



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**Epilogue II:
Trump Changes Internet Privacy Rules**

Digital Societies and the Internet **Epilogue II: Trump Changes Internet Privacy Rules**

This series is written as a follow up to subjects discussed in the book, *Digital Societies and the Internet: What the Present is Bringing to the Future*, available online at Amazon.com and B&N.com

For Epilogue II, see the following material in the book for background information:

Chapter 15: Protecting User Content (I)

Chapter 18: The Bandwidth Battle

Chapter 21: FCC Regulations on Net Neutrality

Chapter 22: Protecting User Content (II)

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Last week, Congress voted to repeal an FCC ruling that protects the privacy of user information from Internet Service Providers' (ISPs) inspections. (Specifically, the broadband carriers.) It will allow broadband Internet companies, such as Comcast, Verizon, and Spectrum, to store, share, and sell consumers' browsing habits and Website usages.

The new measure will also allow broadband providers to use customer data without seeking their users' consent, much as non-broadband companies, such as Google and Facebook do now. Thus, in a sense, it levels the playing field between what are becoming increasing competitors. For example, many companies, including carriers, want to get into the video streaming business.

The altered rules also release Internet providers from protecting the privacy of user information against hackers. In addition, the Federal Communications Commission will not be allowed to invoke privacy regulations in the future.

In addition to my book, the reader can benefit from reading one of my prior articles on this subject. Go to Blog.UylessBlack.com; scroll down to the link "21 Computers and Networks," then click on the link, "Net Neutrality I and II." The article explains the differences between broadband carriers and non-broadband providers and offers other information that will be helpful to you.

It appears to this writer that this change does not change the rules that companies such as Google has been playing by. It expands the number of companies that can compete with Google for mining our Internet data for commercial purposes.

As individual users, should we be concerned that the Internet is evolving to become essentially an advertisement medium? Yes, but the large broadband carriers, such as Comcast, are elated.

Thanks, to Donald's Ducks, the recent actions by Congress is another gain for big business, to the detriment of Joe and Josephine Citizen. Thank you Donald, another of your actions to help the little guy.

What can you do to protect yourself from these encroachments? As I have written before (and see Chapters 15 and 22 of the book), install an app on your computer that

encrypts your data. Indeed, much of your data is already being enciphered between you and a web provider, and is transparent to you. Other correspondence may require you to go through some simple steps with the app and your communicating partner. But it can be done. It takes a bit of effort but not much.

A good place to get started is at <https://www.symantec.com/products/information-protection/encryption>. Make certain when you setup the system, you stipulate end-point encryption. This procedure scrambles the data at your machine and the machine to which you are sending the data.

This procedure does not protect the “to” and “from” addresses and the subject line in an email. Thus the Internet (using time stamps, as well) can glean an extraordinary amount of information from that data. But the data inside your message is protected.

In summary, the recent ruling appears to expand those companies that can spy on your Internet traffic. However, the Trump administration is preparing more legislation. It appears these upcoming acts, if successful, will largely disembowel the Net Neutrality rules created last year. If so, they will have a serious, negative long-term affect on ordinary users, to the benefit of the large broadband carriers.

Once again, Donald’s Ducks forsake the citizen for the corporation. Hardly sounds like this populist preachings.

Don’t get me wrong, I support quite a number of Trump’s initiatives and will write about them in other articles. However, I will also point out where he is going astray.