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OURVIEW

Don't neuter Net neutrality

The Federal Communications Commission is planning to allow Internet service providers (ISP) to charge extra money for "fast lane" broadband services. In other words, the mega web sites on the Net, YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, etc., would have better service, and speed, than other web sites.

Such changes would allow ISPs to charge customers for "preferred" service on web sites. It can also provide the opportunity for web sites with deep pockets to pay money to the ISPs to allow them better service than other sites. Who doubts that such payoffs would be passed on to Net service customers? The proposed rules are meant to end Net neutrality, a practice that has been in place since 2010 and is being challenged in court by the major corporate firm, Verizon.

For those unaware of what Net neutrality is, Standard-Examiner technology writer Leslie Meredith explained it in a pithy, succinct manner: "Net neutrality is about fairness across the Internet -- equal treatment for all. ... the principle that Internet service providers should enable access to all legal content and applications regardless of the source, and without favoring or blocking particular products or websites."

All Internet users should oppose these FCC recommendations. The Net is a libertarian service. It should not play favorites. Corporate money should not harm access to users who already pay via subscription fees to use the Net. We urge readers to contact their U.S. representative and senators and tell them that Net neutrality should not be neutered.

As Meredith reported, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler is backing away a little from ending Net neutrality. He wants a delay and added that anything that decreases the quality Net users already enjoy is not acceptable. He also claims that current competition for web usage will not be harmed. Frankly, talk is cheap, we've seen what the FCC wants to do. Ron Fournier, reporter for National Journal, has suggested that ending Net neutrality could spark a populist revolt (<http://www.nationaljournal.com/tech/net-neutrality-s-death-couldspark-populist-revolt-20140506>)

Fairness with Internet usage must not die. The Internet cannot wither thanks to corporate dominance — like areas of our nation have withered due to corporate greed replacing corporate responsibility. Net neutrality must survive.

