

## Stop AT&T From Wrecking the Web!

AT&T supports paid prioritization. Why should we care?

AT&T and other telecom carriers want to control the Internet, by controlling the flow of information using a technique called "paid prioritization".

"Ensuring that operators do not engage in paid prioritization is fundamental to ensuring that the Internet continues to operate as an open, interconnected platform for commerce, speech, and innovation."

-- Excerpt from a letter to the FCC from the Center for Democracy and Technology: Re: Preserving the Open Internet, GN Docket No. 09-191;

Framework for Broadband Internet Service, GN Docket No. 10-127

What is paid prioritization?

"Paid prioritization is a financial arrangement where a third-party content owner can pay an ISP to 'cut to the front of the line' at congested nodes, or where an ISP engages in 'vertical prioritization' by favoring its own content."

"Paid prioritization is the antithesis to openness, and any regulatory framework that does not presume that such arrangements are harmful to consumers and competition is not real Net Neutrality -- it's fake Net Neutrality trying to pass as protections that will actually preserve the open Internet."

-- Excerpts from freepress.net article: Paid Prioritization: The Antithesis of Openness on the Internet

What is net neutrality?

"A level playing field for Internet transport. It refers to the absence of restrictions or priorities placed on the type of content carried over the Internet by the carriers and ISPs that run the major backbones. It states that all traffic be treated equally; that packets are delivered on a first-come, first-served basis regardless from where they originated or to where they are destined."

-- Excerpt from the PC Magazine Encyclopedia definition of Net Neutrality

A more detailed explanation:

"Network neutrality (also net neutrality, Internet neutrality) is a principle proposed for user access networks participating in the Internet that advocates no restrictions by Internet service providers and governments on content, sites, platforms, the kinds of equipment that may be attached, and the modes of communication allowed."

"The principle states that if a given user pays for a certain level of Internet access, and another user

pays for the same level of access, then the two users should be able to connect to each other at the subscribed level of access."

"Though the term did not enter popular use until several years later, since the early 2000s advocates of net neutrality and associated rules have raised concerns about the ability of broadband providers to use their last mile infrastructure to block Internet applications and content (e.g., websites, services, protocols), particularly those of competitors."

"Neutrality proponents claim that telecom companies seek to impose a tiered service model in order to control the pipeline and thereby remove competition, create artificial scarcity, and oblige subscribers to buy their otherwise uncompetitive services. Many believe net neutrality to be primarily important as a preservation of current freedoms."

-- Excerpts from Wikipedia.org article on Net Neutrality

What does AT&T think of those that support net neutrality? It mocks them.

One of AT&T policy makers, a VP, has referred to supporters of net neutrality as members of the "Church of Extreme Net Neutrality" and dismisses their views as "dogma". Since this "opinion" was presented before Congress during testimony, we can assume this person speaks for the management of AT&T. Apparently AT&T's current tactic is to paint the opposition as religious wackos, just because they want a fair Internet.

Why should we care what AT&T thinks about net neutrality? Because AT&T's sheer size allows it to influence public policy.

AT&T's market cap is over \$160 billion and it makes over \$120 billion in revenue! -- Yahoo Finance

"AT&T Inc. is the largest provider of fixed telephony in the United States, and also provides broadband and subscription television services. AT&T is the second largest provider of mobile telephony service in the United States, with over 92.8 million wireless customers, just behind Verizon Wireless' 93.2 million, and more than 210 million total customers."

"As of 2010[update], AT&T is the 7th largest company in the United States by total revenue, as well as the 3rd largest non-oil company in the US (Behind Walmart and Bank of America). In 2010, Forbes listed AT&T as the 13th largest company in the world and the 8th largest non-oil company in the world, the largest company in the world not associated with banking or oil, as well as the world's largest provider of telecommunication."

-- Excerpts from Wikipedia.org article on AT&T

Why shouldn't we just trust AT&T to do what is best for us? Because they don't have a record of doing the right thing. As an example:

"According to a lawsuit filed against other telecommunications companies for violating customer privacy, AT&T began preparing facilities for the NSA to monitor "phone call information and Internet traffic" seven months before 9/11."

-- Excerpts from Wikipedia.org article on NSA warrantless surveillance