

The proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner concerns me deeply. While I am lucky enough to live in an area where I have more than one option for Internet Service Providers available to me, I still feel the effects of the minimal competition among the ISP industry.

As Comcast and Time Warner are the largest (and least trusted) ISP's in America, their smaller competitors need only provide minimally improved service to garner customers. No company is going to provide exceptionally better service for substantially less revenue, and that's understandable; it wouldn't make sense from a business standpoint. But is ISP profitability the only angle that matters?

Having an affordable and reliable internet connection is becoming more of a necessity for daily life of individuals, families, and communities. If an organization providing this necessity has no direct competition (as Comcast and Time Warner already have in many districts), then they can charge any amount regardless of the quality of the product. As a college student in his mid twenties sleeping in the living room of a one bedroom apartment, being able to maintain a reliable internet connection is not a luxury. My reliance on a stable internet connection has led to me choosing to skip meals regularly to ensure I won't miss out on possible job or educational opportunities.

While some argue that the business may have a responsibility to their stock holders to make money regardless of the cost to the consumers and society, government has a responsibility to the consumers to ensure that they are not being unjustly taken advantage of. In lieu of establishing internet service as a utility, as some have urged and I would be eager to get behind, it seems that the government's responsibility to the American people should be to ensure a healthy level of competition in the ISP industry by restricting the two largest Internet Service Providers from becoming a single entity.

At least this is what I think.