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Communication in recent years has taken on new meanings. Internet-based communication, in spite of its drawbacks, is the logical future. It is already so prevalent that I am honestly surprised we have not yet seen the FCC reclassify broadband providers as Common Carriers. Data (such as email, web, and bulk non-interactive traffic), voice and video communication (VoIP), real-time media (streaming webcasts, movies, live content, recorded content, etc), all serve to demonstrate how broadly ranging our broadband service providers have become, how common and intrinsic they now are to practically all our means of communication.

Broadband providers provide some of the roads that tie the internet together. They are not ubiquitous and they should not be given unilateral reign. Their responsibility is to provide access to their customers, and whatever traffic those customers deem appropriate to access is between the customers and the content providers (traffic sources). We all drive the same roads, we all share the pipes. A provider that cannot serve the load demands of its customers is failing its customers; this does not mean it should now manage the traffic sources. No different would it be for a company that maintains a highway to charge not only the people who drive that highway, but every business near the highway for the privilege of allowing people to drive to those businesses. If the highway is jammed, do we blame the businesses who have no control over how many people want to access them, or the company maintaining the highway for not building it wide enough or for letting too many people on at once?

Broadband carriers are, today, not much different from providers of electrical power: they are generally in control of a limited monopoly, a huge percentage of households uses their services, and whether the customer uses a small or large portion of their service is a choice the customer must make. BUT, would it be reasonable for the electric company to charge makers of incandescent light bulbs for using more power than fluorescent or LED bulbs? Can an electric company justly charge manufacturers of toasters, ovens, refrigerators, washers or dryers, based on the power consumption those appliances use? Can they use their "infrastructure" to justify such charges? Should broadband be able to use the same arguments?

As a network administrator I understand the importance of keeping the data moving. I also understand that someone has to pay. Broadband may have made some poor decisions regarding their pricing for bandwidth usage, but that's broadband's problem, not the content providers. The customer is the loser no matter what happens, let's just be clear about that, but we're also "willing" losers - to a point. We pay our bills, as long as those bills are not obscene. Mobile providers such as Verizon and AT&T have long stuck it to the customer for mobile data usage by the megabyte. Customers pay, or move to another provider. This is reasonable, or at least not obscene. Actual competition between them has been good for the consumer - now more companies are offering unlimited data at lower costs. Given broadband's limited monopoly, what broadband is doing transcends obscene. That they may be permitted to charge me by how much data I consume, or how fast I consume it, is one thing; that they should not only charge my content providers but also limit my access to them is something else entirely, and should not be allowed.

Please reclassify broadband providers as common carriers.