

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.

We already pay differing rates to use the Internet. At my home we use DSL, and pay our ISP for a slightly higher speed for uploading and downloading. My neighbors, around the corner, chooses to use Dial-up. His choice, and he pays a significantly lower rate for service than we do. We could choose to use the service provided by our local TV cable company, but have decided the service is not as fast as the DSL service we currently use. Yes, we did try it not that long ago. Another choice, for our area, is AT&T U-verse. Unfortunately, it is not available on my side of the street. The box is across the street and immediately around the corner from us, but we cannot get the service, yet. Maybe in a year or two. That neighbor, who uses dial-up, has access to that, but he chooses not to utilize, and pay for that.

Someone who cannot afford to pay for Internet service, or chooses not to do so, but who has a computer, can go to a neighborhood Starbucks or McDonalds, or the like. Even airports have free Internet service. If someone does not have a computer, they can go to a library, or an "Internet cafe" to access the Internet. The service at the former is currently free. I don't know about the other.

All this is <my> choice. No one can decide that I do not deserve to have a certain speed. A business, does, I believe, pay more for Internet service, and the extent of their bandwidth, than I as an individual, or homeowner. I do not run a web site at my home, but I do send a lot of pictures to my online photo service. At the moment, this service is free, but I do pay the company to print the pictures. I can 1 hour service, but I pay more per print for that capability. Again, MY choice.

No one should be able to decide that I cannot access a particular web site, other than the owners of the web site. If I choose to pay the owners of a web site to sign on, that, again, is my choice. I don't happen to be interested in pornography, but it would be my choice, and that of the site itself, for me to utilize those services.

It is just one step from this proposed agreement, for the government, or any particular business or political interest, to decide to what information I might be allowed to see or obtain. I'm not saying that is will absolutely happen, but either one of the major political parties, or fringe elements, could keep me from getting the information I need to make an informed choice. It should be my choice whether I watch MSNBC, or Fox News, or access their Internet sites, and access government documents so that I can make up my own mind about things like Net Neutrality, or a particular medical procedure, or treatment for an illness, or what book to read.

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. It should never have been changed in the first place.

Money should not be able to "talk".