The Internet has always been a critical telecommunications tool enabling the free flow of communications and information, commerce by companies big and small but it's future as an open platform is threatened by the rise of corporate gatekeepers. As users we expect our ISPs to be dumb pipes, which we use just to get online and then access the lawful content and services of our choice. In the wire-line world we can also use the devices of our choice on our service provider's network freely. You're not required to use a Comcast computer to access Comcast's Internet or a TWC computer to access Time Warner Cable Internet. We need more open access though in wireless even with the recent voluntary carrier agreement on 700 MHz interoperability reached after the FCC threatened to implement and enforce rules if the big two did not agree to an industry compromise more can be done. The FCC should attach open access conditions to spectrum bought in upcoming wireless auctions.

Even then giant companies like Comcast which today controls NBC making it a vertically integrated content and service provider want to dictate what we can and cannot do online. Giant telecom and cable companies like AT&T, Verizon, CenturyLink, Comcast have gained enormous influence over our pipes and want to limit our access to competing services online. To make things worse Comcast now wants to own Time Warner Cable giving it even more power to harass consumers and force us into accepting artificial data caps. If they could they would even dictate how you can connect to their network (what devices can and cannot work). This scenario once existed in the wire-line telephone industry with AT&T dictating what equipment could connect to its network. This was before the Carterfone ruling,

which paved the way for the fax machine. Today users have open access over wire-line communication. To complicate matters we do not have such flexibility in the wireless world. An iPhone bought from Verizon Wireless cannot be made to work as easily on AT&T's network or Sprint's network. You have to buy iPhone for Sprint network or AT&T's network from those carriers. Those with the technical expertise to unlock their phones ("rooting phones" when referring to Android or jail-break for iOS devices) can do so but most of us are stuck with the carrier from which we got our phones. Users with unlocked handsets can take their phone when their contract ends to another carrier (often they just have to change the SIM card) but overall the type of wholesale open access rules that have benefited consumers in wireless are not as widely implemented or enforced when it comes to wireless. Carriers have for too long had a monopoly in the phone business being able to dictate not only to consumers what phones are available on their networks but dictate to phone manufacturers what features can be included in their phones. With the advent of this iPhone carriers have begun to lose some of this influence as Apple succeeded in retaining control of the user experience.

The big carriers would like to have consumers locked in to their proprietary networks making it harder to switch carriers. Verizon Wireless has a proprietary cloud service Verizon Cloud which users can use to backup their files including contacts, music, videos and other data. Only Verizon Wireless subscribers though can use this service, if you switch carriers you need to download and backup your data before switching your service. With Dropbox, Google Drive and Microsoft SkyDrive (soon to be renamed OneDrive) there are no such restrictions – you can

use these services on your phone, computer and tablet regardless of which ISP you use. The good news is when it comes to carrier services like Verizon Cloud users have a choice among Box, Google Drive, Dropbox and SkyDrive. The FCC must reclassify its definition of broadband to reassert legal authority to enforce Net Neutrality and by extension protect the Open Internet and should attach more open access rules