

To Whom It May Concern,
Ordinarily, I am not one to make waves. I didn't go march with Occupy. I don't like to sign petitions from random people downtown. However, I woke this morning and discovered headlines like "FCC approves plan to allow for paid priority on Internet" and became compelled to make sure my voice was heard.

In no uncertain terms, allowing for an "internet fast lane" or any sort of "paid priority" will destroy the grand avenue to prosperity that is the Internet as we know it. We paid Billions in tax dollars to have the cable companies create an open and free network. They shirked most of their responsibility. Now their services are becoming congested, but rather than increase capacity, they are trying to sell this artificial scarcity. If they had deployed the nationwide fiber network that we already paid for, they would not have the congestion.

The internet has always been a global phenomenon. There are companies and individuals across the world who would not be able to offer services in the United States if they have to pay a special "fast service" fee to each internet provider. The story about the 17 year old who makes games that top the charts, and helps feed and house his family with the proceeds would not be possible (<http://www.npr.org/2014/05/05/309743657/teens-app-helps-pay-families-bills>). Maybe his game would have failed without the fast lane, in a world where an increasing share of an underdeveloped network is "pay to win". Maybe the company who's free hosting he used would have failed, if their level of service were degraded because they didn't pay the "internet speed ransom". Maybe that Teen's parents have to go on welfare because they can't afford to eat, because their son's game never took off.

Consider my own self as an example. I work for a small tech support business. We use a computer remote control software that lets me log into someone's computer from my home office. The software is made by another small business who likely couldn't afford to pay for a "fast lane", at least in the beginning. If their software didn't exist, I wouldn't be able to run my business.

How many, less dramatic stories do you imagine are out there? Considering the global nature of the internet, I'd say millions. Now if the United States is the only country in the world that implements this "fast lane", developers will have a decision. Create their app to work globally, or jump through special, expensive hoops to make it work the same for United States citizens as it does for everyone else around the world. Suddenly, as a consumer in the US, the only apps and internet services that work to their full potential are the ones made by giant corporations that can afford to jump through the extra hoops. Imgur.com, one of the largest and most popular picture hosting services in the world, was started by one guy, alone in his dorm room. That would not be possible under the proposed system.

I hope I have established that implementing a fast lane would have catastrophic and wide reaching consequences beyond people not being able to watch the latest House of Cards without buffering. The internet is the last refuge of the American Dream. Only with the internet can I pick myself up, educate myself, and climb the socioeconomic ladder. I can only do that if the tools are available. The tools I need will not be available if the only toolmakers are the large corporations that can afford to pay to "fast lane" their services.

I would now like to bring up the apparent conflict of interest between content providers and internet service providers. As a consumer, I do not want to have to pay for "Internet Channels". I pay for internet data to be delivered to my home. I do not pay so that an executive at Comcast can make editorial decisions about what sort of websites are going to work better than others. Does anybody find it suspicious that Netflix, the new kid on the block competing with traditional television service, is one of the first who's service is being held for ransom? And again, Netflix is being told they must pay more because the pipes are congested, but the American taxpayers already gave billions to the cable companies to upgrade their networks.

Sincerely,

Alex Ramsey

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