



May 13, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We are writing to express our strong support for an open Internet. We are showrunners and creators of television and original Internet programs, and members of the Writers Guild of America, West.

The open Internet is the greatest technological catalyst to participatory democracy and free speech since the printing press. That's why totalitarian states around the world try to control it.

There are two basic directions that the Internet can go, and the choice is in the FCC's hands.

Currently, the open Internet works like the phone lines. Consumers can call whomever they want; nobody gets to limit who they can call. Likewise, consumers choose where they want to go on the Internet; no content can be given preferential treatment by their Internet provider.

If Net Neutrality is neutered, the Internet will become like cable television. A few corporate gatekeepers such as Comcast will be allowed to decide what content consumers can access and on what terms. The danger is that blocking, discrimination and paid prioritization could occur.

This puts decision making and power over the Internet in the hands of the few, especially those with money. The Internet is too vital to the free exchange of ideas to allow the few companies who control Internet technology to edit the ideas and content that flow through it.

Moreover, in this case what's bad for free speech and democracy is also bad economic policy. Economists across the political spectrum agree that when companies can construct barriers to entry, markets are not free and efficient. New competition is locked out, resulting in a form of monopoly that causes consumers to suffer from higher prices- like their cable bills- and fewer choices.

That is exactly what has occurred in our traditional film and television business. After decades of consolidation and mergers, seven corporations control 95% of television production and viewing.

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But right now the Internet is opening up the media business to new competition. There are new buyers for what we as writers create. But if this new competition is unfairly pushed aside because the FCC adopts weak rules, *rather than allowing consumers to decide what they prefer*, neither innovation nor the best interests of society will be served.

An open Internet is essential for free speech and participatory democracy. An open Internet has also been a tremendous engine for the generation of new jobs and businesses, an engine that properly rewards creators who have something compelling to say.

The Commission has the authority to keep the Internet free and open. We urge you to take the steps necessary to ensure the free flow of ideas and content across the web, without the threat of blocking or discrimination.

Sincerely,

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