

It has become common knowledge in USENET and IRC Chat that any person can obtain the canceling of a Road Runner account merely by making complaints to Road Runner abuse. The complaints do not have to be justified, they don't even have to be true, there just needs to be a lot of them.

Many Road Runner customers have figured this out, and never upload anything to USENET through Road Runner, or access IRC through Road Runner, but obtain a backup account to protect their high speed access. Unfortunately, the majority of the people don't find this out until they have been terminated for "abuse" that never happened.

What is worse, recently Road Runner has terminated some customers who posted material it considered objectionable which was not even posted through Road Runner, but through this back-up ISP!

It is beginning to appear that Road Runner is actively trying to get rid of anyone who regularly posts political, social, or any other comment to USENET or IRC, and that Road Runner is attempting to convert the internet from a way to express views to a service where they can sell their other Time Warner offerings. This is not what the internet is supposed to be.

I am not making this comment at the urging of any company or organization. Regular users of USENET and IRC have become extremely concerned that the merger of AOL and Time Warner will result in the disappearance of USENET and IRC, and I would like to see some insurance that this cannot happen. If the merger takes place, the merged company will be in a position where they can effectively remove both USENET and IRC as viable components of the internet, at least for users with high-speed access.

Please, for the benefit of internet users who do use the internet for purposes of speaking out rather than purchasing interactive cartoons or games from Time Warner, if you approve the merger between Time Warner and AOL merger, include some protection for USENET and IRC users so that these valuable internet functions cannot be eliminated from the internet by the new company.

Steve Durgin