

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.

I am a grad student (incurring substantial student/government loans) who relies heavily upon the Internet for research. My education will be compromised without both free and high-speed online access. Getting a high quality education is an expensive pursuit; and to stay on the cutting edge We The People need education to be affordable. This will be impossible if we price a good education right out of the market.

The FCC can't cut private deals that would hand control over the Internet to a few massive phone and cable companies. Any compromise that allows Internet providers to build toll lanes online is not real Net Neutrality.

The agency must stand with the public and protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must regain its resolve to protect Net Neutrality on wired and wireless networks. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.

As an American living in the Middle East doing a Master's in Political Science this has enormous significance for my future and the future of my country. My education, and that of my peers, is the future of this country - your children and your children's children - their welfare and well-being depend on an educated populace. Loss of free and unrestricted access to information will not serve American interests but line the pockets of multi-national corporations that (actually who since in the United States corporations are treated as individuals) are in the business of out-source American jobs and American dollars, undermining the US economy, causing huge losses in tax revenue, and controlling government agencies that should be first and foremost looking after American interests.

Knowledge is power (Francis Bacon 1597).

Freedom and access to information, according to Benjamin Franklin, are two sides of the same coin, and you cannot suffer the loss of one without incurring the loss of the other; our great nation was built on, and depends on free and unrestricted public access to information.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1787 that "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." Samuel Adams said in 1768 that "there is nothing so fretting and vexatious, nothing so justly terrible to tyrants . . . as a free press.*

The Internet, if privately controlled, will answer to the siren call of the bottom line. This vast resource will be in the hands of a very few, and restricted to those who can afford it. If Bacon was correct in saying knowledge is power then a decision in favor of private multi-nationals will immediately and effectively disenfranchise more than 50% of all Americans - students, researchers, the working poor and the unemployed.

Information is NOT a luxury item.

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*Breig, James. "Early American Newspapering". CW Journal. Spring 2003.

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