

RESOLUTION AFFIRMING “NETWORK NEUTRALITY”

ALA Committee on Legislation  
and  
Intellectual Freedom Committee

WHEREAS, libraries “preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas” (53:8), and

WHEREAS, equal and equitable access to information is a core value of the library profession and the American Library Association, and

WHEREAS, the “ability to access and effectively participate in the networked world . . . should be barrier free, format independent and ubiquitous to ensure an open flow of ideas.” (50:15) and

WHEREAS, America’s libraries collect, create, and disseminate essential information to the public over the Internet, and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States [Reno v. ACLU, 521 U.S. 844 (1997)] has held that four freedoms of the Internet are:

1. The Internet presents very low barriers to entry.
2. These barriers to entry are identical for both speakers and listeners.
3. As a result of these low barriers, astoundingly diverse content is available on the Internet.
4. The Internet provides significant access to all who wish to speak in the medium, and even creates a relative parity among speakers.

WHEREAS, “network neutrality” is the delivery over broadband, or high speed internet access, of any content or use of any service in a neutral fashion without a preferential structure favoring some providers of content or services to the detriment of other providers, and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has outlined network neutrality principles including the right of consumers to have access to the lawful Internet content of their choice; to run applications and use services of their choice; to connect their choice of legal devices that do not harm the network; and to have competition among network providers, application and services providers, and content providers, and

WHEREAS, the consolidation and diversification of broadband providers into content providers has the potential to lead to such discriminatory behaviors as the control of access to and pricing of broadband facilities, and the favoring of network-owned content, thereby placing unaffiliated content providers at a competitive disadvantage, and,

WHEREAS, without protecting network neutrality, the Internet could develop into a multi-tiered system establishing different terms and conditions to content, services or applications providers for access to the broadband pipe, thereby favoring large established businesses or those with ties to broadband network providers, and,

WHEREAS, bills have been introduced in Congress such as the Internet Freedom Preservation Act (S.2917) and the Network Neutrality Act of 2006 (H.R. 5273) to would ensure that network neutrality and the basic and essential principle of open and nondiscriminatory access to all information on the Internet will endure; and now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association affirm the right of all library users to enjoy equal and equitable internet access free from commercial bias, whether provided in the library, or through remote access to library resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA reiterate its support for effective network neutrality legislation such as the Internet Freedom Preservation Act (S.2917) and the Network Neutrality Act of 2006 (H.R. 5273), and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ALA support the FCC's codification of network neutrality principles, and be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA call upon library supporters to actively advocate for effective and enforceable network neutrality as telecommunications reform legislation proceeds in Congress.

Policy: 53.8, 50.15

Policy History: CD#50, 6/27/84

Endorsed by:

IFC 6/28/06

LITA 6/28/06

ACRL 6/28/06

PLA 6/28/06

Endorsed by ALA Council 6/28/06