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I am a professor at Yale university, the editor of a free online academic journal and a scholar of small literary enterprises, many of which only survive by their ability to provide an online experience of culture--books, video, interactive search functions to explore literature in a fuller way, video--that doesn't differ in technical quality from the content provided by large media companies.

The internet IS a public utility. FCC rules that put small enterprises at an essential disadvantage will clear the net of the massive blossoming of what I call subsistence writers and providers of content--a blossoming that keeps a whole sector of small-scale entrepreneurs in business doing what they love. Booksellers, writers, builders of intellectual community, and small business owners: they need functional net neutrality, not a technical concept of net neutrality that allows large companies to monopolize online experience.

To allow large companies to pay for faster lanes is not like allowing customers to pay for a faster line at a Disney theme park. It's like allowing drivers to pay more to use the high-speed lanes on the highway rather than using those lanes as a public good, as we do now--to promote carpooling and fuel efficient vehicles. It's like allowing companies to pay a fee to ensure that if a fire starts in their building they get better service from the fire department than those who don't. The internet is a public good, like our roads and emergency services and public schools.

To stifle the small scale enterprises online will shut down a great age of cultural and business innovation. Of course the big companies want it to end: the profusion makes them work hard for their eyeballs. What they do has to be better, smarter, and more interesting to justify looking at it when there is so much smart stuff to choose from that moves just as fast. Let our eyes see as much as possible. There are few issues for which I would cancel my classes and take to the streets in protest--this is one. Don't let large companies litigate their way to market censorship.

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