

To the FCC Commissioners

Gentlemen and Ladies:

These large mergers are hurting the consumer. In several cases (AirTouch AT&T merger, Mediaone-AT&T merger) I have had service providers merge, and in both cases there was an immediate and drastic decrease in service quality. As a single consumer I cannot protect myself against corporate exploitation of the consumer for the purpose of short-term profit, if the free market place is dominated by a few giant global corporations. I rely on the government to protect my rights and keep corporate greed in check. The Bridgestone/Ford scandal, where corporate greed has caused numerous consumer deaths and condemned many innocent victims to wheelchairs and hospital beds for life, is a good example of how the failure of the government to look out for consumer interests has caused massive human misery.

From the time it was invented, the internet has been a medium of public exchange of information. Often this information has been useful in daily living, sometimes it has been controversial, occasionally it has been offensive to someone. But I have had the freedom to post it without fear of being excluded from the internet.

I no longer have that right if I wish to have high-speed access. There is no effective high-speed access except Time Warner. Time Warner adds this clause to its acceptable use policy:

TIME WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SHALL HAVE THE SOLE AND UNREVIEWABLE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHETHER CONTENT VIOLATES THESE STANDARDS.

The "standards" are such that absolutely anything I post could be considered to violate them.

Even if I do not violate these standards, if I purchase "unlimited access" as soon as I try to use it, I am either speed-capped or terminated. The acceptable use policy states:

IF TIME WARNER DETERMINES THAT THE SUBSCRIBER HAS FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE SERVICE'S STANDARDS OF CONDUCT OR LIMITS ON BANDWIDTH UTILIZATION, TIME WARNER MAY SUSPEND SUBSCRIBER'S ACCOUNT.

It seems that you will establish some protection for the large corporations. Will you protect me too?

High bandwidth internet access is not a free market place. I only have two realistic choices- DSL and cable, each supplied by a single company. Without government oversight, as a single consumer I am helpless to negotiate a deal with these companies or exert pressure for better service. My right of free speech is compromised if Time Warner can exert censorship over my speech. The Internet is becoming a major, if not the only, means of mass communication available to the individual. Why should a private corporation remove my first amendment rights?

-Leigh Goldstein

