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For Immediate Release



BUSH DOJ BACKS INDUSTRY CRONIES OVER PUBLIC INTEREST

Pay Off For Domestic Spying And Jamming Pearl Jam?

Today, the Department of Justice Antitrust Division filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the issue of “network neutrality” — whether broadband providers such as AT&T, Comcast, and other telephone and cable companies can monitor, filter, or otherwise interfere with a subscriber’s use of internet services or internet content. The filing parrots the industry arguments that adopting a rule that would prevent telephone and cable companies from monitoring and filtering internet traffic would harm investment and innovation, despite mounting evidence from Europe and Asia that the opposite is true.

Harold Feld, Senior Vice President of the Media Access Project, had the following statement in response:

“It would seem that the President and the Justice Department cannot do enough for AT&T and the other companies that agreed to spy on the American people. Without network neutrality, companies are free to turn over user information without a warrant or block users from desired content — as AT&T recently did ‘accidentally’ by blocking Pearl Jam’s criticism of the President during a concert performance carried on AT&T’s broadband service.”

“Factually, the Department of Justice filing — like the industry filings it shamelessly parrots — is plain wrong. The evidence continues to show that deregulating the cable/telco duopoly has created the equivalent of a “duopoly tax” that drags down our national economy and cripples our international competitiveness in the global “knowledge economy.” Americans pay more money for less speed than businesses and citizens in comparable developed nations such as Japan, South Korea, England, or France thanks to the policy of ‘regulatory restraint’ urged in today’s DOJ filing.”

“Last year, the Department of Justice approved AT&T’s buyout of BellSouth with no conditions. In the last few weeks, we have seen the Administration go so far as to release information that it had previously declared a vital state secret to try to get the phone companies off the hook for domestic spying. It is no small surprise that this Justice Department once again takes the side of industry cronies rather than protects the American people.”

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Contact: Harold Feld
Senior Vice President
Media Access Project
(202) 454-5684
hfeld@mediaaccess.org