

Some members of the U.S. Congress mostly Republicans now say because of the Internet the need for media ownership rules no longer exists. That's just flat out wrong. As we saw from the Comcast NBC merger when a media company (a content provider) merges with a service provider there is a huge conflict of interest and they can prioritize their content while discriminating against other content flowing over their pipe. Thanks to the merger Comcast has unprecedented media and Internet power. The Verizon SpectrumCo deals involving Comcast worry me even more because of the anti competitive JOE and the spectrum transfer.

Already we have seen Comcast violating the news neighborhood-ing merger condition requiring if they make a news neighborhood they place stations they don't own like Bloomberg in the same channel lineup as their preferred stations. They've been ordered now into compliance but also use data caps to discourage streaming Netflix and services that don't require cable TV.

Worse they are now interfering with the operations of Hulu that now intends to require online viewers have a cable TV subscription to watch TV online. If Comcast influenced Hulu to make such a decision that's another merger condition violated. So Comcast is violating Network Neutrality, they tried violating the news neighborhood-ing merger condition to prevent them from privileging their content over others and discriminating against content unfavorable to them and they interfere with Hulu. Allowing such vertical mergers of media companies and service providers threatens the open Internet. Comcast now has unprecedented media and Internet power.

So the last thing we need is to loosen media ownership rules any further or to allow more media consolidation. I will be more diligent in the future than I was with the Comcast NBC merger – then I filed comments with the FCC against the merger but never filed an opposition nor did I write the DOJ's Antitrust Division. I believe the media can be a powerful tool to give a voice to the voiceless or it can be co-opted by the powerful to distort the truth and protect the powerful from any accountability. Even in the Internet era we must have accountability and we must stop the ongoing corporate media consolidation that assaults democracy and ignores the voiceless.