



Dateline Reality

September 16, 2007

It seems odd to include addressing network neutrality on a list of things the FCC should do to protect the American public and the fate of democracy when the commission has already done so [“Failures of the American airwaves,” Democracy Papers editorial, Sept. 10].

The FCC issued its four principles of net neutrality in August 2005. The FCC also has opened an inquiry into whether there should be actual regulation of the Internet.

With the Federal Trade Commission having voiced its objections to net regulation earlier this year and the Department of Justice jumping into the fray last week to describe the ill effects for consumers that Internet regulation could wreak [“ ‘Net neutrality’ rules are opposed by Justice,” Business & Technology, Sept. 7], there’s good reason for the FCC to exercise caution.

As the analysts and economists at those agencies know, regulation will chill investment in broadband and squelch new and innovative services for consumers, and it couldn’t come at a worse time.

As ever more people join the billion-plus Internet users worldwide, and ever more advanced applications bring those users everything from e-mail to lifesaving telemedicine to better education, health care, job growth and a cleaner environment, hypothetical “problems” like the ones dreamed up by the net-regulation crowd are just that — hypotheticals. Here in the real world, net regulation means less investment, less innovation and, therefore, the potential of harming what has made the Internet so valuable to us all.

— *Walter B. McCormick Jr., president and CEO, United States Telecom Association, Washington, D.C.*