

Why can't carriers just accept we want them to be 'dumb pipes?'

I've been a [Verizon](#) subscriber for years now, even though I've long suspected that they don't think much of their customers' intelligence. However, when I read today that Verizon is thinking of actually trying to create [a rival app store to compete with Google Play](#), I realized that [Verizon doesn't just think we're stupid](#), it thinks we're the kid who made himself sick in kindergarden every day by gorging himself on paste.

FROM EARLIER: [Verizon still thinks you're stupid](#)

Why is Verizon doing something that will inevitably be a total failure and will make it the butt of jokes on tech blogs for years to come? Because like every other carrier out there, Verizon has a hard accepting the cold reality that people want it to be a dumb pipe that brings us what we want, when we want it.

If you've ever talked with telecom execs, you know that nothing makes them freak out more than the notion that their business will

be relegated to the role of “dumb pipes” that only make revenue by pushing bits from one point to another. This is why carriers are constantly trying to “add value” to your service by pushing their own “exclusive” apps onto your smartphone that you never use and that take up needless space.

But here’s the thing that Verizon doesn’t understand: There’s nothing wrong about being a dumb pipe. Sure, you won’t make the same kinds of ungodly profits that Apple, Google and Microsoft make as a dumb pipe but you’re not going to starve doing it either. Indeed, given the amount of money my family and I cough up to Verizon every month, I would hope its executives aren’t panhandling on the street for food.

The virtue of being a dumb pipe is simple: I pay you money to bring me what I want when I ask for it as quickly and cheaply as possible. In other words, wireless carriers are basically digital mailmen — and there’s nothing wrong with that, it’s a very valuable service!

But just like I don’t want my UPS guy trying to convince me to read the novel he wrote instead of the book I actually ordered from [Amazon](#), I similarly don’t want my wireless carrier trying to convince me to sign up for inferior services that it doesn’t have the talent or the infrastructure to deliver.

Nonetheless, I don't expect Verizon and other carriers to stop trying to push services on us that we don't want anytime soon. If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result, the wireless industry has shown itself to be pretty damn crazy over the years.