

Dear exemplars of venality:

It is time to seek a better way. Or, failing that, to pretend you care about the purported responsibilities of your jobs. This does not apply to the one of you who actually favors the ability of the American people to communicate freely with one another. We the people feel certain we can rely on her.

For the other four of you, the three corporate lackeys and the one fanatic, I suggest strongly that you adhere to the basic truth that the airwaves are public, and that the Internet should be reclassified as a public utility. In other words, private-sector corporations do not get to charge money to access the airwaves so that communication becomes a purchasable commodity belonging more to the rich than the poor, and data generated by the extraordinarily wealthy does not get priority over the data generated by the not-so-wealthy, just as Thomas Paine did not have to pay more to publish his ideas, word for word, than did Edmund Burke. (You may remember Thomas Paine. He believed people had rights, including the right to free communication.)

"Separate an individual from society, and give him an island or a continent to possess, and he cannot acquire personal property. He cannot be rich. . . . All accumulation, therefore, of personal property, beyond what a man's own hands produce, is derived to him by living in society;<sup>1</sup> and he owes on every principle of justice, of gratitude, and of civilization, a part of that accumulation back again to society from whence the whole came."

Thomas Paine

*One of the things you ought to give back, by the way, is a respect for the commons which has sustained your ability to make lots and lots of money. As well as respect for the basic rights of your fellow citizens.*

Why should you choose this moment to temporarily abandon, or perhaps simply constrain, your venality? Because what you and your friends in the private sector may not fully understand is that you are going to piss off **everyone** if you change the Internet into the

unwillingly sodomized playground of the ultra-wealthy and legally chant "neener neener neener" at the rest of the world. You will piss off liberals. You will piss off conservatives. You will piss off independents. You will piss off small businessmen. You will piss off some large businessmen (certain people in Silicon Valley have not entirely sold their souls to the devil. Yet.) You will piss off researchers. You will piss off coders. You will piss off the young. You will piss off the old. Just about the only people you **won't** piss off are those so poor they have no Internet access to speak of anyway. And they, being so excluded from all our society's power and privilege, will not be able to help you, even if they would.

When the world becomes enraged with you, the only people on your side will be the corporate behemoths that are egging you on to this unspeakable act of anti-civilization in the first place--well, not counting your own employees. Speaking of your employees, I hope they have very good digital skills indeed, because, while I am the digital equivalent of someone just learning her ABCs, you are about to anger every digitally-skilled person in the world who isn't getting a paycheck directly from you or your corporate friends.

Think well what you're about to do. Think wisely.

Is it so important that you make sure your corporate friends are able to dominate every arena of public discourse? Wouldn't it be better for them to accept this one slight limitation on their total power and dominance, while they continue to accrue obscene amounts of wealth in exchange for fairly piss-poor service?

As people with careers in the public sector, more or less, you no doubt have heard the acronym NIMBY. What you perhaps don't yet fully understand is that the Internet is the largest NIMBY issue in the history of man. Everyone who uses it views it as their back yard, except for those who view it as their home itself.

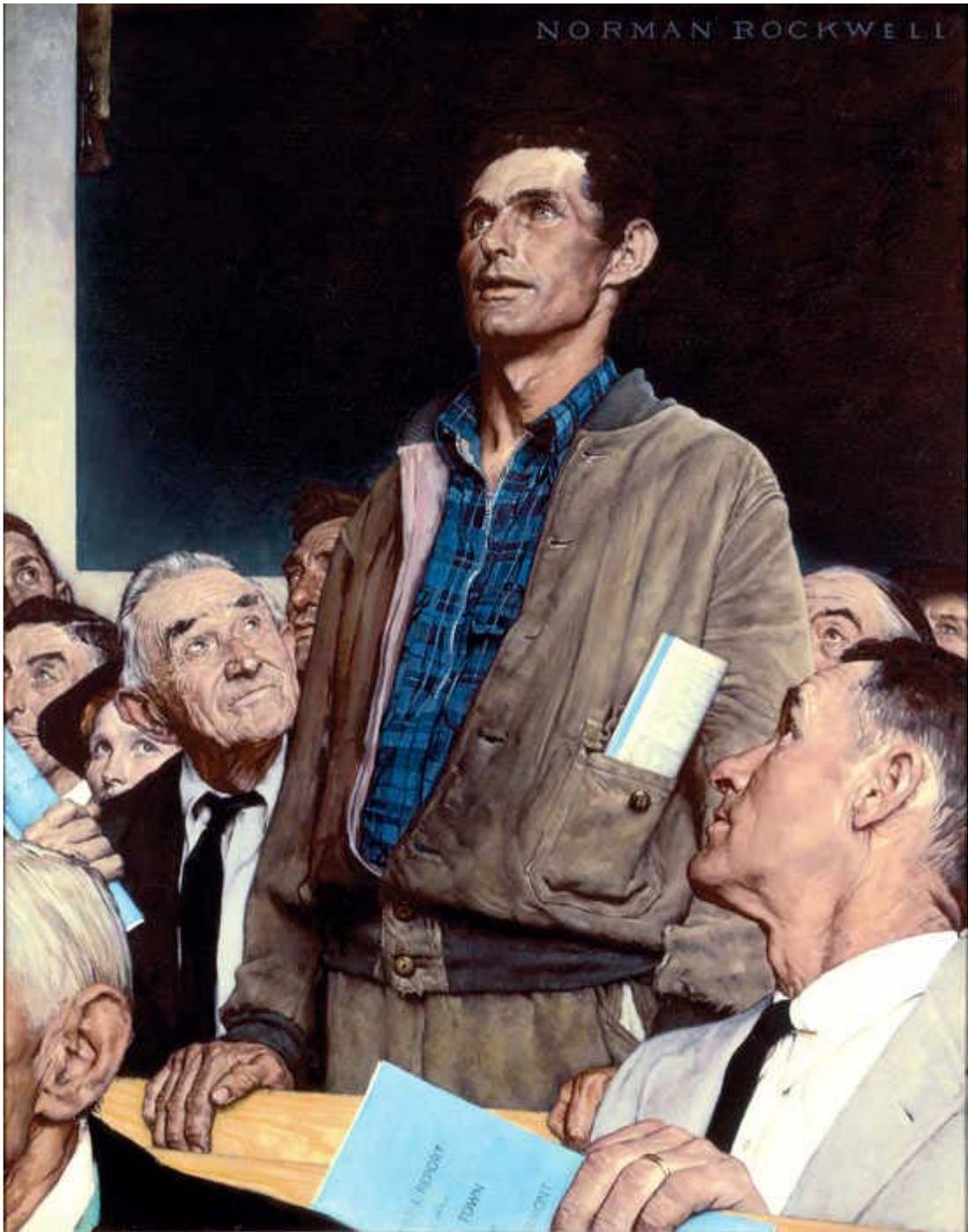
This is an international issue, but to bring it down to a more homegrown, national level:

Your wealthy friends should take a step back and realize that, having deprived Americans of their personal homes (their houses) and their national home (their democracy) it would be highly inadvisable at this moment to deprive them of their digital home as well.

We have had enough of this:



What we want is this:



We have had enough of this:



What we want is this:



Do your jobs. Make it so.  
Comment to the FCC at [this link](#). Click on the top item, 14-28. Balance out my rant with sweet-talking reason, or rant along at my side.