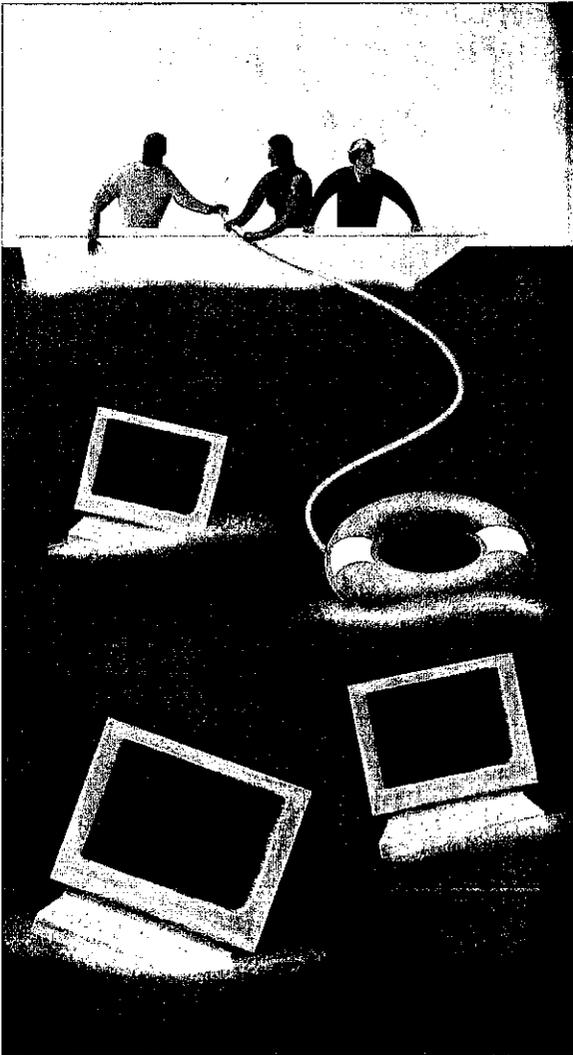


NET NEUTRALITY:

Saving the Internet



Free Press is a national, nonpartisan organization working to reform the media. Through education, organizing and advocacy, we promote diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications. For more information, visit www.freepress.net.



When we log onto the Internet, we take a lot for granted. We assume we'll be able to access any Web site we want, whenever we want, at the fastest speed —

whether it's a corporate or mom-and-pop site. We assume that we can use any service we like — watching online video, listening to podcasts, sending instant messages — anytime we choose.

What makes all these assumptions possible is **Net Neutrality**, the fundamental principle that has made the Internet an amazing environment for free speech, democratic participation and economic innovation. Put simply, Net Neutrality means no discrimination. It prevents Internet providers from speeding up or slowing down Web content based on its source, ownership or destination.

Net Neutrality has been part of the Internet since its inception—

but now it's in jeopardy. As a consequence of a 2005 decision by the Federal Communications Commission, this longstanding protection against discrimination online was abolished. Now cable and telephone companies are pushing to block legislation that would reinstate Net Neutrality and protect the free and open Internet.

The biggest cable and telephone companies want to decide which Web sites, services and applications go fast or slow. Content providers who won't (or can't) pay a toll will see their sites slowed to a crawl. While big corporate sites ride in the fast lane on the information superhighway, the rest of us will be left behind on a winding dirt road. →

The choice we face now is whether we can choose the content and services we want, or whether the broadband barons will decide for us. If the public doesn't speak up now, Congress will cave to a multimillion-dollar corporate lobbying campaign.