

## Mobile Phones and the New Digital Divide

By Josh Levy, December 6, 2011

Colorlines' Jamilah King has been on the Net Neutrality and mobile beats for a while. But her new, important piece really ties things together. Its title, "How Big Telecom Used Smartphones to Create a New Digital Divide," pretty much says it all.

Colorlines' Jamilah King has been on the Net Neutrality and mobile beats for a while. But her new, important piece really ties things together. Its title, "How Big Telecom Used Smartphones to Create a New Digital Divide," pretty much says it all. With the aid of several fascinating graphics like the one below (which use invaluable data from Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project), King illustrates how, as Blacks and Latinos continue to use the mobile Internet more than whites, "there are, in essence, two Internets emerging in the United States": The wired Internet, which has driven innovation and commerce for years and users have basic protections, and the wireless internet, where "companies are free to do as they please with customers ? they can control what users see, do and say online." People of color or disproportionately dependent

on this second, closed Internet. Those without access to affordable high-speed broadband in their home must rely on mobile broadband on their phones. But the wireless Internet is completely open to abuse from the carriers. And as we see nearly every day, the carriers are all too willing to block our access to the full, open Internet. The mobile carriers are controlling access to a tool that is now essential for everything from political participation to employment to getting an education. Read King's piece to understand why it's so important for us to stand up and protect mobile users' rights.