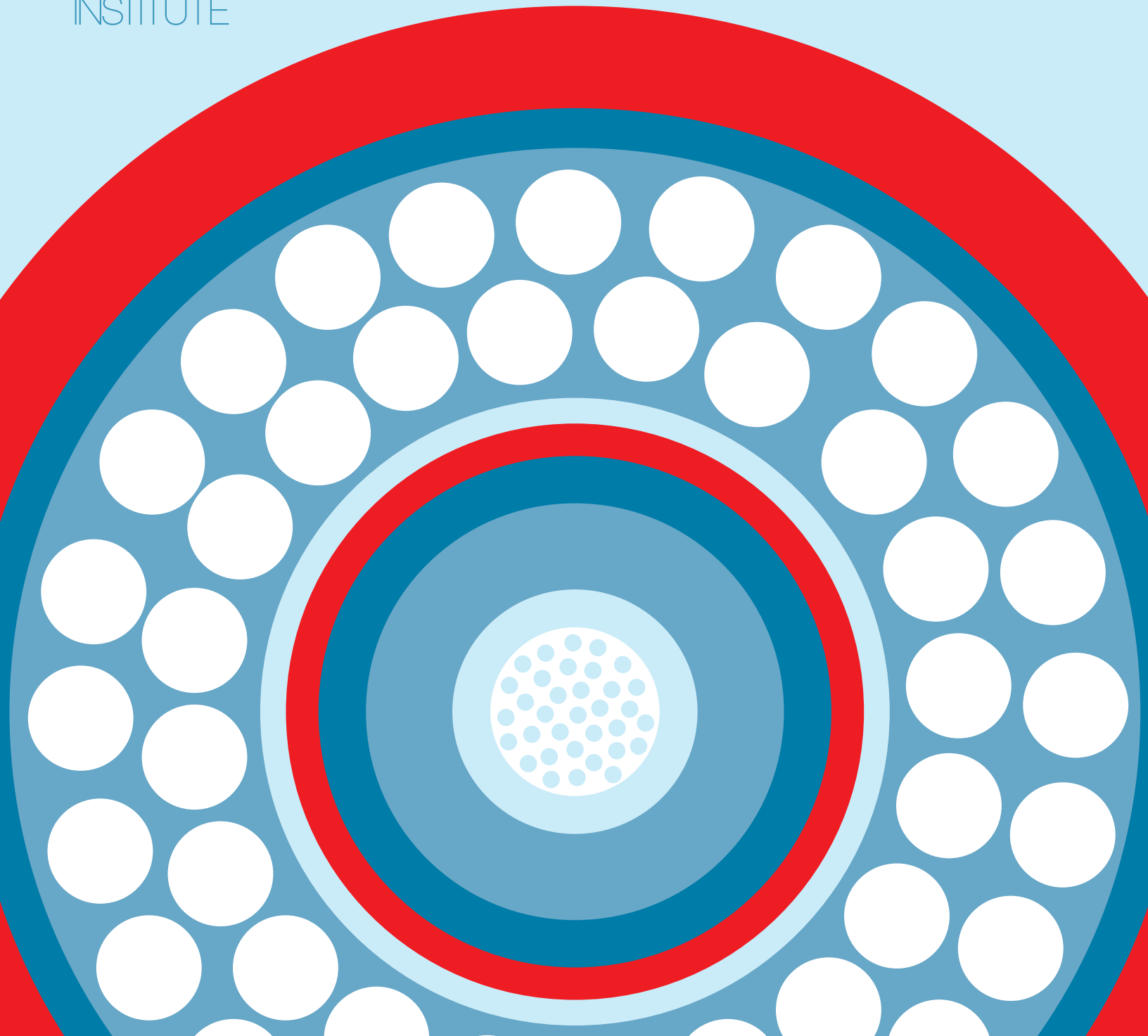


# ***Net Neutrality For The Win***

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

HARMONY  
INSTITUTE





**THE FIGHT**  
*for the*  
**OPEN INTERNET**





## **WHAT IS NET NEUTRALITY & WHO CARES?**

**T**oday, if you log on to the Internet at work, in your home, or even on your mobile phone, you are immediately entering into a relationship with an Internet service provider (ISP). ISPs maintain the infrastructure that enables computers and mobile phones to connect to the networks that create the Internet. In the days of dial-up, there were many ISPs, including those that operated locally by leasing the right to offer Internet access over telephone lines.

Developments in faster broadband access, the popularity of the Internet with the public, and the deregulation of the Internet under the Bush Administration FCC helped to consolidate the ISPs operating today. Larger telecommunication companies, mainly AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon, lobbied extensively for this deregulation, and the subsequent revised rules reclassified the Internet as an “information service,” enabling these companies to end the leasing of their DSL, cable, wireless, and fiber-optic lines to third parties.<sup>5</sup>

Under the old rules, the Internet was defined as a “telecommunication system,” making telecommunications companies the “common carri-

ers”. Common carriers are private companies that provide invaluable goods or services to the public. For instance, utility companies are generally designated common carriers because they provide heat, electricity, and other fundamental services to the public without discriminating between consumers or varying the quality of that service. Federal and state commissions regulate common carriers to ensure that these anti-discriminatory practices are adhered to. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the lead group that works to protect the interests of the public within the telecommunications industry.

Taking away the designation of common carrier for ISPs greatly reduced competition, leaving only a few local providers in business. AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable and Verizon now hold the lion’s share of the market and continue to lobby extensively for ever-greater control of Internet user and business access to their networks. These companies understand that the Internet, if defined as an information service rather than a public good, offers them a unique opportunity to capitalize off of its content, services, and applications.

The Internet was not always under the thumb

of ISPs; its design was guided by the principles of openness and nondiscrimination summarized in the term *network neutrality*.<sup>6</sup> Beginning as the brainchild of academics and funded with taxpayer dollars from the National Science Foundation, the Internet of the 1960s served as a network for U.S. military computers. It wasn't until the 1990s that the Internet became popular among the public. An estimated quarter of the world's population is now online.

Net neutrality describes the current culture of the Internet, in which personal interest, not the financial motivations of ISPs, fuels traffic to Web sites. AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and

Verizon want to change this culture and serve as the gatekeepers of the Internet. They would like online businesses to pay for consumers to access their sites. As for consumers, ISPs want to offer tiered service plans much like today's cable subscriptions. A basic Internet service package would reduce access and limit the amount of content one could download/upload. For instance, this structure might allow you to view Facebook, but not your best friend's blog. Or you might have access to YouTube and Blogger, but could only upload a limited amount of content to these sites each subscription month.

ISPs and other net neutrality opponents argue



---

that the FCC, media reform groups, and concerned citizens have created a solution in search of a problem. Despite deregulation, the Internet has continued to boom both worldwide and, even more so, in the U.S. But the ensuing consolidation of ISPs has opened up the possibility for the major players to participate in anti-competitive practices, such as blocking much of the content offered

rights to all lawful services obsolete.

The FCC must now reposition itself and its relationship to the Internet. The likely result will be a reversal of the Internet as an “information service” to its former definition as a “telecommunications service,” again enabling oversight by the FCC. Although this will protect Internet users from ISPs that interfere with the information they deliver

over their networks, it is not the desired conclusion for AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon. The FCC will need broad public support to counteract the extensive and powerful lobbying campaign these telecommunications companies will wage.

With their eye on growth, ISPs argue that net neutrality regulation will discourage investment in their expanding networks, thus making it difficult for Inter-

net users to gain access. These arguments are unfounded. The FCC, among others, has shown time and again that regulation does more to spur investment than to stifle it.<sup>8</sup> ISPs also argue that net neutrality rules make it difficult for them to manage basic congestion. As more and more users download larger files, watch TV, and stream movies online, these companies will continue to assert their need to manage consumer access to Internet content.

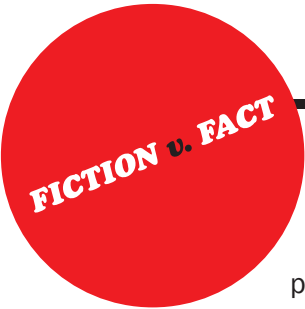
But net neutrality proponents are not trying to prevent ISPs from pursuing reasonable congestion management practices, preventing viruses and

**“The remarkable social impact and economic success of the Internet is in many ways directly attributable to the architectural characteristics that were part of its design. The Internet was designed with no gatekeepers over new content or services ... [Just as] telephone companies cannot tell consumers who they can call; network operators should not dictate what people can do online.”**

**VINT CERF | GOOGLE VICE PRESIDENT & “CHIEF INTERNET EVANGELIST”**

today to Internet users. Although deregulation only recently resulted in ISPs blocking sites and restricting content, the widespread reality of these practices is not far off.

In April 2010, the FCC lost a pinnacle court battle with Comcast, the nation’s largest cable-based ISP. The FCC challenged Comcast’s ability to restrict its subscribers’ access to the file-sharing protocol BitTorrent, a service that allows users to transfer large files like movies, music, and applications. The FCC lost because the Internet’s current legal definition as an “information service” made the FCC’s ability to protect Internet user



**Fiction:** Net neutrality is a solution in search of a problem.

**Fact:** ISPs have repeatedly stated their intention to violate the principles of the open Internet to reap profits from discrimination.

**Fiction:** New net neutrality policies would be the first time the government has regulated the Internet.

**Fact:** Since the birth of the Internet, the FCC has put in place clear rules to ensure fair competition and vibrant innovation.

**Fiction:** Net neutrality will discourage investment.

**Fact:** During the years following the Telecommunications Act of 1996, ISP investment rose dramatically as new regulations were implemented.

**Fiction:** Net neutrality will prevent ISPs from managing web congestion.

**Fact:** Proponents of net neutrality believe in ISP rights to network management techniques, as long as they are transparent to the public and preserve the openness of the current Internet.

**Fiction:** Net neutrality will stifle competition and innovation.

**Fact:** Without net neutrality protections, ISPs have a strong incentive to control the content that flows across their networks in a manner that reduces competition and consumer choice.

**Fiction:** Internet companies want net neutrality because it makes it free for them to deliver their content and services over other people's networks.

**Fact:** Today, Internet companies pay billions of dollars to transmit their content and services over the Internet, and consumers spend even more for the ability to access that content.

**Fiction:** The Obama administration wants the government to become an Internet traffic cop.

**Fact:** Net neutrality is the First Amendment of the Internet and protects free speech, as well as the consumer's choice of content and applications.

*\*For more on the misconceptions surrounding the open Internet, download S. Derek Turner's Digital Déjà Vu: Old Myths in the Network Neutrality Debate.<sup>9</sup>*



---

spam, and cracking down on illegal file sharing and piracy. Net neutrality policies mainly seek to assert the public right to freely access all lawful websites without any interference by an ISP, and provide a venue for inquiries into potential abuses of this right by ISPs.

Today, multiple legislative efforts are underway on both sides of the debate. Senator John McCain has introduced the Internet Freedom Act, legislation that would further deregulate the telecommunications industry and effectively block the FCC from issuing any policies that protect net neutrality.<sup>10</sup> An opposing bill, the Internet Freedom Preservation Act, amends the Communications Act of 1996 to clarify and codify net neutrality principles into law. It also supports the FCC's list of "Internet Freedoms," including the freedom of expression, the lawful use of Internet applications and devices that pose no harm to a network, and policies that protect competition among service providers.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, ISPs and many of their political supporters are not solely motivated by a desire for greater profits and personal gain. The principles of transparency and free speech are also at stake. Because net neutrality allows all voices on the Internet to be heard, regardless of ideology, some perceive it as a threat, especially to many partisan political campaigns. In 2007, the threat of Internet censorship became a reality when AT&T cut audio during an online broadcast of a rock concert featuring the band Pearl Jam. The "technical error" occurred just as the lead singer began publicly criticizing then President George W. Bush.<sup>12</sup> AT&T stated that its contractors made the technical error; but after pressure from bloggers who cited previous instances of AT&T censorship, the company issued a broader apology.

Already there is a large coalition of people who support net neutrality and work to have it codified into law. Journalists, writers and bloggers, small and large Internet businesses, advocates, academics, and a wide majority of the public see the value of having an open Internet that encourages competition among content creators, service providers, and application developers. Supporters cite the many studies that show how open Internet policies encourage competitive marketplaces, drive innovation, and dramatically lower consumer pricing.

As the U.S. continues to fall behind other nations in terms of Internet speed, access, and price, the urgency of the current situation grows.<sup>13</sup> While ISP profits exceed billions of dollars per year, there remains a large divide between those who can afford access to the Internet, with its opportunities for employment, education, and civic engagement, and those who cannot. Without net neutrality, this gap would surely widen, exacerbated by stifled innovation, fewer online businesses creating jobs, actively censored news and information sources, and skewed public discourse.

Net neutrality needs active spokespeople who are invested in supporting federal policy-making that will ensure the open Internet remains a reality. Understanding the value of net neutrality is only the first step. Communicators must then transmit this information to the public in a way that motivates understanding and action. Chapter Two will address the public's opinion of the Internet, ISPs, and net neutrality as a principle and a policy. With this information, communicators can define their target audiences, as discussed in Chapter Three, and use the recommendations presented in Chapter Four to create persuasive open Internet campaigns.



## WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS

**N**arrative campaigns that resonate with an audience on a personal level and offer clear, compelling messages make the strongest impression. Therefore, communicators need to understand what motivates their target audience, what people know and don't know, what people believe is true or important. Surveys can help communicators better understand their target population.

In November 2009, the *Free Press National Poll on Internet Usage and Net Neutrality* was commissioned to explore how the American public views the Internet, including both its economic and social function, and the issue of net neutrality. We summarize the results below. Although unfamiliar with the term net neutrality, the majority of polltakers overwhelmingly recognized it as the guiding principle of the Internet and wanted to keep it that way.

### INTERNET USAGE

- More than 75% of the public have access to the Internet in their home; some 90% of these connections are high speed.
- Almost 70% of home users access the Internet through a wireless connection and spend over five hours a week online for personal, non-work related activities.
- Of those with Internet at home, 15% spend over 20 hours online per week for personal use. Of the 25% who do not have access to the Internet at home, or who do not have a high-speed connection, the numbers are split: 37% state that they do not desire these services, and 33% state that they want access but cannot afford it.
- Among respondents under 40 years old, 70% reported frequently reading news online, 61% reported frequently watching videos online, 60% reported frequent use of social networking sites, and 60% said they regularly search for jobs online.

---

## **VIEWS ON ISPS, COSTS VS. SERVICES, & REGULATION**

- As is evident in other national samples, AT&T remains the nation's leading ISP, with 20% of home subscribers saying they are customers of the telecommunications giant. Comcast is the second largest ISP in terms of subscribers.
- Close to 64% of those with Internet in their homes said they get access through one of the big four telecommunications companies (AT&T, Comcast, Time Warner Cable and Verizon), rather than from a local or regional provider.
- The public tends to have a favorable view of their current telephone company, cable or satellite provider, mobile provider, and ISP. AT&T was favored by the majority of respondents, followed closely by Verizon. Of the major ISPs, Comcast rated least favorable with only 35% in support.
- When asked about ISP satisfaction, respondents are most concerned with cost and choice and least concerned with customer support.
- Respondents were not in favor of paying more for faster service. More than 80% of the public stated that even if they had access to faster service than what they currently subscribe to, they would not pay more to secure it.
- Almost 50% believe that the Internet is a public service regulated by the government, with slightly less than 50% stating it is a resource owned by private companies.
- When asked about regulation, more than 50% of the public argued that, as a private resource, the Internet should not be regulated by the federal government.

- Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that all Web sites should be treated the same without interference by ISPs.

## **NET NEUTRALITY**

- More than 80% of the public had neither seen nor heard anything about net neutrality. Yet core net neutrality concerns such as rising costs, the lack of small business protections, consumer restrictions, and the preferential treatment of ISP supported sites all rated as key concerns.
- After learning the definition of net neutrality, public support for it stood at 53% versus 30% opposed. After hearing four positive messages and three negative messages associated with net neutrality, support increased to 67%, while opposition decreased to 24%.

## **CONCERNS & PRIORITIES**

- The public is most concerned with keeping Internet access affordable, ensuring online advantages for small businesses, and expanding Internet access to poor communities.
- The opposition's frequently cited concern that video traffic slows down connection speed for all consumers also resonates, with more than 55% of the public responding they are concerned about this.
- Although respondents supported net neutrality arguments, including treating all Web sites the same, preventing ISPs from slowing down Web sites that don't pay a fee, expanding access to rural areas, allowing international competition, and ensuring fast download speeds, they felt that reliability, privacy, and affordability were paramount.

- 
- Privacy issues, such as being spied on online, rated the highest with almost 80% of the public expressing concern.

## **SUMMARY**

Those who responded to the November 2009 poll generally had a favorable view of their ISP, but were split in their view of the government's role with regard to the Internet. Therefore, it is important for communicators to learn the opinion ratings for policy makers and governing bodies before deciding which political personalities, if any, should be associated with an open Internet campaign. For example, although President Obama is an ardent supporter of the open Internet, low approval ratings at the national and local level may make him a problematic spokesperson for the cause.

It is important to remember that although most consumers care about cost and choice, they generally do not want to pay more for better cover-

age than what they now receive. Despite their favorable view of ISPs, Americans overwhelmingly agree that net neutrality should be the guiding principle for the Internet. Although the term is still relatively unfamiliar among Americans, when described in detail, the public believes that their ISP should treat all Internet traffic equally.

In response to the current economic situation, individuals are primarily concerned with the role that the Internet can play in supporting small businesses and creating jobs. Only privacy outranked the importance of reliability and affordability of Internet access, which was paramount to all other service concerns.

Understanding the public's view of the Internet, ISPs, and net neutrality is just the beginning. From there, communicators must determine the scope and funding realities of a campaign. Once a campaign's capacity is established, additional information on core and persuadable audiences can further narrow the narrative needed and help define the appropriate frames for messaging, as we will explore in the next chapter.

# 3

## WHO TO TALK TO & HOW TO TALK TO THEM

**K**nowing which audiences are most likely to respond increases the potential for effective messaging that can lead to real policy changes. Zeroing in on a target audience for messaging also makes best use of the finite resources of most organizations. Based on the survey and its corresponding demographic information, two groups stand out as most likely to support net neutrality.

We call the first of these two groups “core supporters” because of their comfort and facility with the Internet, belief in its role as a public service, and familiarity with the net neutrality issue. These core supporters are heavy Internet users, spending more than 20 hours a week on personal, rather than professional, use. Between the ages of 18 and 39, predominantly male, Caucasian, and liberal leaning, many core supporters are registered Democrats and have an annual household income of over \$100k per year.

Core supporters should be offered compelling messages about how ISPs seek to change their Internet experience. It should include steps they

can take immediately to prevent these companies from controlling the content, applications, and services they use.

We call the second group “persuadables.” This group did not identify net neutrality as either a problem or solution until exposed to a measured debate on the issue. But after learning about net neutrality and the case for an open Internet, this group responded with full support. Demographically, persuadables tend to be African Americans and/or women, unmarried, and liberal. Many baby boomers, or those 60 years old and over, also fall into the persuadable category. A significant number of those outlined above reside in the southern region of the U.S. or in rural areas. Persuadables make annual household incomes (\$30k-\$50k) that are considerably lower than core supporters.

Both net neutrality advocates and those campaigning for the major ISPs are targeting persuadables. Many persuadables may feel unsure about which camp is truly invested in protecting their interests. Messaging for this group should first

---

clearly define net neutrality, uncovering who has constructed competing definitions and why. Messages should then focus on publicizing the actions required to save the open Internet.

The following chapter offers concise recommendations for messaging based on the Harmony Institute methodology outlined in Part II of this guide.

# 4

## SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS for NET NEUTRALITY CAMPAIGNS

**T**he following recommendations offer a basic communications strategy for creating narrative campaigns that successfully reach both core and persuadable audiences. Entertainment creators and communicators have successfully used many of these ideas for decades, although we have tailored them to inform U.S. audiences about the crises facing Internet users today. Some are intuitive, and some run counter to innate beliefs about what moves and motivates people. We concisely explain the applied social theory in each recommendation and include an example or suggestion for implementing it within narrative.

These recommendations can be applied to new projects, as well as to existing campaigns. They can serve communications efforts directly related to net neutrality or to the large number of issues that are influenced by having an open discourse and accessible information available online. Communicators should consider the broad range of media platforms for telling the story of net neutrality, from film and television to mobile phones and comic books.

### **1** DON'T ALLOW ISPS TO SCARE WITH SCARCITY

ISPs currently argue that net neutrality slows down connection speeds and limits access through network congestion. Combat these arguments by reframing them. Narrate the scarcity of content, information, and services that would occur without net neutrality. Arguments for the open Internet should highlight the threat ISP monopolies have on affordability, economic opportunity, and privacy for individual Internet users and businesses.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Creating a system that allows ISPs to control the flow of content over the Internet will not make it more affordable for consumers. ISPs already make billions of dollars in profit each year, providing enough capital to expand their networks to many rural and underrepresented communities, and yet they do not. ISPs see no benefit for them in creating affordable access and helping close

the digital divide. In fact, the nation's largest telecommunications companies brought in over \$21 billion in revenue for 2009, while the U.S. fell to 22nd place worldwide in terms of average broadband penetration, just barely ahead of the isolated island countries of Barbados and the Faroe Islands. Today the U.S. ranks 14th in average download speed, 10 times slower than Japan, the international leader. And the monthly cost of broadband in the U.S. is only slightly less expensive than the Internet in Hungary and Poland.<sup>14</sup>

What is in their interest? Moving small online businesses to the "slow-lane" of Internet traffic, while charging businesses that can afford ISPs fees to connect consumers to their sites at premium speeds. Eventually smaller businesses, as well as news organizations and other nonprofit content creators, will find themselves priced out of the

Internet market altogether, much like the current state of radio and television. If Google had been conceived under this system, it is unlikely that the mighty search engine that was once a little start-up would have grown to employ the more than 20,000 people that work there today.

When ISPs enjoy free reign to control the content flowing through their pipelines, Internet users will also see an increased threat to their online privacy. AT&T has already met with record and studio executives to discuss developing mechanisms that allow them to monitor users for what they argue is illegal activity.<sup>15</sup> ISPs have developed tools like deep packet inspection, which logs all content, sites, and services Internet users access, to help them discriminate between Web sites, filtering to users what they deem appropriate.

<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>versus</b>	<b>PREVENTION<sup>16</sup></b>
<b>ideal</b>		<b>careful</b>
<b>attain(ment)</b>		<b>maintenance</b>
<b>maximize gains</b>		<b>minimize losses</b>
<b>hope</b>		<b>cautious</b>
<b>wish</b>		<b>responsibility</b>
<b>advance(ment)</b>		<b>protect(ion)</b>
<b>eager(ness)</b>		<b>vigilant/vigilance</b>
<b>avoid missed opportunities</b>		<b>avoiding mistakes</b>
<b>promote</b>		<b>prevent</b>
<b>aspire/aspiration</b>		<b>obligation</b>
<b>support</b>		<b>defend</b>
<b>nurture</b>		<b>secure</b>
<b>add</b>		<b>must</b>
<b>open</b>		<b>stop</b>

---

## **2 DEFEND AGAINST DISASTER**

In most situations, persuasive messages are presented in one of two ways. People either look to prevent some future consequence or seek to promote an ideal situation. Currently the public likes the way the Internet works. Internet users and businesses generally have a positive relationship with their ISP and believe they can access what they want, when they want it.

Thus, “prevention” focused words should be at the core of a communications campaign. Messaging should target supporters by asking them to act vigilantly to “prevent” or “minimize” the potential for a centrally controlled Internet. Given that survey respondents did not respond well to government intervention and policymaking, framing legislative activity as a “public responsibility” may persuade more people to contact their legislators.

### **EXAMPLE**

Communicators should carefully choose the wording they use in a narrative. Matching the words to the inclination of your audience toward either a promotion or prevention focus will increase their responsiveness. On the previous page we list the words that will resonate with either an audience inclined to promote the success of the open Internet or one that would simply like to maintain (prevent changes to) the current system.

## **3 CHALLENGE HOW PEOPLE VIEW THE INTERNET**

Most people think of the Internet in terms of

private ownership. The ultimate goal of a narrative campaign should be to update the image of the Internet from a privilege like property ownership, to a public resource like telephone networks. Today, if you subscribe to long distance telephone service through AT&T, the telecommunications giant cannot tell you whom you can or cannot call. Neither should they be allowed to tell you which Web sites you can or cannot access. Reframing how people view the Internet will help preserve this resource under the same laws as those that govern common carriers.

### **EXAMPLE**

Narrative media has helped update our current cultural understanding on many issues, including hot button topics like race and gender equality. In the 1970s, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* greatly influenced the public’s perception of single women. Only a few years prior to the launch of one of television’s most successful sitcoms, it was considered distasteful for a woman to live alone in the city or to compete with men in the workplace. Mary Tyler Moore encouraged a broader understanding of a woman’s role in society, between genders and across multiple generations, simply by exposing the public to a respectable character living a then-alternative lifestyle. Everyday interactions between the characters on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* included discussing gender equality issues, as opposed to communicating them like a public service announcement to viewers.

Illustrating the challenges that a world without net neutrality would pose does not require discussing the topic in direct dialog. Embedding storylines that show the barriers people face without access to the Internet leaves a more lasting

---

impression. For instance, many rural populations lack access and thus find themselves left out of Internet discussions on policy issues ranging from health care to immigration, digital conversations that greatly influence public debate. Another storyline might show how the un-and-under employed cannot find jobs because they lack Internet access and/or skills. Just as today it would be absurd to argue that roads and other utilities are a private privilege of the elite, narrative entertainment can reframe the Internet as a service that has become integral to basic functioning in our society. The conclusion of such storylines attests to how it is in society's best interest to protect open access to all Websites and services.

## **4 MAKE IT PERSONAL**

The most inspiring stories keep narratives local. Discussing the dominate ISP in an area by name, talking about how lives will be affected by the loss of an open Internet instead of “regulation” and “the government,” and having characters that we already know and trust talk about the issue, are excellent ways to ground the fight for the open Internet in the audience's daily life.

### **EXAMPLE**

Documentaries often succeed at personalizing narrative because they follow the lives of real people and chronicle public struggles with modern institutions and social problems. Unlike most mainstream Hollywood films and television shows, documentaries rely on depicting the nuances of an issue from multiple perspectives. Still, the most effective documentaries of our day have relied heavily on the tradition of storytelling to create

lasting impact. The 2004 documentary *Super Size Me*, which captured filmmaker Morgan Spurlock's personal journey into the fast-food industry, greatly influenced public perception of the American diet because it adhered to the principles outlined above.

The film's narrative worked on multiple levels; it opened up the conversation about illness and obesity by naming a recognizable culprit (McDonald's), featured balanced arguments from cultural personalities to medical experts, and recorded Spurlock, along with his family and friends, as they struggled to stay healthy and sane through the experience. The narrative was so successful that it influenced a radical change to McDonalds' menu and corporate practices (including increased transparency of meat sources and worker's rights).

Creating narratives supporting open Internet policies does not tie a storyteller to the fictional world. Highlighting the real-world supporters of net neutrality can amplify a narrative message and lead to personal relevance for a broad audience. Net neutrality supporters comprise a broad group, including online businesses like Google, Amazon, and Yahoo; politicians and thought-leaders like President Obama, Harvard Law Professor and Creative Commons founder Lawrence Lessig, and Columbia Law Professor and *Slate Magazine* contributor Tim Wu; public interest organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, Gun Owners of America, and the Parents Television Council; and celebrities like *The Daily Show* host Jon Stewart, the musician Moby, and actor Tim Reid (*That 70's Show*). By showing that net neutrality serves all Americans, regardless of ideology, communicators amplify the message that there is far-reaching support among characters regularly regarded as role models and public leaders.

---

## **5** **MAGNIFY YOUR MESSAGE IN GROUPS**

Expanding conversations about net neutrality to a group or discussion with a wide range of knowledge, skill, and personal experience enables people to process difficult or confusing information in a way that exceeds their individual capacity. Bringing people together to discuss the narrative of a communications campaign can help a group develop social cohesion and take concrete steps for advocacy that fit in with immediate needs.

### **EXAMPLE**

The impact of the 2005 drama *North Country* went far beyond the box office, eventually reaching Capitol Hill. At the time of its release, Congress was debating renewal of the Violence Against Women Act, legislation passed in 1994 and labeled by one women's rights group as "the greatest breakthrough in civil rights for women in nearly two decades."<sup>17</sup>

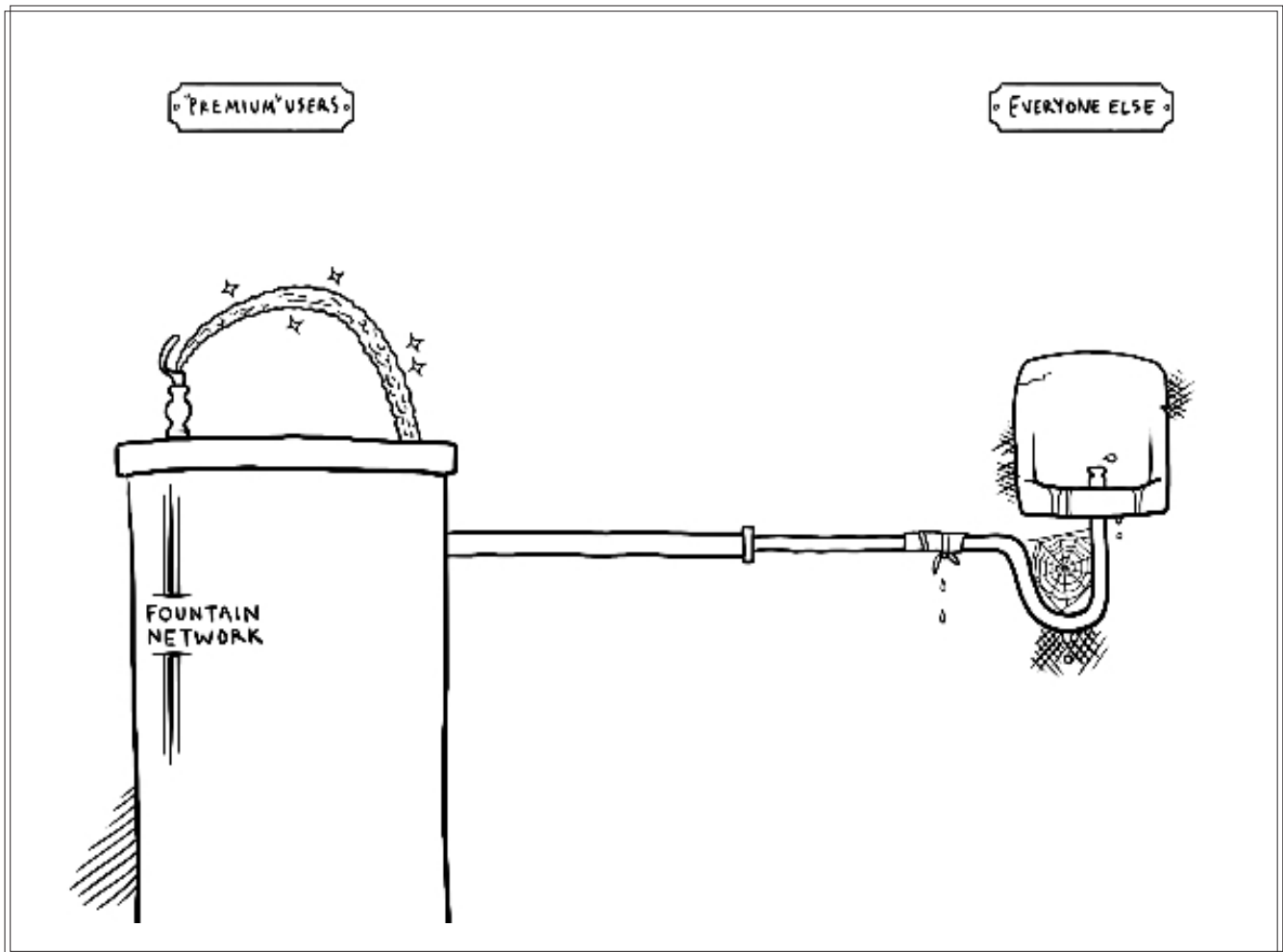
Based on the real-life story of one woman's battle against harassment in a Minnesota mine, the film was credited with impacting the renewal of the Act by spurring a coordinated outreach program. Jeff Skoll, founder of Participant Media, explained, "It was a film that starred Charlize Theron, and it was about women's rights, women's empowerment, domestic violence, and so on. We released the film at the same time that Congress was debating the renewal of the Violence Against Women Act, and with screenings on the Hill, and discussions with our social sector partners like the National Organization of Women, the film was widely credited with influencing the successful renewal of the Act. That to me spoke volumes."<sup>18</sup>

*North Country's* release was effectively timed with a major policy debate in Washington and, in turn, lived up to Participant Media's mission of positively impacting social issues. Today the FCC, along with many of the nation's leading political figures, is debating the merits of legislative efforts that will influence the Internet for years to come. Entertainment projects that illuminate the concerns of today's Internet users and of businesses advocating for net neutrality have the greatest potential to shape the debate if released in the coming year.

## **6** **ASK FOR A COMMITMENT MORE THAN ONCE**

Entertainment campaigns are effective at changing behavior when they have associated action strategies for their audience. Below is a list of actions the public can take today to preserve the open Internet:

- Join a coalition of supporters, such as [SavetheInternet.com](http://SavetheInternet.com)
- Call or write state and congressional leaders and explain why they should endorse net neutrality
- Sign petitions directed to Congressional leaders in support of the Internet Freedom Preservation Act
- Spread the word by e-mail/Twitter/Facebook
- Donate money to organizations lobbying for the open Internet
- Support new FCC rules that will ensure net neutrality for all Internet users and businesses at [OpenInternet.gov](http://OpenInternet.gov)



## **7** TELL THE STORY

The story of the open Internet is a story about civil liberties and economic justice. Net neutrality is not solely a tech or policy issue, but also encompasses maintaining basic needs and rights. Just as every entertainment writer's target audience will differ, so too must the characters' experiences with access to the open Internet if these narratives are to resonate. Creating narratives about how the Internet impacts people's lives in positive and profound ways will be more effective in build-

ing awareness and instigating action than discussing this critical issue from a cognitive or policy viewpoint.

Although the entertainment examples outlined in this guide constitute mainly television and film, there are countless platforms for storytelling. When considering your target audience for messaging, it is important to think critically about the most effective media platform to reach them. Remember, the most obvious is not always the most effective.

---

## EXAMPLES

- Tell stories of the many children who fall behind in school because they lack access to the Internet in their homes or are unable to use it effectively.
- Narrate the lives of the elderly or underemployed, who find themselves at a disadvantage when the only way to fill out a job application or efficiently request public and private services is by going online.
- Talk about small business owners who risk financial ruin if they cannot reach customers because their Web site is blocked or slowed down.
- Seek out the stories of grassroots campaigners who, if censored online by ISPs, would not be able to connect with their constituencies, threatening their political or social struggles.

We encourage communicators and the concerned public to invest in this conversation by creating entertainment that promotes the open Internet. Generating broad public support for this issue is the only way policy makers will take notice, counteracting the pressure from another powerful constituency—ISPs. At a time when Americans grapple with an unstable economy, violent conflict abroad, and divisive issues such as health care, education, and immigration reform at home, it would be easy to allow concern over net neutrality to take a back seat. But once one understands how the open Internet fundamentally influences every facet of our lives, it is clear net neutrality should become a national priority. We hope that communicators will help voice this opinion through one of the greatest, most prevalent tools at their disposal—narrative entertainment.

Part II of *FTW!* focuses on the Harmony Institute methodology for creating persuasive entertainment-education campaigns, as outlined in Chapter Five. Chapter Six explains the behavioral science theories that inform the above recommendations, and Chapter Seven describes how to measure the impact of a narrative campaign.

# 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](http://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](http://harmony-institute.org)

The Institute welcomes feedback about this guide. Please send emails to [ftw@harmony-institute.org](mailto:ftw@harmony-institute.org)

