Comcast CEO Brian Roberts and Comcast's top lobbyist David Cohen don't understand why the Time Warner Cable merger is controversial. They just want Comcast to be like Apple, Google or Amazon a media giant which just so happens to control the pipes through which our information and communications flow. This deal has opened a pandora's box even for AT&T to buy DirecTV.

The fact is for most of the Internet's history all ISPs have been dumb pipes taking us to the same Internet. Users pay for an Internet connection and can then go anywhere they want online. Yet the telco and cable giants want to make the Internet like pay TV with costly bundles. Depending on which websites you want to visit you may have to upgrade to a higher priced service plan when they start offering tiered Internet.

Even worse content providers will have to start paying ISPs to transmit their data to their web customers over the ISP's network. They want the whole Internet to pay them for what their subscribers use the Internet. The big content companies like Disney, Fox, Time Warner Inc., may be able to pay the toll but smaller web firms including political blogs like Daily Kos and Daly Caller which engage their readers to participate in the political process - and use the Web for political activism could be shut out as they lack the funds to pay the ISPs. In this way independent media suffers.

So if Comcast subscribers want to use Netflix then Comcast wants to charge Netflix on top of the internet access fees they already charge users to connect to the Internet. This is double billing and it's wrong.

The Next Internet:

For most of the past 25 years, no single person or company has been powerful enough to control how the American Internet works. One reason for that was the diffuse and chaotic nature of our online economy -- a kind of rough and tumble Wild West where thousands of producers jostled for the attention of the masses. In this environment, NO SINGLE COMPANY NOT even GOLIATHS like GOOGLE or FACEBOOK, dominated enough traffic to bend the network's free market checks and balances.

The infrastructure of the Internet helped keep everyone on a level playing field as well. All players from pip squeak individuals to giant companies had to pay an Internet Service Provider (ISP) a flat fee based on the speed or volume of the service for online access. In exchange for those fees the ISPs would expand and maintain their pipes and pass their customers traffic to and from another set of companies that owned the larger global transit ways for online information.

It was for a time marvelous architecture, fundamentally unlike any of the other networks in our lives. There was no government ownership as with the interstate highway system, no costly long distance plans as with the phone networks and no individual postage required to send content as with the U.S. Postal Service.

But in recent years that UNIQUE STRUCTURE HAS STARTED TO CRACK, and the REASON IS THE SIZE OF THE BIGGEST PLAYERS. A decade ago, thousands of companies shared in the daily buzz of Internet traffic said Craig Labovitz, the CEO of DeepField, a network research firm. By 2009 150 COMPANIES ACCOUNTED FOR HALF OF ALL THAT TRAFFIC, and BY EARLY THIS YEAR just 30 companies made up the majority of the daily give and take.

As of March just two companies in particular Netflix and Google, which owns YouTube -- accounted for 47% of all Internet traffic during prime-time hours at night according to Sandyvine, a network equipment company.

Meanwhile ISPs like Comcast have consolidated as well. Part of the reason was old fashioned mergers with big cable and telecommunications companies buying up smaller ones, and part of this was the market for broadband simply changed. Online video consumption grew by 71% in the U.S. from 2012 to 2013, according to Nielsen. Since you need at least 5 Mbps to stream a single HD video, according to the FCC, Americans demand for faster broadband exploded. As a result ISPs that offered perfectly acceptable speeds less than a decade ago have fallen out of favor. Dial-up is laughable, satellite is too unreliable, DSL is on the decline. And while there is proliferation of faster mobile services like 4G and LTE most come with data usage caps that make them unattractive to use as a household's primary Internet connection.

Verizon and AT&T, both of which are bleeding traditional DSL subscribers have begun offering consumers speedier services like FiOS and U-Verse. Both those along with lightning fast options like Google Fiber are available in only 20% of American homes. The rest of us are left with one choice for broadband capable of streaming multiple HD videos: cable. And since cable companies almost never compete with one another geographically, that means Americans have one option for the fastest available category of broadband.

Though some analysts predicted as recently as a decade ago, that cable was a terminal industry the opposite has turned out to be the case. While pay TV subscriptions are slowly declining, broadband subscriptions are driving new profits. Broadband is Comcast's fastest growing sector with margins that are says industry analyst Craig Moffett "comically profitable".

While undoubtedly good for the cable industry, this paradigm--more demand for streaming videos, more demand for faster broadband, fewer companies offering services that meet those needs--sets the stage for a power struggle. In one corner are enormous content producers just like Fox, Disney, Time Warner and Netflix. In the other are powerful ISPs like Comcast, AT&T, Verizon. The stakes? Control over the Internet and the profits its produces. The ISPs want to gut Net Neutrality which would harm smaller businesses making it harder for startups to compete on the merits of their service - only those who can afford to pay extortion will succeed.

In a world without Net Neutrality in the 1990s Google would not have been able to startup. Microsoft which was already a tech giant would have the resources to pay ISPs to get around data caps and could dominate the Web. Furthermore, Amazon,.com likely would not have succeeded if it had to startup in today’s type of broadband environment. Without Net Neutrality it would be harder for new companies to start up. Also keep in mind Comcast’s violating NBC merger conditions - the Bloomberg carriage complaint of Comcast violating news neighbor hooding on its pay TV system’s channel lineup, and Tennis Channel complaint. Also Netflix’s complaint about Comcast prioritizing XFINITY TV by exempting it from data caps.

The Clinton Gore Justice Department didn't like Microsoft trying to monopolize the Internet and would have permitted no large company to do so even ISPs. They forbade SBC Communication's proposal to re-merge with AT&T but a few short years later in the Bush Cheney Administration Ma Bell was allowed to piece itself back together.