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Before I explain why I believe such prioritization is a huge issue for net neutrality and why reclassification is absolutely necessary to preserve the openness of the Internet, let me explain why I care so deeply about net neutrality. As an activist, seeing how the Internet has grown and has enabled unprecedented cultural and technological evolution around the world, I've come to see it as by far the most important modern tool known to mankind. It has been a platform that brought about not just a never before seen explosion of innovation but also revolutions in many countries and global movements that have been able to change the world due to the inherent equality of the Internet.

It's a place where every bright idea can easily be developed into a user experience that everyone can enjoy, not where huge budgets are required to reach a large audience. Cases like the one with Comcast and Netflix introduce new challenges in how we define and enforce net neutrality but one thing is obviously clear: when ISP's start creating fast lanes at high charge for the content creators (which has not been the case until now in the evolution of the Internet), the incentive for ISP's to focus on more fast lane services increases and the incentive to invest in better networks that deliver equally fast connections for all decreases. This problem can only become worse if the FCC explicitly allows these types of deals. Even though we are at a point where even reclassification might not be enough to safeguard the openness of the Internet against these new last mile interconnection developments, it would in any case by far be the best step forward. This is something that most lawmakers and scholars agree on. The only ones thus far who take issue with this idea are the heads of ISP's and cable lobby groups. But the FCC's purpose is to protect consumers, not to give cable companies who are arguably already currently infringing upon net neutrality even more leeway to do so. Explicitly allowing any type of prioritization within the FCC's rules has thus far clearly not been necessary to help the Internet grow and there is absolutely no valid reason to believe that this would help the Open Internet forward in any shape or form. Regardless of promises to keep it 'commercially reasonable', adding such exceptions can only weaken net neutrality.

In light of all the data from past years and also recent developments such as the ones between Netflix and Comcast, it's clear that we need even stronger Open Internet rules than before, not weaker ones. If we want the Internet to enable our generation and future generations to continue to spark technological and cultural revolutions, we have to do everything to safeguard online equality. Reclassification is not only the best option. It is the least that the US can do to show to the world that online freedom and openness are more important than private interests.