

By this one act, Google has (for me) destroyed their "branding" as one of the few huge companies I could trust. Now they are just one more selfish outfit out there only to destroy the environment (in this case, the information environment) in a short-sighted lust for profits. They MUST be stopped, and only the Federal Government- through a reinvigorated FCC- can do that.

We have come to 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 we will have a voice online. These companies should not have the power to determine our fate on the Internet.

I watched in dismay as the Bush administration gutted the power of the FCC to protect us from politicized, profit-driven media manipulators like Clear Channel and Fox News, leading to an immense dumbing-down and distortion of fair political discourse.

This latest move would be a huge further step in the wrong direction, in the one area of the media where we still have some freedom and some rights. The US government built the internet, not Verizon or Google. They merely profit from it. Government funds sparked all the technological innovation, from the invention of the transistor to packet switching to fiber optics to internet protocols to web browsers to supercomputers to the development of personal computers. These individuals left academia to strike it rich on their own in the private sector- again spurred by public funding. The idea that we owe them something is a myth- they are already enormously rich. Only the government can protect the rest of the 99.99 percent of us from abuse of power by the few.

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.