

I rely on the Internet as a public platform for free speech, equal opportunity, economic growth and innovation. Without vital Net Neutrality protections, near-monopoly 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. When AT&T was broken up in 1984 into the so-called "baby bells" it brought in regional competition for phone and long distance service and innovation with it. Fast-forward a quarter century later and the phone system of the U.S. has now made a complete circle back to two or three mega-corporations who own most of the wires (Layer 1) and switches (Layer 2) that comprise the backbone of today's internet. This situation is bad enough, considering there is NO competition for my (and your) local dial-tone (and we should move to nationalize this part of the system). Now these same comp!

anies that own the connections and switches for voice and data aim to control Layers 3, 4, 5, 6 and Layer 7, the Application Layer, i.e. CONTENT. Should these mega-carriers gain total control of ALL SEVEN LAYERS of the OSI model these mega-telecoms and cable corporations can effectively route traffic to slower connections, control what applications can run across their "wires" and direct users to web sites within their "approved" control, a de facto unelected censor on the free flow of information. An open internet should be analogous to the water pipes into your house: you open the tap and get water; for the internet you turn on your web browser and get electrons back. There is no censorship of your water: you pay your bill and get as much or as little water as you need. Some people need LOTS of water (like a nuclear plant or paper mill or golf course or factory farm) and they get bigger or more pipes while others need very little (most home users and small businesses) a!

nd they are okay with one or two pipes. If the mega-telecoms want to b

e CONTENT providers, then they should de-couple their business from the Layer 1/Layer 2/Layer 3 (which should/can be nationalized or localized) and then they can play on the "level field" of the "free market" instead of pursuing a monopolistic position to control ALL of the OSI model.

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. If the FCC and Congress really want to maintain the internet as a public forum and provide companies large and small with unfettered access then they must break up the anti-competitive monopolistic corporations that run the hardware of the internet. I can be reached at billorightsmen@sbcglobal.net for further comment. Thank you for your time and consideration on the vital national interest.