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A research paper I wrote for a sophomore level, college English class.

Neutralizing the Internet

The World Wide Web is like a shiny packaging on a new toy. It looks appealing and displays everything you want to know, and the manufacturer is the Internet Service Provider (ISP) who decides, with careful consideration of government rules and regulations, how the contents are put together and sold. Like manufacturing laws, Net Neutrality is a set of government rules designed to keep the Internet open and free. Without these rules the manufacturer or ISP decides the quality and delivery of the product. The product can be poorly assembled and an ISP can make false claims since there would be no way to prove if they are true. On the other hand, with Net Neutrality the government levels the playing field by requiring their product, Internet service and Internet network management, to be transparent and fair. Furthermore, history shows that prior rulings supporting Net Neutrality have shaped the Internet into what it is today, while current rulings against it have sparked opposition a need for an overhaul. A future without Net Neutrality laws regulating the Internet will result in freedom of speech being violated, corporate monopolies taking over, and information sharing being negatively affected globally.

Opponents of Net Neutrality see it as a Marxist ideal where the government controls businesses and every aspect of the economy so it can be shared equally. In contrast, Net Neutrality laws can be taken as a step toward a government-controlled communist economy. With the government controlling businesses, advancements in a company will slow, and control will eventually be in the hands of statesmen. Laissez-faire, or translated in French for "let-it-be," is an economic term used to describe a free and unregulated capitalist favored market. This free-market approach to the economy allows the businesses to grow unconstrained and will drive direct competition, sparking economic growth from different facets. In fact, international trade will increase with corporations expanding overseas and will improve the economy of developing nations because outside investors will be interested in a market with less regulation. Currently, companies like AT&T and Verizon built their networks from the ground up and many believe in working hard for the American Dream, but to have the government control you with Net Neutrality laws infringes upon core beliefs of this nation. ISPs need to grow because internet access has become a necessity and in the future we will become even more dependent on it. In many part of the country only two providers are available, and in others the offered speeds of alternatives vary greatly, leaving users without a high-speed alternatives, (Internet Regulation 341). This quote is important to the essay because 5% of the country does not have wireless broadband access, which is what the future is looking towards and advancements to this technology will put Net Neutrality in the past. Just like cellular phone companies, small businesses can capitalize on new emerging technologies in wireless. Although, opponents of Net Neutrality present a valid argument, having these laws in place is essential to our freedom of speech and escaping a future of capitalist control like a dystopian, greed fueled 800s film.

The lack of Net Neutrality laws allow ISPs to regulate the internet at their own discretion, which can lead to violation of our First Amendment, freedom of speech. Without government caution from the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), an ISP can manage networks unfairly to Internet content providers and end users. Robert Frieden, Professor of telecommunications law, says, "I don't pay Comcast for making Netflix inferior to pay-per-view. I don't want the intermediaries tilting things to favor their own content" (Internet Regulation 328). This quote is important to the essay because ISPs may have been doing this all along without consumer's consent of how their data is managed. Allegations of such practices arose in 2011 where Skype, an alternative free telephone service, was slowed down, but this could not be proved as users only received errors and network management practices were not divulged. In reality, the 2005 classification of the Internet as an "Information Service" made cable companies and phone companies providing Internet abide to much less stringent rules than telecommunications services (Access to Broadband Networks 63). This quote is important to the essay because it proves that

an ISP's unethical practices can be hidden because management practices do not have to be divulged. If this ruling were applied to cell phone carriers in the PRISM scandal where data was mined by government agencies, Verizon and other companies could have shook it off as company owned data. In turn, this can cause big ISP corporations to be biased towards certain journalism agencies and decide to slow bandwidth to their particular server. As consumers, we have certain rights to know how our product and services are handled, but most importantly how our personal data is handled. We should be ensured that our data is secure and not used in any way other way, but ISPs can sell Internet habits to marketing companies, and they will in turn use it to predict markets and make billions of dollars. Our internet habits are currently mined and used by Google and Facebook to make market predictions. This is a way of being surveyed without knowing, like PRISM where millions of American's data were mined and stored. Ultimately, without transparency of how a network is managed, links to certain websites can suddenly show up with errors as the ISP figures unethical ways to block servers. The lack of Net Neutrality laws will lead to deceptive practices in order to benefit the ISP.

With Net Neutrality, rules can be changed to set the Internet as a common carrier so freedom of speech can be applied like telephones. The Internet can be compared to any place that is public while the World Wide Web is a shopping mall. The Internet is the sidewalk outside of your home where you are allowed all the freedoms of the constitution and although the World Wide Web, or the mall, lies in public domain, it is controlled by the website owner or retailer who decides what content they wish to present. The consumer still decides what store to go to and that choice is part of our freedom. In regard to the 2013 Net Neutrality ruling, former FCC Commissioner Michael Copps states "The Court's decision today poised to end the free, open and uncensored internet. People depend on the Open Internet to connect and communicate with each other freely" (Net Neutrality Ruling Paves The way For Internet "Fast Lanes" 6). This quote is important to the essay because communication is key in any society, and reducing the Internet is like silencing the voice of the people. Therefore, the Internet should be treated as public domain, a place where opinions can be shared and provide shelter for minority interests.

Without Net Neutrality, Corporations will grow into monopolies, dominate the economy and small businesses will get trampled. America was founded on small business mom and pop farms selling produce at market prices, and even today these farmers receive government intervention with grants and subsidies to keep it fair for other farmers. With a capitalist approach, ISPs will run communication services like a fast food restaurant and cut costs wherever possible. In 2005, incoming AT&T CEO Ed Whitacre said in a response to Google services "Use my pipes free, but I ain't going to let them do that because we have spent this capital and we have to have a return on it" (Net Neutrality Ruling Paves The Way For Internet "Fast Lanes" 7). This is important to the essay because Whitacre cares about the money first and does not propose a way for the Internet to eventually become free. This is like creating a toll on a new road to pay for its expenses with no promise of it being free, and then offering fast lanes to those who can afford it. This analogy can be applied to the FastPass Lanes in LA, where those that can afford the pass will not have to endure rush hour traffic. Feeding the capitalist oligarchy that is growing with every sneaky manipulation of the law, such as ruling that set Net Neutrality laws unjust in February 2014.

Without Net Neutrality, ISPs are expanding and have begun buying out entertainment companies. The latest giant acquisition was Comcast engulfing NBC Universal. This type of transaction should have common interest opponents all over it, because Comcast is one of the biggest cable and Internet providers, and now it controls one of the biggest entertainment studios in the world. Another example of common interest concerns is when Time Warner was seeking to drop opponent channels such as CBS. Monopoly laws during the industrial revolution were created to protect small businesses. ISPs will find it in their financial favor to bias network speeds for services that rival their own, such as Voice over IP or Skype and in some cases ISPs were suspected of doing this (Internet Regulation 328). This quote is important to the essay because constricting the competition is every business's dream, and theoretically ISPs can do this without anyone knowing. When music sharing first boomed in 1999 with Napster, ISPs were accused of bottlenecking speeds for these services. Now with the viral spread of Netflix, I've personally experienced Verizon slowing speeds for this service as well. It's apparent that

corporations can be unethical because I noticed the slow down to my personal Netflix before the February 2014 ruling when Net Neutrality was overturned, then Verizon began offering a similar service from an opponent of Netflix, the withering RedBox video service. ISP monopolies will grow uncontrollably and soon control our communication, news, and possibly our government.

Without Net Neutrality laws, information sharing will be regulated by ISPs and in turn will lead to slower technological innovation. Forums, colleges and social media sites are open areas for communication and ideas to be shared. The scientific community is based on open communication, specifically, the ability to share data and challenge each other's theories. Professor of computer science and public affairs at Princeton University, Edward Felten says "The next generation of innovators, who need neutrality the most are not at the bargaining table. They're hard at work in labs or classrooms" (Internet Regulation 328). This quote is important to the essay because scientists are not politicians and alone they cannot make the changes necessary to keep scientific advancements thriving. ISPs will sell fast lane services to those who can afford it and the poor independent scientists and researchers will be stuck in the slow lane. Communication is as natural as breathing, and by having Net Neutrality laws reestablished it would keep the Internet free and technological innovations will continue blossom.

Net neutrality laws are needed to keep communication channels open for world news to be shared fast and fair, because without these laws the news will become biased. ISPs have started to buy into the entertainment industry and the world of journalism makes up a good portion of it. NBC News may be inclined to omit reports about Time Warner and Net Neutrality, or skew stories about competitors. Reporting openly about world news keeps the entire globe conscious of what is going on thousands of miles away and not knowing will lead to worldwide disaster. The FCC is committed towards a free internet, economic growth, innovation and maintaining channels that are protected by the First Amendment. (Net Neutrality Ruling Paves The way For Internet "Fast Lanes" 7). This quote is important because it shows that FCC strongly supports Net Neutrality and understands the need for unprejudiced news reporting. Unbiased news reports are necessary and give people the crucial information they need in order to make the decisions that make the world a better place.

Net Neutrality laws keep the Internet free to speak opinions, freedom from dominating monopolies, and the freedom to share information openly and fairly. Films like V for Vendetta and The Running Man imagine a dystopian future where the Laissez-faire free markets grew wildly and allowed corporations to take over the world. This monster of greed is everywhere, and it's the government's job to decide where greed has gone too far. Without Net Neutrality, opinions will be silenced by errors or redirected to a website that looks similar, alike to "pulling the wool over a sheep's eyes." Corporate monopolies already control most our lives with wireless phones, Internet, and now entertainment. This will lead to monopolies controlling other industries such as food, automotive, or financial because they can broadcast biased commercials to favor their corporate interests and greed. Prior to the 2014 ruling, Net Neutrality shaped the Internet into the flourishing frontier of technology it is today. The outcome of the FCC's policy of no regulation, has proven successful with the booming of internet and technologies over the past two decades. (Internet Regulation 328). This quote is important to the essay because it shows that having the headroom to grow allowed for the rapid expansion on the Internet grew into, and in contrast having limits will slow innovation. Past and present rulings have exposed the FCC's inability to substantiate Net Neutrality laws. In 2005 ISPs cleverly argued out of being classified as a Common Carrier, and instead into an Information Service that abides to less rules. In 2011, courts ruled it unlawful for government to control private corporate products. Recent 2014 rulings have further buried Net Neutrality and the latest FCC's alternatives do not offer the same freedoms as before. Internet software companies such as Mozilla have called out the FCC's weak push for Net Neutrality, and urge the resurrection of reclassifying to common carrier. This concern is growing everyday as more people are reached through the free Internet that is still available. Net Neutrality is ultimately vital to all human civilizations, and without it, will feed the growing capitalist oligarchy and corporations will eventually be treated better than people.

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