

- EDITORIAL -

We should be worried about Net Neutrality

Net Neutrality. It has the sound of something important, but if you don't fully comprehend it, you're in good company. It's worth taking a few minutes to absorb it and the changes happening around it.

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission voted late last month to repeal regulations intended to ensure Net Neutrality remains a governing principle of the internet. Even though the dismantling won't be directly applicable to Canadians - the CRTC has committed to protect and improve it in this country - the death of Net Neutrality will have an impact on everyone who uses the web.

Net Neutrality is intended to prevent internet service providers from discriminating against different kinds of traffic and content on the internet. The loss of those protections means that big ISPs (in the U.S. they are AT&T, Comcast and Verizon, in Canada they would be Bell, Cogeco and Rogers) can block any sites or content they don't approve of. More importantly, perhaps, they will have the ability to "throttle" access to sites and content. If they own, sponsor, partner or approve of the content provider, they can speed up traffic. If they don't approve they can slow it down, or stop it altogether.

So, let's say a major social media site pays a lot of money to ISPs for preferential treatment. They benefit, while others who haven't, or cannot, pay a premium don't. Or a business startup wants to compete with established players on the web, but can't afford the premium those players can pay.

Or messaging from one political party can be fast and easy to access while that from another, less favoured, party could languish.

From the individual user's perspective, certain content could become difficult or impossible to view, unless you pay a premium. Everyone gets some degree of access, but only those who can afford it get full access. It's one thing for individual companies, say media outlets, to charge for access to some or all of their content. But we're talking about the entire internet here, which is a different thing entirely.

Is this necessarily a bad thing? Shouldn't businesses be allowed to do business and make money operating on the web? Isn't that free enterprise? But doesn't this capitalism-rules environment mean that the internet is really controlled, if not outright owned, by the people who can afford it? There is huge public opposition to the changes in the U.S. But the FCC is now dominated by Trump Republicans, and they were successfully lobbied by the big ISPs to scrap Net Neutrality. Who is really being served here?

For now, we get to watch this from a comfortable distance, since our government won't allow big ISPs and other major players (Facebook and Twitter included) to control the internet. But don't kid yourself, the same thing could happen here. We should be wary.



- LETTERS & COMMENTARY -

Town hall nothing more than a sham

I was at the recent town hall meeting with Kathleen Wynne, and had a front-row seat.

In my opinion, it was nothing more than a well-coordinated farce and the hall was only about 75 per cent full - of Liberals of all levels and friends of the premier, who for the most part lobbed her softball questions.

She danced around most questions, telling all of us little people about how unfair the world is!

She talked a lot and said nothing, from what I heard.

The premier showed up 15 minutes late to start the evening while everybody sat there and waited for her. No apology was given. It showed a total lack of re-

spect for our community.

Nav Nanwa was apparently the moderator and stated the ground rules for the question and answer session and from the first questions the rules went out the window with multiple members of the community and Brampton city Coun. Gael Miles blabbing on for five minutes to ask a simple question taking away precious time from others to ask questions.

One gentleman asked four or five questions in his one question and a young girl took up about 10 minutes while telling all of attendees about food drives and homeless people. All while taxpayers, like me, went to the bottom and back of the line.

I believe the premier knew how to pick the questioners out of the crowd and how to get those soft-

ball questions.

This meeting was nothing but a sham.

Steve Panchuk

Show some respect to servers

Re: "Beware the added holiday gathering tip," Ted Brown column.

Karma may always come back to bite you but please consider that maybe some people who do neglect to tip appropriately are indeed getting bitten right back and receiving their "just desserts" thanks to an increased gratuity applied to restaurant tabs.

A lot of people do not tip correctly and some don't tip at all, even if the service deserved it.

I sure gained insight from my daughter who was a waitress at a popular res-

taurant.

She had to cope with rude and impatient customers, endured verbal abuse by some who had too much to drink, and was taken advantage of by people who left without paying.

Should anyone have to endure such disrespect?

Serving a party of ten or more would often be her only table for the evening. Customers would arrive early and stay for hours.

After providing exceptional service, the tips were sometimes a slap in the face, certainly not 15 or 20 per cent.

So please, the next time you gather at a restaurant, try to have more empathy for your server.

Tip generously.

It will certainly be appreciated.

Janice Laframbois

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