



December 4, 2017

Ajit Pai, Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

On behalf of the Society of American Archivists, I wish to express our alarm at the Federal Communications Commission's plan to dismantle network neutrality regulations on Internet service providers.

With more than 6,100 members, SAA is the largest professional association of archivists in the United States. We represent archivists from college and university archives; federal, state, and local government agencies; corporate and institutional archives; and archives of religious communities, historical societies, and more. Archivists share a commitment to provide open and equitable access to records entrusted to our care, regardless of physical format and in accordance with our professional Code of Ethics. The principles of network neutrality are indispensable for the transparent and democratic distribution of information available online from tens of thousands of archival repositories throughout the country.

In February 2015, the FCC reclassified broadband providers as common carriers under Title II. Title II gives the FCC the authority to ensure that Internet service providers cannot block or otherwise interfere with Internet traffic. Title II preserves the Internet as a level playing field, allowing people to equitably share and access information of their choosing. By reclassifying broadband as an information service, the current proposal undermines vital regulatory protections that prevent Internet service providers from artificially restricting or privileging access to Internet traffic.

Archives provide access to historical records that are essential to establishing and upholding the civil and political rights of individuals. Additionally, archives ensure that evidence of our collective human experience is preserved for and made accessible to the public and government officials. Archival users increasingly rely on digitized and born-digital materials that archives and libraries are making available online at an exponentially rapid pace, in response to customer requests for digitized information.

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The current FCC proposal undermines the ability of archives to provide equitable and unfettered access to our shared cultural heritage and will penalize users of archival information from many research communities, including attorneys, genealogical researchers, K-12 teachers and students, historians, scientists and medical researchers, college professors, and undergraduate and graduate students. Accordingly, we strongly urge the FCC to preserve existing network neutrality protections.

Sincerely,



Tanya Zanish-Belcher  
President, 2017-2018

cc:

Sen. John Thune, Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Sen. Bill Nelson, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Rep. Greg Walden, Chair  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. Frank Pallone, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce