

SPEECH

FROM

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE NET NEUTRALITY RALLY ON
PARLIAMENT HILL

OTTAWA, ONTARIO
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

FIRST LET'S BE CLEAR ON THE CAPACITY IN WHICH I AM SPEAKING TO YOU TODAY. IT IS AS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT INTERESTED IN THE WAY SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENTS DEAL WITH NEW MEDIA AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN ESTABLISHING RULES FOR THE USE OF NEW MEDIA.

I AM NOT HERE AS A PARTY CRITIC OR AS SPOKESMAN FOR ANY PARTICULAR INDUSTRY INTEREST.

WHAT DOES NET NEUTRALITY MEAN FOR ME? IT DOES NOT MEAN ADVOCATING FOR A FREE FOR ALL, FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS.

IT DOES MEAN THAT WHOEVER PAYS FOR AND OWNS THE PIPES SHOULD EXPECT A REASONABLE RATE OF RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT WITHOUT ANY GUARANTEES OF SUCCESS FROM THE STATE.

IT ALSO MEANS THAT ACCESS TO THESE PIPES MIGHT HAVE TO BE MANAGED WHEN DEMAND WILL EXCEED CAPACITY BUT THAT THE RULES ESTABLISHED TO MANAGE THE PIPES BE TRANSPARENT AND FAIR AND SUBJECT TO SOME PUBLIC AUTHORITY.

THE NET IS OFTEN COMPARED TO A MULTILANE HIGHWAY. YET EVEN THE “NO-SPEED LIMIT” HIGHWAYS SUCH AS THE AUTOBAHN IN GERMANY HAVE RULES AND RESTRICTIONS TO PROTECT ITS USERS AND ITS OWNERS. FOR INSTANCE, THE VEHICLES WHICH USE THESE HIGHWAYS MUST BE LICENSED, AS MUST BE THEIR DRIVERS, AND ALL MUST CEDE THE RIGHT OF WAY FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

TODAY, I WANT TO MENTION TWO AREAS ON THE NET WHERE TRANSPARENCY AND FAIRNESS MUST PREVAIL.

FIRST IS THAT THOSE WHO OWN THE PIPES (BELL, ROGERS, TELUS, VIDEOTRON, SHAW, COGECO, ETC.) AND WHO ALSO OWN INTERESTS IN BROADCASTERS SUCH AS CTV, CITYTV OR TVA, DO NOT USE THEIR OWNERSHIP OF PIPES TO CREATE AN UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD FOR COMPETING BROADCASTERS.

IN PARTICULAR, I WANT TO ENSURE THAT THE BROADCASTER WE ALL OWN, CBC/RADIO-CANADA IS NOT SHAPED, THROTTLED, STRANGULATED, OR OTHERWISE UNFAIRLY TREATED.

A SECOND PREOCCUPATION IS THAT THE NET SHOULD NOT BE SEEN IN ISOLATION OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE FACING US. I BELIEVE THAT AS VIDEOCONFERENCING TECHNOLOGIES IMPROVE THEY SHOULD HAVE A PRIORITY ACCESS STATUS FOR THE NET, EVEN IF THEY REQUIRE MORE BROADBAND CAPACITY. WHAT BETTER WAY TO CUT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN A CORPORATE WORLD IF THE OPTION TO VIDEOCONFERENCE IS AVAILABLE AS AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ALTERNATIVE TO FREQUENT AIR TRAVEL EN MASSE?

IN CONCLUSION THEN, OUR SOCIETY HAS EVOLVED FOR ITSELF WELL DEFINED PARAMETERS IN ORDER TO FUNCTION YET RESPECT THE FREEDOM OF ITS CITIZENS.

THE SAME SHOULD APPLY TO THE INTERNET: THERE SHOULD BE RULES, EVEN RESTRICTIONS. THESE SHOULD BE SET IN A TRANSPARENT, FAIR AND PREDICTABLE MANNER. AND THE

CRTC NEEDS TO EXERCISE ITS AUTHORITY TO BECOME THE
ARBITER OF ANY DISPUTES.