



The internet sector is responsible for 6 percent of the economy – nearly \$1 trillion of GDP in 2014 – and continues to drive unprecedented innovation and growth across the United States. It is crucial that our leaders seeking public office understand and champion policies that **SUPPORT THE INTERNET**, **ENCOURAGE INNOVATION**, and **GROW OUR ECONOMY**. This document provides candidates with a guide to key policy areas for the internet ecosystem and will ensure its continued success.

MAINTAINING A FREE AND OPEN INTERNET

From its inception, the internet was built on an open architecture that lowers barriers to entry, fosters innovation, and empowers user choice. The internet should be free from censorship. It should be protected by simple and enforceable rules that ensure consumers' unfettered access to the content they want, without holding internet platforms liable for user behavior online.

INTERMEDIARY LIABILITY

Intermediary liability laws protect free speech and creativity on the internet. Specifically, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) and the safe harbors of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) provide essential liability protections that have allowed internet platforms to scale and diversify. Section 230 of the CDA shields internet providers from liability related to the speech of their users and requirements to police their users' actions. The safe harbors of the DMCA explicitly protect internet providers against liability for content posted by third party users.

COPYRIGHT

Balance and flexibility provided by U.S. copyright law, consistent with the Copyright Clause of the Constitution, enables free speech, economic growth, and the development of new technologies and creative content.

Strong limitations and exceptions in copyright law, such as fair use, allow the public to access legal content and create new forms of follow-on creative works. The safe harbors of the DMCA protect internet platforms operating in good faith from liability for users' actions. Robust protection of the balance and flexibilities in copyright law is needed even more than during the internet's infancy, as the diversity, scale, and global accessibility offered by the internet has grown since its early days.

An open, transparent, and competitive music marketplace cannot exist without the continuation of a sensible and efficient legal framework to promote competition and prevent market abuses. Support for a functionally competitive music ecosystem will protect America's small businesses and consumers.



INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Like its network architecture, the internet thrives under a governance model that is bottom-up and multistakeholder in nature. Internet governance forums, like the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), should not be subject to capture by any one stakeholder or group of stakeholders, including national governments. Well-constructed multistakeholder governance models contain checks and balances that foreclose capture and lead to consensus driven decision-making to the long-term benefit of all internet stakeholders.

OPEN INTERNET

At its core, net neutrality is a principle that underpins a free and open internet. Net neutrality ensures that internet service providers do not act as gatekeepers by allowing paid prioritization, throttling, or blocking. The internet must be a place where companies can compete on a level playing field, and people – not governments or gatekeepers – pick winners and losers. Additionally, with more people accessing the internet through their mobile devices, any net neutrality rules must apply equally to mobile broadband. There is only one internet and rules must be consistent no matter how consumers connect.

SAFEGUARDING USER INFORMATION

The internet industry is deeply committed to providing innovative products and services while maintaining user privacy and safety online. From standardizing data security and breach notification, to protecting encryption standards across digital technologies, candidates must recognize the importance of ensuring the internet remains a place where people can share their information and ideas without fear of it falling into the wrong hands.

CONSUMER PRIVACY

Industry self-regulation and agreements between internet companies and their users have been successful models for protecting people and fostering growth in the internet community. Conversely, static laws are often unable to keep up with the innovative privacy tools and options that internet companies provide.

GOVERNMENT ACCESS TO DATA

Attempts by the United States government to subvert privacy rights of people could result in demands from foreign countries to access vast quantities of user data and information. Sensitive information must remain secure and out of reach from all parties, including the government, that are not explicitly privy to that information.

Strong encryption protects users and our nation from countless daily threats to the financial system and sensitive infrastructure (like our electric grid), and restrains repressive governments looking to stifle speech and democracy. Laws that require companies to engineer vulnerabilities into products and services harms personal privacy and endangers national security. Support for strong encryption makes America more secure.



FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Approximately 8 trillion dollars are exchanged through e-commerce each year, and the internet accounted for 21 percent of GDP growth in advanced economies over the past five years. It is critical to support continued growth of the internet as a global medium for innovation.

TRADE

Trade today takes place with the click of a button. Millions of small business owners, artists, and content creators participate in the global exchange of goods and services through internet-driven platforms. Supporting strong trade policies that promote the free flow of knowledge and information across borders is vital to the continued growth of this global marketplace. Trade agreements can foster a more seamless ecosystem of connected networks, preventing balkanization across localities and increasing access to information for citizens around the world. The internet industry supports the continued inclusion of pro-internet policies in current trade negotiations and calls for greater participation in these processes to ensure that the voices of internet stakeholders are included.

PATENT REFORM

Patent trolls stifle innovation by creating business uncertainty and opening the door to wasteful litigation. Targeted patent litigation reform and actions by the United States Patent and Trademark Office to enhance the quality of patents are key to promoting innovation and encouraging inventors to invest in the development of new, useful products.

ON-DEMAND OR SHARING ECONOMY

By harnessing the power of the internet, sharing economy platforms allow individuals to use their free time and resources to earn significant supplementary income, all under a flexible arrangement that allows people to earn income how, when, and where they want. Piecemeal regulatory approaches at the local and state levels, which often feature misguided or overly burdensome rules, drive up costs for consumers and workers. Policymakers can ensure this rapidly growing sector of the economy sees its full potential through a thoughtful and light touch regulatory approach.

ABOUT INTERNET ASSOCIATION

Our mission is to foster innovation, promote economic growth, and empower people through the free and open internet. The internet creates unprecedented benefits for society, and as the voice of the world's leading Internet companies, we ensure stakeholders understand these benefits. We are dedicated to advancing public policy solutions to strengthen and protect internet freedom, foster innovation and economic growth, and empower users.

