

RETIRED MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH, Inc. (RMA)
invites you to attend its meeting, on Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014.
First Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Place, Greenwich, CT.

DAVID ISENBERG

NETWORK NEUTRALITY AND THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET



Net Neutrality is the principle that Internet Service Providers and governments should treat all data on the Internet equally, not discriminating or charging differentially by use, content, or otherwise. Net neutrality is an important component of an “open Internet”, where policies such as equal treatment of data and open web standards allow those on the Internet to easily communicate and conduct business without interference from a third party. A "closed Internet" refers to the opposite situation, where decisions made by established corporations or governments favor certain uses and users. Non-discrimination has governed infrastructure

businesses for about 1000 years. Voice telephony, for example, can't selectively degrade or enhance certain calls. Similarly, electric and water companies must serve all customers equally. The government can't pick and choose who has access to public highways, assuming that vehicles conform to a well known set of public rules. Nor can common carriers such as the railroad companies offer special prices to potential business partners. So why is the Internet becoming controlled by media behemoths such as Verizon, AT&T, Time Warner and Comcast (made even more imposing by the recently proposed merger)?

The issue goes to the heart of the Internet, whether it will fulfill its original promise of being a forum, open to all equally, a robust democratic market place of ideas, or whether it will be controlled by increasingly large profit-seeking corporations. In January 2014, the DC Circuit Court determined, in *Verizon Communications Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission* that the FCC has no authority to enforce Net Neutrality rules, as ISP's are not identified as "common carriers", leaving a window open for the FCC to enforce Net Neutrality by making such a determination. Instead, the FCC announced plans to formulate new rules, which would allow Broadband Internet service providers, such as Comcast and Verizon, the right to offer faster connection speeds for companies, such as Netflix, Disney or Google, willing to pay a higher price. These customers would have preferential access.

David Isenberg, a resident of Cos Cob, spent 12 years at AT&T Bell Labs, where he was a Distinguished Member of the Technical Staff. His 1997 essay “The Rise of the Stupid Network” was received with universal acclaim, except at AT&T, where it was seen as an embarrassment. In 1998 he founded isen.com, LLC (an independent telecom analysis firm) and began publishing open-minded commentaries on the communications revolution and its enemies. He has spoken to over 100 audiences on three continents and has been cited and quoted in the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Forbes and Fortune among others. He is an advisor to several telecommunications companies, and appears regularly as a commentator on television news. He holds a Ph.D. in biology from the California Institute of Technology.

Our business meetings begin at 10, and our speakers are scheduled for 10:30. No Charge, and No Reservations are required. For additional information, call Bernard Schneider, 203-698-2558; bgsesq@gmail.com. See our website greenwichrma.org.