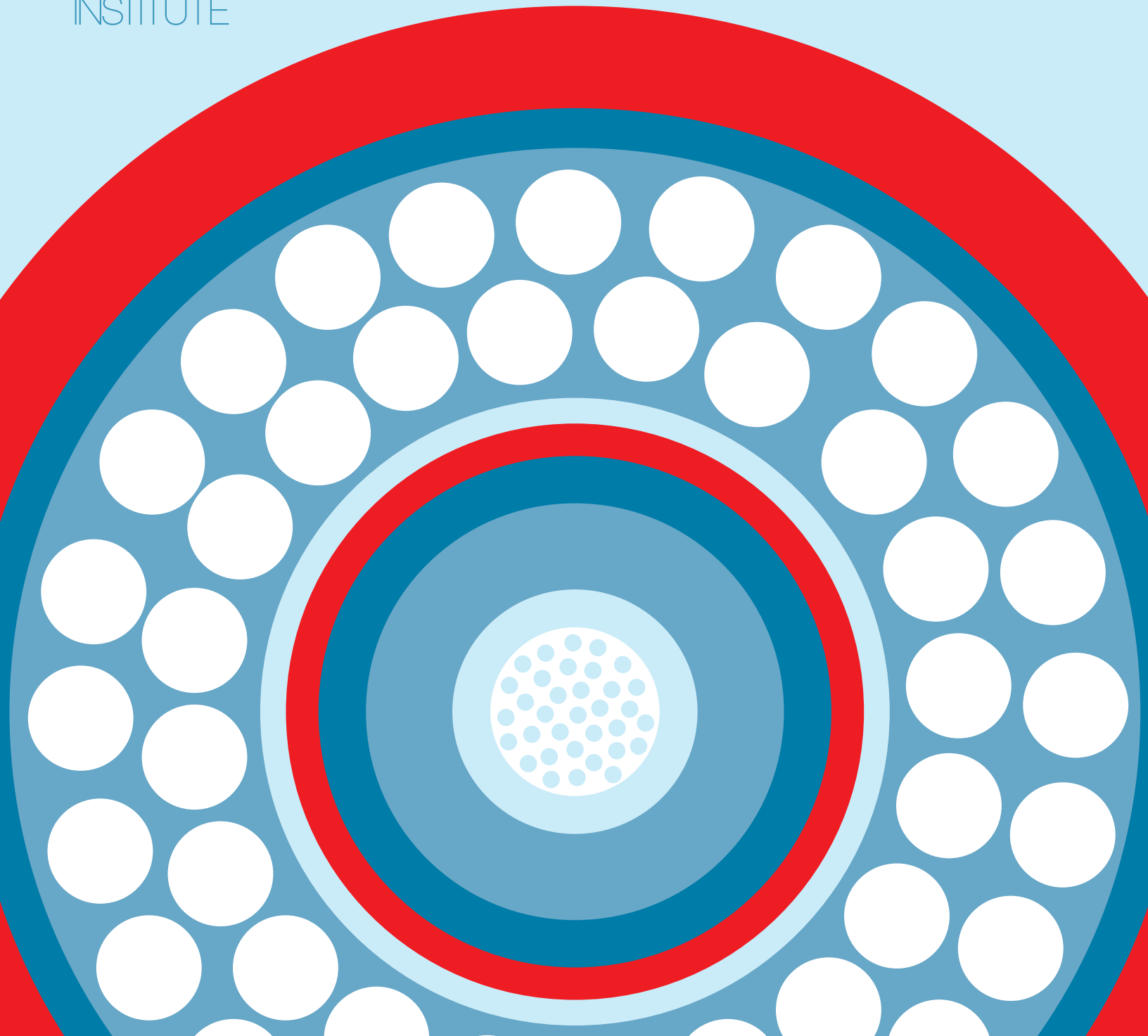


Net Neutrality For The Win

***How Entertainment and the Science of Influence
Can Save Your Internet***

HARMONY
INSTITUTE



Introduction

The *New Yorker* calls it “an online community devoted not to last night’s party or to next season’s iPod but to a higher good.”¹ Alternatively, the *National Review* earmarked it as “a stunning example of how the propaganda machine works.”² Whether one is singing its praises or hoping for its demise, it cannot be denied that the 2001 launch of Wikipedia.org left a permanent mark on history. The brainchild of entrepreneur and encyclopedia geek Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia quickly garnered go-to status as the place for information on the Internet, from the useful to the inane. More than half a million English entries cover a diverse range of topics, with searches from “swine influenza” to “Lady Gaga” launching to the top of its page rankings.³ Drawing more than 300 million unique visitors and hundreds of thousands of writers vying for editorial control over postings since its launch, Wikipedia continues to ignite debates on the fundamental nature of the Internet.

Wikipedia’s democratic approach to information exchange reflects the philosophy of the platform it is so intimately associated with. Openness and nondiscrimination, the Internet’s most basic principles, underlie the phenomenal success of

websites like Wikipedia. It is hard to imagine an Internet that looks different from the one that we browse today: an Internet that allows users to load an infinite number of Web pages and grants developers the freedom to create sites and services regardless of their content, source, or user.

Predictably, the few dominant telecommunications companies providing Internet access to Americans today would like to capitalize off of their relationship with users and businesses. Companies such as AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon see an opportunity to become the gatekeepers of Internet content by reserving faster, more preferential space for their own sites, and taxing other Web site owners who would like to continue to see their content reach Internet users.

The repercussions of this business model are already clear: *limited competition and stifled innovation*. If the Internet is not protected from this small but powerful group of telecommunications companies, Internet users will end up paying more for much less. Small Internet businesses will find themselves priced out of the market, and their loss will cause an already stressed economy to shed more jobs. The effects of this business

model would further widen the divide between those who can afford access to the Internet, and those who cannot connect to its wealth of information.

The Harmony Institute wrote *FTW! Net Neutrality For The Win: How to Use Entertainment and the Science of Influence to Save Your Internet* to inform communicators from the worlds of policy, education, advocacy, media, and entertainment on the threat now posed to the open Internet. In addition, *FTW!* aims to help these communicators create powerful public messages about this issue, based on persuasion techniques borrowed from the social sciences. The guide's two complimentary sections empower communicators with not only the knowledge, but also the tools necessary to create public narratives that underscore the urgent need to protect the open Internet.

In Part I, *FTW!* succinctly outlines the debate over the nature of the Internet and the role AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon play as America's largest ISPs. Next, an analysis of recent polling data on the public's perception of the Internet reveals two key audiences for communicators to target. Part I then outlines a basic communications strategy for creating narrative campaigns that should successfully reach these target audiences.

In Part II, we introduce the Harmony Institute methodology for entertainment-education, an effective technique for influencing an audience's un-

derstanding of and attitude toward a social issue. By providing the social science theories behind our recommendations, Part II arms communicators with a deeper understanding of how to truly move and motivate the target audiences.

Regardless of your stance on Wikipedia and the content its users generate, the ability of those surfing the Internet to access and contribute all manner of information is under immediate attack from the nation's largest ISPs. The American

“In trying to figure out who’s right, let’s forget about the Internet and look at KFC. The fast-food chain discriminates. It has an exclusive deal with Pepsi, and that seems fine to pretty much everyone. Now, let’s think about the nation’s highways. How would you feel if I-95 announced an exclusive deal with General Motors to provide a special “rush-hour” lane for GM cars only? That seems intuitively wrong. But what, if anything, is the difference between KFC and I-95? And which is a better model for the Internet?”

TIM WU | SLATE MAGAZINE | MAY 2006⁴

public must act now to ensure that open access to the Internet remains a fundamental right for every citizen. Advocating for net neutrality also means supporting free market competition in one of the nation's largest growth industries. Most importantly, it means protecting the voice of the average citizen, which should not be stifled due to the small size of his or her wallet. Communicators invested in this issue have a responsibility to translate the importance of an open Internet to their audiences. *FTW!* offers them the keys to do so, effectively and with lasting results.

Acknowledgements

PRIMARY AUTHOR

Eleanor M. Cleverly

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

John S. Johnson, Debika Shome, & Tamara Del Rosso

REVIEWERS

Jed Alpert, Kenny Broad, Art Brodsky, Emma Canarick, Harmony Davis, Steve Gaghan, David Hardisty, Michael Huttner, Lawrence Lessig, Josh Levy, Adam Wolfensohn, & Thom Woodley

EDITOR

Andria Cimino, Leapfrog Communications

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Eleanor M. Cleverly

COVER ART

Gabe Benzur

ILLUSTRATIONS

Ian Webster, Hazard County Illustration

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Columbia University Center for Research on Environmental Decisions

THE HARMONY INSTITUTE, a non-profit research organization committed to applying behavioral science to communications, created *FTW! Net Neutrality For The Win: How to Use Entertainment and the Science of Influence to Save Your Internet*. The guide was made possible through the generous support of The Pacific Foundation, with additional support from Free Press. This material is protected by a Creative Commons copyright. Each individual is permitted one download or print copy for reference and research purposes. The guide may be distributed to individuals and organizations for these uses as long as this notice is kept intact

and attached to the material. Any other distribution or use is expressly prohibited without prior written consent of the Harmony Institute.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Citation: Harmony Institute. (2010). *FTW! Net Neutrality For The Win: How to Use Entertainment and the Science of Influence to Save Your Internet*. New York.

For an online version of this guide, visit harmony-institute.org/ftw.

ABOUT THE HARMONY INSTITUTE

The Harmony Institute is a non-profit research organization that works to harness the power of mainstream media and entertainment within the United States to increase awareness and provide motivation for transformative action within traditional viewing audiences. With a keen understanding of behavioral science, and a wide network of academic and industry supporters, the Institute assists in the production of entertainment that connects with viewers on both a cognitive and emotional level. Accomplishing this goal not only means advising on conceptual projects and existing productions, but also providing key members of the media, advocacy, and public-policy realms with the tools and information they need to develop and market projects that accurately evaluate current concerns and offer empirically-based alternatives.

For more information, visit harmony-institute.org

The Institute welcomes feedback about this guide. Please send emails to ftw@harmony-institute.org

