

## Editorial



Courtesy photo: Student Activities Center

## Student leaders collaborate for better future

Two Daily staffers joined in a retreat over the weekend that brought together three dozen student leaders of various campus organizations for the very first time.

These are students who care deeply for other students and their experience at Iowa State, including the representatives of the greek community, IRHA, the International Students Council, the LGBT Alliance, Students2Student, among others.

These are also students who care deeply for Iowa State, evident in the faces of the representatives of the Homecoming Central Committee, the Student Alumni Leadership Council and Cyclone Family Weekend.

And these are also students who care deeply about our impact, as students, on the world around us, whether it's on campus, in Ames, Iowa or beyond. They include representatives of Dance Marathon, the 10,000 Hours Show and The Green Umbrella.

The common themes of our discussions: recruitment, retention, public relations and marketing — and, most importantly, the potential for collaboration.

The premise of the weekend: that among the more than 800 clubs and organizations on campus, there are bound to be students working toward similar goals.

The goal of the weekend: to discover, together, ways in which we might better work together to achieve those goals.

And the weekend was just a start to a year filled with promise and hope.

Promises were made to stay in touch, attend each other's events as often as possible and to work together whenever possible.

The hope that fulfilling those promises will make all of our lives, as students and leaders, easier, and make our work on behalf of our organizations more effective and further-reaching, in the long-run.

The general attitude was one of open and honest dialogue, with the hope/expectation that we'd work together for the betterment of all students at Iowa State.

As an Editorial Board, we're thrilled to see an opportunity like this come about for dialogue between the leaders on campus. At the very least, we hope the relationships that were formed as a result of the time and energy put into the weekend will bring students closer together as they endeavor to achieve similar goals.

At best, it'll mean a better quality of life for the students, faculty and staff at Iowa State.

Special thanks from all go out to the students and staff at the Student Activities Center, including its director, George Micalone; the director of Greek Affairs, Jenn Plagman-Galvin; the coordinator of residence life with the Department of Residence, David Garsow; and the coordinator of leadership and service, Jennifer Nissen, as well as the many guest speakers.

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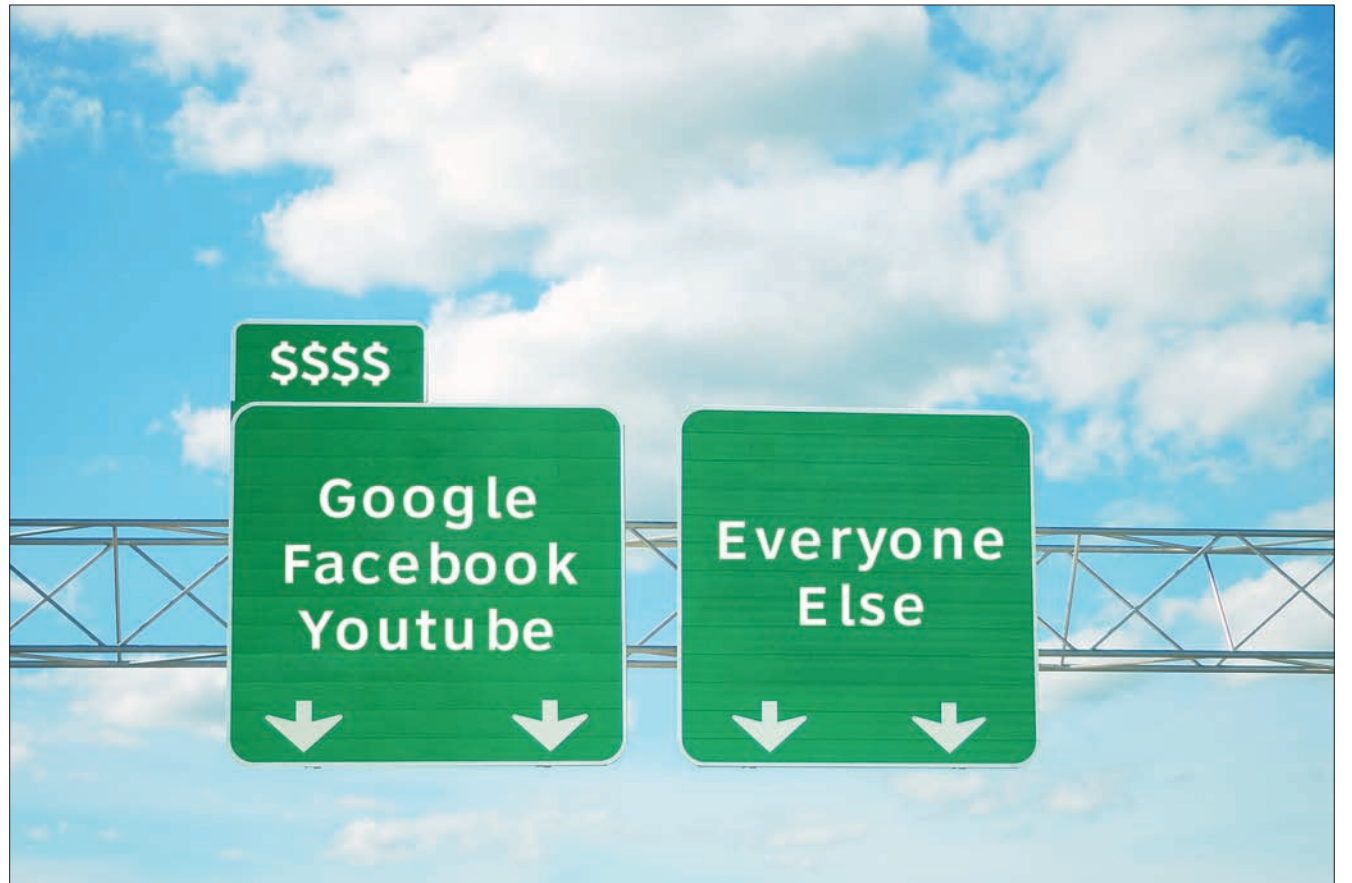
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## Net neutrality

# Cyberspace in crisis

By Rick.Hanton@iowastatedaily.com



Columnist Hanton believes we should give the FCC the power to maintain net neutrality, so as not to push out smaller, less profitable website sources from the public's view. Graphic: Logan Gaedke/Iowa State Daily

For a long time, maybe since my parents upgraded from a dial-up connection, I have been interested in technology and the internet. In more recent years, I've delved a bit into the politics of the internet and my favorite websites.

For those of you who have heard of *Digg.com*, you may know about the digital riot of sorts that went on there a few years ago over a leaked HD-DVD decryption code. Taking part in some of that fiasco that shut down the site one day in May, I managed to have my profile on Digg suspended and it probably didn't help my final exams that week at Iowa State.

On the upside, we won a small victory in forcing Digg to take its community of members seriously and think carefully before arbitrarily deleting user content.

Fast-forwarding to today, I'm still very interested in Internet politics, countries trying to block free speech on the internet, companies trying to cut off certain services — Bit-Torrent — and the like. So, as an observer of the organized chaos that is the World Wide Web, I'm deeply disturbed by the current debate over the need for net neutrality legislation — not sure why there is a debate.

Now, if you don't understand net neutrality that's OK, let me explain it in a metaphor you may understand:

Think of the Internet as a highway of information where every bit of information is a car and your computer is a highway exit. Companies like Google, Facebook, YouTube

and Wikipedia have car garages, servers, on entrances a long distance away from you down the highway.

This highway is controlled by your Internet provider and the provider collects a toll from cars getting on and off the highway to maintain it for you so that Facebook or others can send a car of information down the highway to you when you ask for it. Currently all the cars obey the same speed limits and the only reason Google's cars get to you faster than Facebook's is that Google has more garages around the country.

So, the idea of net neutrality is simply that the FCC should have the power to mandate that while the speed limit on the highway can go up or down as the quality of the road surface and traffic congestion dictates, the Internet providers will not be able to set up "express lanes" for big companies' data at the expense of normal cars, causing normal cars to get in more traffic jams.

Now, no company has decided to create these Internet express lanes yet, but they could do so very easily. They would charge companies like Facebook millions of dollars so that their data reaches you much faster than other websites such as the website for a class you are taking at Iowa State.

I went to hear Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., in Minnesota about this issue at South High School in Minneapolis, and found I heartily agree with him that we need to give the FCC the ability to maintain net neutrality, which they currently don't have. One of Franken's memorable quotes was, "Net neutrality is

the First Amendment issue of our time," and if you think about it, it really is.

If Internet providers started to abuse their freedom from net neutrality, they could speed up your access to CNN or Fox News who could pay for premium distribution, but your favorite news-reporting blog or a website like *www.iowastatedaily.com* could never cough up the millions or billions to compete and may soon become too-slow and irrelevant.

It is in Internet and phone service companies' best interests to serve you the smallest amount of data for the greatest price they can.

So, while it would be great for the free market to keep net neutrality in check, that doesn't work in a virtual monopoly market where most people have one or two choices of Internet provider and maybe one possible cell phone provider — because that company is the only one with the iPhone.

You, as a young person and a student, need to speak up right now to support granting the FCC net neutrality oversight.

You need to call or e-mail your senator or representative, and convince them of the importance of a single-tier, data-neutral Internet in today's society. You need to explain to your parents and friends that the Internet is as vibrant and useful as it is today solely because anyone is able to create a website that could become the next Facebook out of their parents' garage.

You are the Internet generation. It is your Internet. Help protect it.

## Culture

# Being a geek is a way of life

By Sean.Flack@iowastatedaily.com

Growing up, I was a pretty geeky kid. I wasn't interested in sports and instead became an intense devourer of all things pop culture. I loved it all: movies, books, music, TV and video games.

Fast-forward to 2010 and I'm still the same geek I've always been. But while it's always been kind of "cool" to know good music and movies, video games have seemed to carry a negative reputation through the years. That is, until the Nintendo Wii and "Guitar Hero" came out. And suddenly, it became all right to be a geek.

I should be happy, right? All those years of getting passed by girls for the more genetically fit guys were a bummer. My mom told me once, "I hope you're at the point in your life where you choose girls over Xbox."

Now I don't have to choose. This is good news. But after attending the millionth Wii Bowling party, I realized that it's not cool to actually be a geek, but rather to say you are.

I don't know everyone's story, so who am I to judge? But it just seems like anyone with a Guitar Hero controller these days considers himself or herself a gamer. Can you name a video game character that isn't Mario or Pikachu?

It's just, being a geek implies that you're passionate about something, more so than the general public. And when you find other geeks like yourself,



Flack argues that the public has turned "geek" into a fashionable trend, creating a group of people with a false definition of the term. He places the blame on Adam Brody of "The O.C." fame for making it cool to be a geek. Courtesy photo: Cha già José/Flickr

it's great that someone else shares your passion so immensely. If you call yourself a gamer but list "Wii Sports" as your favorite game, then you're not even scratching the surface of an entire spectrum of amazing.

Growing up is hard enough as it is, especially when you

have such specific interests. But once the general public gets a slice of that new fad pie, meanings and significance become watered down so much that what was once a defining characteristic is now just another slutty Halloween costume.

I suppose the blame sort of begins with Adam Brody. You

might remember him from "The O.C."? His portrayal of Seth Cohen was very sarcastic, very neurotic and very geeky. He was also incredibly romantic and adorable, which girls totally ate up. Making it even better was the fact that in real life, Brody was pretty similar to his character on the show. For lack of a better phrase, Brody was a sexy geek. And thus, the geek snowball started to roll down the snowy hill.

As a result, it seems like being a geek these days is just a fashion statement. You know, "Hey gurl, just got back from the mall. Haha, totally got a new skirt and a Mario game." Give me a break.

Having an iPhone doesn't make you a geek. Your Yoshi sticker on your notebook doesn't make you a geek. And your Atari shirt that you bought at the local "vintage" store definitely doesn't make you a geek.

I'm proud to be a geek, which is why it saddens me to see the word thrown around so much these days. If everyone hops on the bandwagon, then you just become another grain of sand in the huge, boring beach called life. And that's part of the appeal of being a geek: being a part of a subculture of like-minded individuals.

It's not some trend. It's a way of life. Give me "Final Fantasy" or give me death! Now, if you'll excuse me, I have some episodes of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" to catch up on.