

#ArtNeedsNetNeutrality

Artists are facing unprecedented threats to our livelihoods and our ability to express ourselves freely and safely. Corporations want to use artificial intelligence to replace the work of our hands, hearts, and brains with content generated by algorithms that cannot think or feel. Big Tech platforms rake in record profits year after year, while leaving us with crumbs. Billionaires buy and sell the platforms that we depend on for a living like they're trading cards.

Corporate greed and control are at the root of these harms. Many policy changes are needed to protect art and give power back to artists. **One of the most important is the restoration of strong Title II net neutrality protections at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).**

Net neutrality protections ensure that we get to decide what we do online, without interference from companies we pay to get online, like Verizon and Comcast. That means they can't block, throttle, favor or try to extract payments from online services.

Title II is the legal underpinning of net neutrality, and allows the FCC to prevent ISPs from abusing their gatekeeper power. It also gives them the power to ensure that everyone has access to affordable Internet. Internet access has become a basic necessity for everyone, but especially artists. The COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many artists to turn to livestreams, ebooks, and other methods of generating online income, made this more clear than ever.

But without national net neutrality protections, it's only a matter of time before telecom giants like AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile start trying to charge for online services that artists depend on, or build pay-to-play fast lanes only affordable to companies like Google (YouTube), Amazon (Kindle, Audible, Goodreads), Spotify, and Instagram. That will only entrench the monopoly power of these giants, making it nearly impossible for artists to find or build alternatives with more just and transparent business practices.

Artists are not fools. We know that if Big Telecom giants squeeze access fees from Big Tech companies, these monopolies will put corporate profits before struggling artists and pass those costs along to us. And smaller, more independent platforms that actually cater to artists' needs could shut down entirely. Fees like this are so high in South Korea that Twitch is actually shutting down there in February because it became too expensive to operate.

Now more than ever, artists and creative workers need new indie outlets and platforms, and to build those we need net neutrality. Millions of people fought for these protections, and millions more protested when the Trump administration callously repealed them. We, the undersigned, call on the FCC to move quickly to restore Title II, and on all elected officials to support restoring strong net neutrality protections.

Signed,