

Dear FCC,

My name is Sean Ray and I live in Somerville, MA.

Net neutrality, the principle that Internet service providers (ISPs) treat all data that travels over their networks equally, is important to me because without it sites can be censored based less on content and more on the highest bidder. This stifles creativity and destroys free speech.

A pay-to-play Internet worries me because new, innovative services that can't afford expensive fees for better service will be less likely to succeed.

I spent a lot of time when I was a teenager exploring the internet. I lived in an emotionally abusive household, and at times in a physically abusive household, where the internet was my 'gateway' to the world. Through it, I was able to come to terms with my sexuality, and understand that not everyone gets treated this way, and that there are options. Through small communities and websites, I was able to find a new place to live and to start my life, to get emotional assistance I needed to cope and to understand that the problems I faced weren't the end of the world.

In short, it saved my life. I can't express how important and vital it is that I had access to these tools: many of which were non-profit, and many of which could have been blocked because, in many states, my sexuality is illegal. By providing an open forum that does NOT involve my ISP, these options became available to me. It's likely I would have committed suicide out of depression without it. I can't recall the number of conversations I've had talking me out of it.

Now, the lives of other young people are in your hands. You can choose corporate profit, or the lives of young people. I trust that the FCC, as its purpose is to ensure that communications are fairly treated, will keep in mind how vital open communication is to young people, especially those in dangerous situations where an easy solution may not exist. By putting a price tag on expression, by allowing companies to decide priority of content (or even access to content at all), you will destroy both my faith in your organization to protect the very rights that you claim. The FCC will send, to me, the message that I'd be better off dead than to lose profit.

Sincerely,

Sean Ray