

Keep in mind without Network Neutrality in the wireless space giants like AT&T Mobility could put the screws to consumers. In fact with AT&T's previous FaceTime over cellular blocking they did to their deaf customers. Limiting FaceTime over cellular to their Mobile Share plans and preventing it from working over AT&T's 3G network excluded iPhone 4 and iPhone 4S users from accessing FaceTime over AT&T's cellular network. Even worse iPad users with cellular model iPads and AT&T cellular access owning a device incapable of making traditional phone calls were prevented from using their iPads to place FaceTime video calls. AT&T said for users with just an iPad you have to buy our Mobile Share plan which includes calling features the iPad lacked. So they basically said you have to pay for a service plan that includes features you can't or won't use on your iPad, you have to have an iPhone or another brand of smartphone to use the Mobile Share plan's calling features forcing users to pay for something they don't need to use a feature they want or may need to communicate. Keep in mind Verizon Wireless has been known to engage in discriminatory behavior also, and it's not just the wireless carriers but the cable and telco companies providing wire-line service so look into Comcast's behavior also. Below is an article from a few years back documenting this discrimination:

## AT&T's FaceTime Blocking Puts the Screws to Its Deaf Customers

On Wednesday, Apple will **unveil the latest iPhone** for its fans to **drool** over, and its detractors to **mock**. This annual ritual has become such a big deal that **economists say the iPhone launch** is critical to the health of the U.S. economy.

Analysts and amateur speculators around the globe have already come to a consensus about what the new device will look like, and what its capabilities will be.

4G LTE? **Check**.

Thinner, bigger screen? **Check** and **check**.

Mobile FaceTime? Um ... **asterisk**?

Yes, AT&T, the **universally loved** carrier, will **block** users from accessing this core feature of iOS 6 unless they are willing to shell out **big bucks** for one of AT&T's unlimited voice and texting plans.

For most consumers, AT&T is just being AT&T, **ignoring** the needs of its customers and using its gatekeeping power to **protect** its legacy voice business from the disruptive forces of competition.

But AT&T's FaceTime blocking is especially frustrating to me. I am profoundly deaf. For me and my family, mobile FaceTime offers the promise of a seamless, one-touch communications solution that will allow me to communicate in my natural language, American Sign Language (ASL).

As I expressed in a recent **opinion piece** I wrote for *Wired*, I'm not looking for special treatment and I'm not trying to abuse the system. I just want to be able to use the data I pay for on the device I paid for.

Yes, it's ridiculous that AT&T is telling me and all other deaf and hard-of-hearing customers that we have to buy unlimited voice minute plans to use FaceTime on our iPhones. But it's even worse than that. I own a **new iPad** that runs on AT&T's 4G LTE network. Yet if I want to make a FaceTime call on my iPad — a device that isn't designed to make

cellular phone calls — I have to first sign up for an unlimited voice and texting plan. Just think about that for a minute.

Most people get why AT&T's FaceTime blocking hurts the deaf and our families, but I'm also seeing some commenters telling me to jailbreak my devices or use an app like Skype that AT&T has said it won't block.

I work in tech. I could jump through these hoops. I might even be able to convince my wife's family to jailbreak their devices. But I shouldn't have to.

Part of the appeal of Apple's iDevices is their ease of use. If I want to make a FaceTime call, I open up my contacts list and **press a single button**. But if I want to make a Skype video call, I have to register with Skype, launch the app, pick out the person I want to call, and hope that they've got Skype up and running on their device.

So while I may not have a hard time getting around AT&T's barriers, many other deaf and hard-of-hearing users will. And for what? So we can help prop up AT&T's voice business at a time when **the market is deciding** that over-the-top Internet alternatives are better?

Unless AT&T gets the message loud and clear that this is an unacceptable way to treat its customers, FaceTime blocking will be the tip of the iceberg. In a normal market, consumers could vote with their wallets. But **this market** is anything but normal, and all the barriers the carriers throw up **make switching hard to do**. And even if they could, the options are limited. Verizon is **requiring all new customers** to buy unlimited voice plans just to use their mobile data.

Hopefully AT&T will see all the negative attention its FaceTime blocking is getting and reverse course before iOS 6 launches. But we

have Net Neutrality protections just in case the company doesn't do the right thing. The FCC needs to step in and protect users, so I encourage you to [click here and tell the agency to stop AT&T's anti-consumer behavior](#).