

Dear Unnamed Employee that the Government has Hired to Read These Comments,

Chances are that you will never see this letter. Or if you do open see it, you will skim through it in five seconds, because you've got over 30,000 of these comments to read through and a good chunk of them are written by people who don't understand how the internet works.

I am, admittedly, one of these people. The only knowledge I have of the internet's mechanics comes from my sixth grade computer science class, which was very long ago. So I will not talk to you about bandwidth or servers. Nor will I talk to you about the legality of government oversight. Instead, I would like to talk to you about fish.

Imagine you are taking care of a pond that holds a dozen fish. You have the choice to throw the fish flakes in the corner of the pond or to scatter the flakes on the surface. If you put the fish flakes in the corner, the larger fish will push their way to the front and eat most of the food. The larger fish will grow up to be gigantic, while the smaller fish will stay small. If you scatter the flakes on the surface, however, the larger fish cannot crowd out the smaller ones. All the fish can spread out and eat equal amounts of food. None of the fish will grow up to be huge, but neither will any of them stay small.

As you know, this "net neutrality" dilemma doesn't have much to do with fish. But ultimately it doesn't have much to do with the internet either. At its heart, this issue is the same one at the heart of our economic crisis and our partisan politics. Namely: Is it better for our nation's resources to go to the few or the many? Is it better to provide superior technology to the people who can afford it, or to provide our current quality of internet to everyone? Is it better to have a few big fish in your pond, or many average-sized ones?

Many people who argue for a so-called "big fish" nation will say that their way is the only means of ensuring progress. They say we must cater to the rich so that they will invest in technology and jobs, and prosperity will then trickle down to the rest of the populace.

However, I have lived among the 1% for all my life. While many of my neighbors are terribly kind people, they do not spend their days creating jobs for the poor or raising money for the homeless. They are buying their sixteen-year-old an over-priced hybrid car, or squirrelling away their paychecks in a savings account. They splurge on clothes and repair their leaky roofs, just like everyone else. Their money is not a stream, but a nest.

In my humble experience, if you give a man a million dollars, he will put it in the bank. But if you give a million people one dollar, they will all buy something from McDonalds or Starbucks. I'm not saying coffee is the cure for our economy, but last I checked, McDonalds was hiring a lot more people than JPMorgan Chase. Likewise, a dozen five-pound fish will feed a lot more people than two ten-pound ones.

Personally, I am an advocate for the little fish. I prefer internet access to internet speed, and so I personally support net neutrality. Maybe you agree with me. Maybe you don't.

But before you decide, I ask that you close this file. Then I want you to open the file after mine and read it. Then read the next one. And the next. Don't stop until you reach the end. You have heard the voices of the big fish. Now all I ask is that you listen to the voices of the little fish. If, by the end of your very long reading session, you and your colleagues still wish to override net neutrality, so be it. All I ask is that you don't make that decision until everyone's had a chance to speak.

Thank you for your time.