

The Internet is the greatest means of promoting freedom ever devised by humankind. The Internet provides a forum for the expression of free speech. It gives people of every economic means access to the greatest storehouse of information the world has ever seen. It gives businesses a means to conduct business with a freedom from limitations of distance and time. Personally, I have access to medical information I need to take care of my chronically ill wife. Being held hostage by my ISP and forced to pay a higher rate to get unfettered access to the information I need would be another financial burden added to the already large amount I pay for medical care. In addition, I am self-employed. Again, being held hostage to paying a higher rate to get around a telecom that wants me to use its content would add another unnecessary expense to my business.

Of course, access to the Internet is not free. Users must pay for access to everything the Internet offers. And that's the key word: access. The Internet is NOT the digital pipelines provided by the telecommunication giants, e.g., Verizon and Comcast. They are simply the conduits, the access points to the World Wide Web. Sure, they can create content if they so choose and compete with all of the other content providers on the Internet, but, just because they own the pipelines, that doesn't mean the telecoms can stifle competition by offering their content at a reasonable price and then turn around and charge higher rates for access to their competitors' content. If this logic is followed, then shouldn't every content provider create his own set of pipelines to protect his content from competition from others? Of course, that idea is absurd in its practicality, but that really is the issue. Why should the companies that decided to be the pipelines now have the right t!

o stifle content competition and earn higher profits, while determining my ability to access the Internet--the entire Internet--at a reasonable rate?

On top of that, why should the giant telecoms be rewarded for not building out fiber optic lines as they promised about 10 years ago in exchange for various federal tax breaks? And why should they be rewarded for providing exceedingly slow download speeds to their customers? The US ranks far behind many countries in download speed. And we invented the bloody Internet! The speed studies are right there on the Internet to see. We're way behind one of the Balkan countries! And we're going to reward this mediocre service with a multi-tiered Internet to fatten the bottom lines of telecoms and their shareholders?

Please say no to the telecoms and yes to Net Neutrality. Let's put freedom and access by the people of this country to the greatest boon to learning and commerce instead of a few, frankly, greedy corporations. It certainly would be refreshing and it might give Americans renewed confidence that our federal government is looking out for us for once and not the interests of the rich and powerful who are simply looking to get richer and more powerful.

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The FCC must have the power to protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must stand with me and 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.

Thank you.