

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting

Topic: Send the FCC Net Neutrality Comments

Background: In the recent past, Presidents have worked with the Board to establish an advisory taskforce which would assist them with planning and implementing activities that would support YALSA’s organizational plan and the theme for their Presidential year. Sarah Hill has presented this proposal for the board’s consideration via virtual discussion in May 2017. In order to be entered into the official record of the organization, this document is presented as a consent item for the Board’s 2017 Annual Meeting.

Action Required: Consent

Proposal

Send the Federal Trade Commission (FCC) comments on behalf of YALSA regarding the proposed roll back of net neutrality protections.

Rationale

- ALA firmly supports net neutrality and opposes the roll backs.
- Removing the net neutrality protections would harm libraries’ ability to serve their communities, because they may not be able to pay for prioritized internet access.
- Removing net neutrality protections goes against the principles of intellectual freedom, as Internet Service Providers would be able to determine what content is prioritized or available online.
- Removing net neutrality protections could have a disproportionate impact on marginalized populations and low income families.

Proposed Comments

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) has a mission to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens – especially those with the greatest needs – on the path to successful and fulfilling lives. YALSA has over 4,800 members working in libraries of all kinds across the United States and overseas. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association (ALA), a 501c3 not-for-profit organization headquartered in Chicago, IL.

We agree with ALA’s statement that libraries are “dedicated to providing maximum and equitable access to information of all kinds. Accordingly, we are committed to preserving the unimpeded flow of information over the Internet society’s primary open platform for information exchange, intellectual discourse, civic engagement, creativity, innovation, teaching, research and

learning and believe that equitable access to it is critical to our nation’s social, cultural, educational and economic well-being.”

Therefore, we endorse the net neutrality framework adopted in the 2015 Open Internet Order and ask the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to preserve the core principles of net neutrality articulated in the Order. We further request that the FCC leave classification of Internet Service Providers (ISP) under Title II in the Communications Act of 1934.

The Open Internet Order enables libraries to fully serve the public by legally prohibiting ISPs from speeding or slowing selected Internet traffic, blocking access to certain web sites or applications, or otherwise discriminating against certain Internet services for commercial reasons.

With approximately 1 in 4 U.S. households lacking broadband, millions of the nation’s teens depend on library resources to accomplish critical tasks, such as conducting research for school assignments, taking practice tests for occupation exams, and applying for college and jobs. Our nation’s teens—the very future of our country—should not be consigned to slow lanes on the Internet, nor barred from accessing certain sites or information, based on the whim of an ISP. Yet this is what will happen if the FCC reverses the Open Internet Order, because neither libraries nor teens can afford to pay for prioritized access to the Internet.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the FCC to neither alter nor eliminate the Open Internet Order.

Requested Action

The board approve the comments as submitted above and direct the Executive Director to formally submit them to the FCC through the comment form on their web site.

Financial Implications

- No expenses are needed

Additional Resources

- ALA Issue Brief on Net Neutrality, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/IssueBriefs.Final17.pdf> (see pages 5 & 6)
- YALSAblog post about net neutrality, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2017/04/28/why-you-should-care-about-the-fccs-attack-on-net-neutrality/>