Comcast's sneaky campaign to squelch bit torrent traffic negatively affected my business! It dawned on me that a much larger issue was at stake - the ability of customers to use an innovative protocol was being arbitrarily eliminated by a service provider that did not want to spend capital to upgrade its network."

" Sean Sowell, Pleasanton, CA

Fiction: "The government wants to become the Web's traffic cop, shutting down free speech online."

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Fact: Net Neutrality ensures everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

The founders of the Internet built it with open standards to ensure that everyone with a connection could communicate with everyone else online. This basic Net Neutrality principle turned the Internet into an essential forum for free speech. Without the FCC stepping in to protect the free-flowing Web, Internet service providers have an incentive to decide whose voices are more important and whose views will be heard.

Quote:

"The Internet holds incredible potential to resurrect a vibrant industry of independent creators with free access to, and distribution of, democratic " with a small 'd' " content... There is still time to protect the rights of content producers and consumers. We need to establish clear Net Neutrality rules to ensure that the Internet remains a level playing field for all."

" Patric Verrone, Writers Guild of America - West