

I live and die by the information available on the Internet. Whether it is contacting colleagues, students and friends via email, or monitoring the news to bring the newest information into the classroom, unfettered access to the internet allows me to improve student education, enhance my productivity in society, and boost my personal happiness. An open internet is a vital part of my life. U.S. tax dollars were used to construct the Internet, so it is vital that it remains "neutral" to all content. Just as anyone in America can place a postage stamp on a letter and send it to the furthest reaches of the nation, we need to give everyone equal access to content on the internet. Allowing private companies to charge more money for certain content over other content essentially would allow these private firms to censor access to information. Our nation survives on its diversity and so those diverse voices and interests must be allowed unabated.

The idea that a firm could be allowed to determine (via pricing or via direct stoppage of content) which content I could view and which content I could not view is un-American and should not be allowed. A provider of broadband service could, for example, prevent its customers from watching the football games of universities that do not use Nike footwear on their sports teams, solely because Nike is a firm sponsor. Just as most Americans cringe at the idea of news stories being quashed so as to not upset corporate sponsors, targeted information on the entire internet could be quashed for exactly the same reason. The situation would be much worse for the nation if these same firms prevented access to political or economic content solely due to the private proclivities of the firms' management. Such a situation would be unbecoming America.

Clearly, that power of censorship should not be in the hands of a for-profit firm. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.