

# Free Press Concerned About AT&T's Plan to Charge for FaceTime

WASHINGTON – According to press reports, AT&T may begin charging customers an additional fee to use the FaceTime app over the carrier's cellular network. Until now, users have been able to access the application only on Wi-Fi networks. iPhone owners reportedly will be able to use FaceTime over cellular networks in new phones running iOS6, the next generation of Apple's mobile device operating system, which will be released to the general public in September. □□ If AT&T forces its customers to pay an additional fee to access this feature, which could be a violation of the Federal Communications Commission's Open Internet rules.

AT&T did not oppose the rules when the FCC adopted them in 2010. The rules prohibit wireless carriers from blocking websites and applications like FaceTime that allow voice or video communication to compete with cell-phone carriers' own services. □□

Free Press Policy Director **Matt Wood** made the following statement:

□□ “It's hard to believe AT&T could contemplate blocking consumers' access to a video-calling application unless those consumers pay AT&T an additional fee. Such a move would almost certainly violate the open Internet rules that AT&T worked with the FCC to craft — rules that we've criticized as far too weak, but that are acceptable to AT&T according to the company's own congressional testimony: “If AT&T is planning to turn its back on the very weak form of open Internet rules that it once committed to following,

that signals trouble ahead for consumers and app developers. The protections we have today for wireless Internet access are woefully inadequate, but this kind of double charging is one of the few things they do prohibit. If carriers like AT&T can throw up tollbooths for applications on top of their already outrageous charges for data, then innovation and competition in the wireless market will be stopped dead in their tracks.”