

I believe that we must speak louder than corporate interests in the fight to preserve the democratic nature of the Internet itself.

Discrimination: The Internet was designed as an open medium. The fundamental idea since the Internet's inception has been that every Web site, every feature and every service should be treated without discrimination. That's how bloggers can compete with CNN or USA Today for readers. That's how up-and-coming musicians can build underground audiences before they get their first top-40 single. That's why when you use a search engine, you see a list of the sites that are the closest match to your request -- not those that paid the most to reach you. Discrimination endangers our basic Internet freedoms.

Double-dipping: Traditionally, network owners have built a business model by charging consumers for Internet access. Now they want to charge you for access to the network, and then charge you again for the things you do while you're online. They may not charge you directly via pay-per-view Web sites. But they will charge all the service providers you use. These providers will then pass those costs along to you in the form of price hikes or new charges to view content.

Stifling innovation: Net Neutrality ensures that innovators can start small and dream big about being the next EBay or Google without facing insurmountable hurdles. Unless we preserve Net Neutrality, startups and entrepreneurs will be muscled out of the marketplace by big corporations that pay for a top spot on the Web. On a tiered Internet controlled by the phone and cable companies, only their own content and services -- or those offered by corporate partners that pony up enough "protection money" -- will enjoy life in the fast lane.