

From: A Ross  
To: FCC Docket 14-28

Subject: The Open Internet

In *Verizon v. FCC*, No. 11-1355, The DC Circuit Court ruled that the no blocking and no unreasonable discrimination rules in the Open Internet Order were not applicable to Verizon. In the announcement for Docket 14-28, the Commission maintains that the transparency rules in effect for Internet providers “helps consumers make informed choices about their broadband service...” While in theory, this may sound like a great idea, such practices are not well known or advertised by the Internet providers being regulated by the FCC. Also, there is virtually no competition within a geographic area, limiting competition, and stifling innovation within this critical space.

During this proceeding, much will be said about preserving Net Neutrality. This is a vital concept. All bits must be treated without any preference for their source or destination. Netflix recently was strong-armed into paying several large providers for access to transport their data across the provider's network. Also, the FCC has stipulated that it is not unreasonable for an ISP to charge an Internet service for preferential access to their network. Again, this does not treat all data equally, which tips the playing field in favor of the service providers who can afford to pay for faster access to the Internet provider's customers.

This trend towards allowing Internet providers to give preferential access to their network for some and the lack of choice for Internet subscribers points to only one conclusion. The Internet will fundamentally change to a model that stifles innovation and removes the freedom of all bits to be transported without preference! The United States already lags behind many countries with regards to overall average speed and deployment of Internet service. Why is this?

The Internet has become much more than a passing fad in the last 20 years. It is the medium by which we bank, share photos across the country with our loved ones, research new products to purchase, connect with our representatives, and so much more. I believe it is even more important than the telephone was in the 1900s.

We deployed electrical power to all homes in the US in the first half of the 1900s. Phones came along not much later than that. Television was and is ubiquitous. Why is the Internet treated the same way? Why do so many people in this country have such limited access to the Internet? Why are speeds slow in many cases?

The solution is simple. Internet providers should be treated as a utility. It is no longer optional for a United States citizen to not have some level of access to Internet service, much in the same way it is not practical to have no access to electricity or telephone service. The providers should be more closely regulated, and forced to disclose, up front, their network management practices. They should NOT be permitted to discriminate against or for certain bits of data traversing their network. This model works well for utilities, and it can work just as well for Internet providers.

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