

I work from home, on my computer. When the weather gets very hot, the network breaks down and we are off-line. This gives us a clear idea of what would happen if the large corporations had the power to limit our internet access. Of course they would not be quite so obvious as to boot us off line completely. We would merely find that some websites were not available to us. Of course we'd never know what we were missing.

It is one of the facts of the human condition that it is very difficult for people to imagine that which is not available to them. If certain books are not in the local library, people tend not to believe that such books exist. Their knowledge is limited by the library's capacity and choices. Similarly with television. If it is not shown on tv, people don't believe it exists. And of course the net is our new source of information. If it is not available on the net, people generally do not believe it exists.

Some of what is available on the internet is personally repugnant to me. Nevertheless, I do not wish to limit access to the internet by proponents of such repugnant material because I do not want my ability to post limited. The internet is the next frontier of the 1st amendment to the constitution. It is a means of public speech. We no longer stand on soapboxes on streetcorners, we post diatribes on blogs. Along with diatribes we post scientific papers, family communications, local commercial information, and lots of music, among many other things.

To allow large corporations to limit access to the internet is to turn over the entire country's 1st amendment rights to entities whose first concern is not free speech. Quite the contrary. They wish to require us to pay for speech, our own and others'. This is yet another of the commons which large corporations are attempting to steal from the public and monetize for their financial gain. Already water and many foodstuffs have been monetized. To some extent clean air has also been monetized. And now these corporations want to monetize my right to speak and hear.

I rely on the Internet as a public platform for free speech, equal opportunity, economic growth and innovation. Without vital Net Neutrality protections, companies like Verizon and Comcast, which have a commercial incentive to limit the free-flowing Web, can decide whether I will have a voice online. These companies should not have the power to determine my fate on the Internet.

The FCC must have the power to protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must keep the Internet in the hands of the people who use it every day. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.

We are in a period when corporations are larger than and have greater power than governments. This is a scary situation, since governments (theoretically) represent the will and intentions of the public. Corporations, of course, represent the will and intent of their corporate structures and to some extent their shareholders. I refuse to accept that my right to speak and listen should be limited for the profit

of these corporations.

The FCC still maintains some power and authority, and in the name of the public it purports to represent, the FCC needs to assert its authority to regulate the corporations which have benefited from the creation - at public cost - of the internet. Since we paid for it, we should have a right to use it without having to pay a toll or ransom to the corporations which have stolen large parts of our communications system. Even with retention of Net Neutrality these corporations will take in obscene amounts of money at public expense. To abandon Net Neutrality will allow them more than just increased profit, it will grant them a power greater than that of the United States government to control the thoughts and speech of the populace. That is altogether unacceptable in a constitutional democracy based on free speech.

Bottom line: please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" so that our free speech rights cannot be abrogated.