

· EDITORIAL ·

We can't take net neutrality for granted

Most of us are well aware of how our cable/satellite TV systems operate - you choose a carrier, then select programming that fits your needs and budget.

Now, imagine the next time you go online, being presented with the same types of limitations.

This scenario is a very real possibility in the United States.

Much to the chagrin of the giant service providers in the U.S., former president Barack Obama legislated a free internet (described commonly as net neutrality) during his time in office.

In a speech, he said: "We cannot allow internet service providers to restrict the best access or to pick winners and losers in the online marketplace for services and ideas."

Net neutrality essentially means equal access for all users. It means a small startup could conceivably have the same opportunities as a giant corporation to reach online shoppers.

The Trump administration, determined to undo just about everything Obama put in place, will repeal net neutrality.

And, more than that, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, Ajit Pai, intends to prevent states/cities from adopting similar consumer protections - all in the name of ending the 'micromanaging' of the internet.

Of course, the micromanaging he refers to is actually non-existent with a free internet, but would be rampant when service providers get to decide what people can and can't access, based on their ability to pay.

(It's similar to Republican-speak on health care, when they claim taking people's coverage away actually provides them with "freedom.")

Should Canadians care about this development?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has no intention of abandoning net neutrality, so we won't be impacted, right?

Wrong.

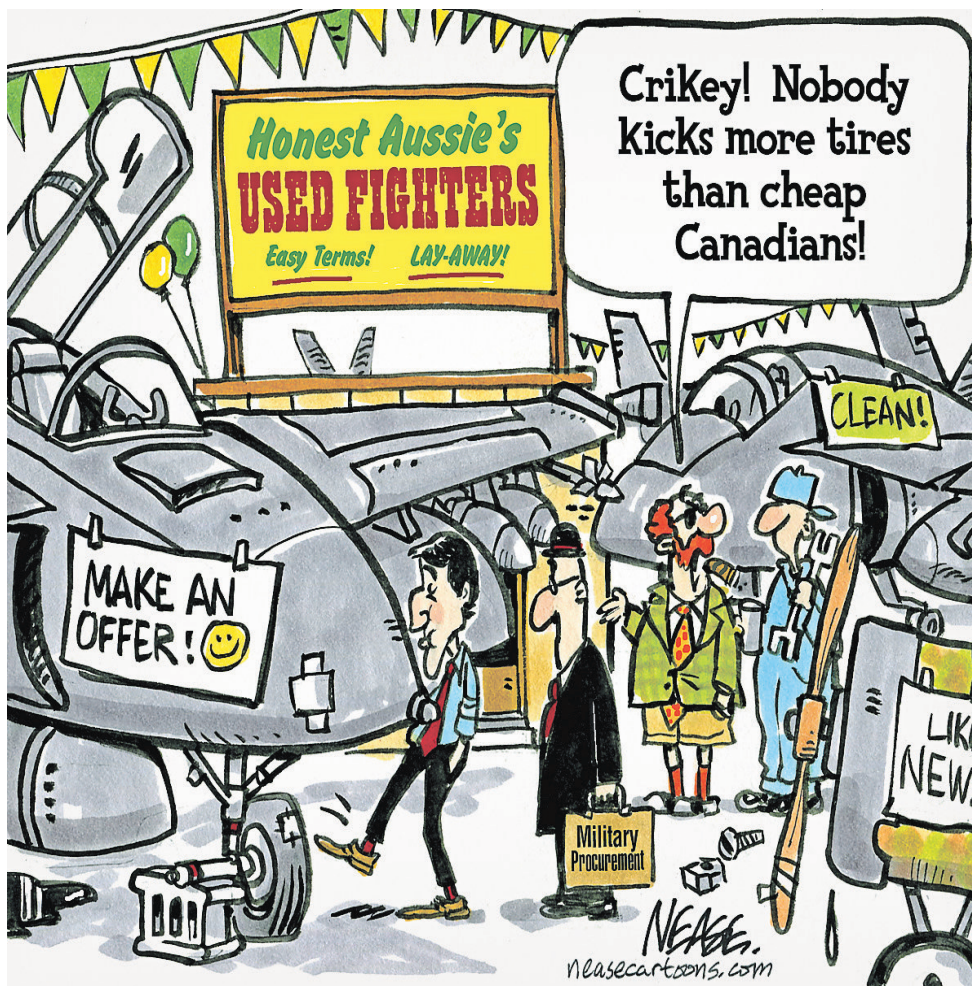
The emerging online landscape in the U.S. means Canadian businesses looking to provide content to U.S. consumers will have to pay to play.

And the extra costs that content providers will pay to ensure their sites are available will be passed on to consumers, so Canadians could face higher fees to access sites like Apple Music, YouTube, or Netflix.

Canadians already pay some of the highest prices in the world for internet access, and cope with some of the lowest caps on data. Being negatively impacted by U.S. policy is not a welcome development.

Perhaps unwisely, we've taken for granted the notion that purchasing internet access includes freedom of choice in using the web. In view of the changes south of the border, complacency is no longer acceptable.

Canada's government needs to entrench net neutrality through legislation, with support from all parties.



· LETTERS & COMMENTARY ·

Where are mental health policies?

In any given year, one in five Canadians living in Ontario will experience a mental health issue, with 70 per cent of these mental health issues onset during adolescence.

The mental health of students in schools is an often overlooked, yet extremely relevant issue.

I believe that it is crucial for all teachers to be informed on warning signs and how to proceed after recognizing these students suffering from these illnesses.

The Peel school board

is the second-largest school board in Canada and is located in Ontario; it schools 154,000 students from kindergarten to Grade 12.

On the official website, there are 86 policies all schools that are a part of the board must follow, yet none are related to mental health issues.

The Peel school board claims that they are "committed to the well-being, safety and success of all of our students" on their official website; but if this were true, 80 per cent of teenagers with depression would not be going unrecognized and untreated. The education for teach-

ers on this topic is optional, not mandatory. High schools located in Ontario, Canada, are not designed to diagnose and manage mental illness. With depression and anxiety so prevalent in today's society, policies on prevention, intervention and aid are imperative and essential. Teachers must have an obligation to report any suspicion that a child is dealing with a mental health issue.

As a student of the Peel school board, I witness students being neglected every day. It is absolutely heartbreaking, but not unique, that a child wakes up each morning and would rather take their own life than go to school. The education system and its policies are the issue, not the students struggling with mental health

issues. If nothing changes within the schools, the blood of these adolescents is on their hands.

Corsen Parker

Individual opinions must be respected

I don't like seeing letters to the editor as a forum to publicly attack the opinions of others.

Expressing an opinion, including an opposing opinion, is anyone's right, but that should be the extent of it.

Opinions are just that — individuals' personal views. That does not make one opinion more correct or more important than another.

Let's not deteriorate into the realm of attack ads. That's my opinion.

Fiona Ryner

CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press

280 Guelph Street, Unit 77
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1
Phone: 905-873-0301
Classifieds: 905-234-1016
Fax: 905-873-0398

Letters to the editor

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