

Consumers Need an Internet Bill of Rights

Government rules for the internet have been debated for nearly as long as the internet has existed, even before a professor coined the term “net neutrality” 15 years ago.

The internet has changed our lives and grown beyond what anyone could have imagined. And it’s done so, for the most part, with very few—but often changing—rules. Regulators under four different presidents have taken four different approaches. Courts have overturned regulatory decisions. Regulators have reversed their predecessors. And because the internet is so critical to everyone, it’s understandably confusing and a bit concerning when you hear the rules have recently changed, yet again.

It is time for Congress to end the debate once and for all, by writing new laws that govern the internet and protect consumers.

Until they do, I want to make clear what you can expect from AT&T.

AT&T is committed to an open internet. We don’t block websites. We don’t censor online content. And we don’t throttle, discriminate, or degrade network performance based on content. Period.

We have publicly committed to these principles for over 10 years. And we will continue to abide by them in providing our customers the open internet experience they have come to expect.

But the commitment of one company is not enough. Congressional action is needed to establish an “Internet Bill of Rights” that applies to all internet companies and guarantees neutrality, transparency, openness, non-discrimination and privacy protection for all internet users.

Legislation would not only ensure consumers’ rights are protected, but it would provide consistent rules of the road for all internet companies across all websites, content, devices and applications. In the very near future, technological advances like self-driving cars, remote surgery and augmented reality will demand even greater performance from the internet. Without predictable rules for how the internet works, it will be difficult to meet the demands of these new technology advances.

That’s why we intend to work with Congress, other internet companies and consumer groups in the coming months to push for an “Internet Bill of Rights” that permanently protects the open internet for all users and encourages continued investment for the next generation of internet innovation.



Randall Stephenson
AT&T Chairman and CEO

