

When Net Neutrality Becomes Programmed Censorship

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The worst fears of all free speech proponents are upon us. The Verizon suit against the Federal Communications Commission, [appellate decision](#) sets the stage for a Supreme Court review. The [Wall Street Journal](#) portrays the ruling in financial terms: "A federal court has tossed out the FCC's "open internet" rules, and now internet service providers are free to charge companies like Google and [Netflix](#) higher fees to deliver content faster."

In essence, this is the corporate spin that the decision is about the future cost for being connected.

"The ruling was a blow to the Obama administration, which has pushed the idea of "net neutrality." And it sharpened the struggle by the nation's big entertainment and telecommunications companies to shape the regulation of broadband, now a vital pipeline for tens of millions of Americans to view video and other media.

For consumers, the ruling could usher in an era of tiered Internet service, in which they get some content at full speed while other websites appear slower because their owners chose not to pay up.

"It takes the Internet into completely uncharted territory," said Tim Wu, a Columbia University law professor who coined the term net neutrality."

What the Journal is not telling you is that this "uncharted territory" is easy to project. If ISP's will be able to charge varied rates or decide to vary internet speed, it is a very short step towards selectively discriminate against sites based upon content. Do not get lulled into thinking that constitutional protective political speech is guaranteed.

Once again, the world according to the communication giants paint a very different interpretation as the article, [Verizon called hypocritical for equating net neutrality to censorship](#) illustrates.

"Verizon's argument that network neutrality regulations violated the firm's First Amendment rights. In Verizon's view, slowing or blocking packets on a broadband network is little different from a newspaper editor choosing which articles to publish, and should enjoy the same constitutional protection."

The response from advocates of the Net Neutrality standard, that is about to vanish, sums up correctly.

“The First Amendment does not apply, however, when Verizon is merely transmitting the content of third parties. Moreover, these groups point out, Verizon itself has disclaimed responsibility for its users’ content when it was convenient to do so, making its free speech arguments ring hollow.”

Prepare for the worst. The video, [Prepare To Be Robbed. Net Neutrality Is Dead!](#), which includes frank language and expletives, provides details that place the use of internet access into question coming out of this appellate decision.

Analyze the implications logically. It is one thing to charge a for profit service like Netflix a higher fee to transverse the electronic bandwidth of a communication network. Selling a membership to an end user is the source of their cash flow. However, most activist political sites usually provide internet users free access to their particular viewpoint and source links.

Your internet service provider controls the pipeline that feeds your devices and data connection. No matter which company you pay for this service, you are dependent upon this union. A free WiFi link may well become a memory. Beaming a satellite signal, mostly is an alternative, when DSL, cable or other broadband is not available.

No matter what method is used to surf the net, this decision clearly implies that internet access is now a privilege, at the effective discretion, if not mercy; of a provider that allow an account for service.

Next, consider the implication that search engines will use this decision to re-work their algorithms lowering their spider bots selection of sites that challenge the “PC” culture. Restrictive categorization used for years by Google, Yahoo and Bing can use this decision as cover to purge dissenting sites even more from their result rankings.

It is common knowledge that YouTube censors and targets certain uploads. One particular subject that experiences technical glitches is Fukushima. The video [You Tube Censoring Truther Channels](#) explains the drill. Add to the frustration are the ads, especially the ones with no skip option and imagine future requirements for uploading approval. What is next, a paid subscription to use and upload to the service?

Yes, the [Ending Net Neutrality Signals A Digital Paradigm Shift](#). It also means that they could unfairly push sites like (add the name of your favorite sites) out of the way of users if they (the “PC” protectors) didn’t like them, acting as effective censors.

Stephen Lendman writes in [Digital Democracy vs. Corporate Dominance: R.I.P. Internet Neutrality?](#)

“Without Net Neutrality, ISPs will be able to devise new schemes to charge users more for access and services, making it harder for us to communicate online – and easier for companies to censor our speech.”

Corporate gatekeepers will control “where you go and what you see.”

Verizon, AT&T, Comcast and Time Warner Cable “will be able to block content and speech they don’t like, reject apps that compete with their own offerings, and prioritize Web traffic...”

They'll be able to "reserve the fastest loading speeds for the highest bidders (while) sticking everyone else with the slowest."

Doing so prohibits free and open communications. Censorship will become policy. Net Neutrality is too important to lose."

Ready yourself for the inevitable results! According to Michael Hiltzik, [Net neutrality is dead. Bow to Comcast and Verizon, your overlords.](#)

"In the U.S., there's no practical competition. The vast majority of households essentially have a single broadband option, their local cable provider. Verizon and AT&T provide Internet service, too, but for most customers they're slower than the cable service. Some neighborhoods get telephone fiber services, but Verizon and AT&T have ceased the rollout of their FiOs and U-verse services—if you don't have it now, you're not getting it.

Who deserves the blame for this wretched combination of monopolization and profiteering by ever-larger cable and phone companies? The FCC, that's who. The agency's dereliction dates back to 2002, when under Chairman Michael Powell it reclassified cable modem services as "information services" rather than "telecommunications services," eliminating its own authority to regulate them broadly. Powell, by the way, is now the chief lobbyist in Washington for the cable TV industry, so the payoff wasn't long in coming."

In a digital environment, access to an internet that provides uncensored content at the lowest costs is a direct threat to the corporate economy. Innovation and creative cutting-edge services are clearly marked as competing challenges to the Amazon jungle of merchandising. The big will just get bigger.

Then the unavoidable effects from the "all the news fit to report" mass medium, intensifies their suppression of honest investigative journalism. Filtering out the alternative and truth media is the prime objective of this ruling. Eliminating political dissent from the internet is the ultimate implication. What would the net be like without access to the Drudge Report?

When the cable or satellite services bundle their programming into a "take it or leave it" format, the choices for the consumer becomes a major financial burden just to watch the few channels that have interest. Applying this pattern to the internet will cause even greater resentment.

Just look at the disaster from the Yahoo retooling. That Ms. "wicked witch" MM have pushed up the stock price, but ask any yahoo group member what they think of the new format. This is a classic example of how to turn off users and ruin your product.

Subscription services are playing with fire. With the collapse of the main street economy, the added fees to access content that is mediocre at best, is the actual fallout. Like the dinosaur TV networks, the corporatist sites risk total rejection from internet visitors.

Totalitarian culturalists are rejoicing with this latest damper on free speech. News by way of government press releases is pure propaganda. How did this happen?

For a short explanation history, Nilay Patel writes in [The Wrong Words: How The FCC Lost Neutrality And Could Kill The Internet.](#)

“The FCC tried to appease the out-of-control corporate egos of behemoths like Verizon and Comcast by pretending internet providers were special and classifying them as “information service providers” and not “telecommunications carriers.” The wrong words. Then, once everyone was wearing the nametag they wanted, the FCC tried to impose common carrier-style telecommunications regulations on them anyway.”

[Credo Action](#) believes that “FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler can undo the Bush-era decision to deregulate broadband Internet providers and allow them to operate outside of the legal framework that has traditionally applied to companies that offer two-way communication services.”

Such optimism seems naive in light of the real controllers of policy, much the same, for the Supreme Court coming to the rescue. Mark this court decision as the strategic destruction of the internet as a beacon of unfeigned free expression of information and open political speech. The programmers will be working overtime to set up layers of tasks, restrictions and huddlers to jump over. If you think Facebook censorship is bad, get ready for a purely governmental approved net along the Chinese model.

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