

## SFBayView's JR Interviews Hip Hop Journalist Davey D

Written by Minister of Information JR ID2972  
Monday, 28 August 2006 22:36 -

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The future of the internet: an interview with Hip Hop journalist Davey D by Minister of Information JR, San Francisco Bay View.

I remember when I first met Hip Hop journalist Davey D in the mid-'90s, and he was talking about how big the internet was going to be; 11 years later he has one of the biggest Hip Hop websites on the internet, [www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com). He has always been on the front line of trying to arm the people he has influence over to become computer literate and learn how to use the new technology and use it to our political and economic advantage.

In this current episode of the haves versus the havenots, AT&T, Verizon and Comcast are working with sellouts like Congressman Bobby Rush and others in Congress to jack up the price of internet service, which will ultimately result in less people using it.

This is a fight that we ask everybody reading this to inform themselves about as well as get involved with, because it will affect you and your family. Check out Davey D as he informs us about the Net Neutrality Act ...

MOI JR: What is the Net Neutrality Act?

Davey D: Let me explain what net neutrality is. For people that are listening, it gets a little complicated, so it might seem boring, but it is real important because it is going to change the way that we communicate with one another. Right now if you go on the internet ... the internet has been a real god-send for a lot of people. Whether you're trying to get news across, or whether you're trying to get your radio show, the Block Report, across to people, or whether you're just an artist trying to get music from one point to the other, the net allows for you to do that freely, meaning that you're just one click away. So in other words, if you have your Block Report, your Block Report can be as big as ABC or CNN, because the only thing that everybody has to do is know the address so that they can click to it.

And so that's been a big problem for the big media conglomerates and a lot of people in power. So let's say that you find out some dirt on a politician, you can go put it on your report, and all that you have to do is get the address to everybody, and they can access that. If they just click

on it, they could get the information.

If you're an artist, and you don't have all the money that 50 Cent has, you could come out and do your tape, put the music on the web, and all you got to do is get the address so you can bump from 50 Cent's site down to yours; it's just one click away.

So now what you got is these big media outlets, in particular AT&T and Comcast – they're the leaders. This Congressman, who you should know, Bobby Rush, from the Congressional Black Caucus and a few of these other people have been leading the charge to change the scene.

So now what they want is they want to make it so if you go to a site, and you don't pay a certain amount of money, then the site will be slow. So let's go back to the example that we used with your Block Report versus CNN. Right now, it's even. If I click CNN, I'll see CNN's site. If I click your site, I go to the Block Report. I can get the information freely.

Now they're going to say, "We want the CNN site to load up quicker and we're going to have to charge you \$10, \$12, \$13 extra dollars a month or maybe even more to have people easily get your site." So when I go to click on your site, it might take forever for it to download. If I go to click on CNN, it's right there quick, fast, in a hurry.

So hopefully that makes sense to people. So they want to basically divide up the internet, so that people who don't have money, people who have a radical or different point of view, people who are competition for major record labels and industry, that their internet connection to the public will be real slow and everybody else's will be real fast. That's the best way to kind of describe it.

MOI JR: Who are some of the key players, and how has the fight been going up until this point?

Davey D: Well, what they did in Congress was that they had a thing called the Cope Act, and the Cope Act was basically like the Community Opportunity Program something – I forget the whole acronym – but it was called the Cope Act. This is what Congressman Bobby Rush pushed forth.

Now his angle was that he was trying to tell people, look, if you vote for this act and we get it passed through Congress, this is going to allow people's cable bills to drop down lower. And he also said that the money that people will have to pay is going to go for research so that the companies like AT&T, Comcast and these other service providers could come up with high speed internet.

So now on the surface, people are like, "My cable bill is going down, and they're going to use the money so that we could have a faster connection." So he might come to you as an artist and say, "Man, just pay this extra money, and you could get the speed so that it is almost a hundred times faster."

It sounds good on the surface, but here is what he is not telling you. The first thing is that he got \$1 million from AT&T. That should tell you something right there. The million dollars was so that he could run programs out of his own little building that he has in Chicago.

The second thing is, is that the technology is already there. About two or three years ago, I cut a deal where I was going to work with some people in South Africa – actually the government over there – to provide them content, and when we were talking about making the deal, we thought that we would have to FedEx all of our information. And they told us about how fast their technology was, and they said back then – this was about 2003-2004 – they said that the technology that they had was close to a hundred times faster than it was here in the U.S.

So in other words, if I wanted to download a movie in South Africa, I would do it instantaneously at the snap of a finger; music – you can download entire albums real quick. So the speed is there. So if you're trying to get information to the masses of people, you could do it instantaneously.

Now at the time, they were saying that the U.S. was making it very difficult to get that sort of technology into the United States, that they were trying to find a way to monetize it. So they were working with Danny Glover, Michael Jackson, Will Smith, and all of these other people to get content, so that it could go to South Africa and they can take advantage of their technology. In Beirut, where I was at for a week, their technology was much faster than ours. In France, their DSL connections are about 50 times faster than it is in the U.S., and they pay only \$6 a month.

So the technology is there and it doesn't need to be discovered; all they're going to do is just open up the gate. And they're just trying to bamboozle people by telling them, "Pay some extra money and we're doing research." The only research that they're doing is just going to pick up a phone and call up somebody and say, "OK, let's bring the technology in." So those are two things that we need to really keep in mind.

Right now, the main players are AT&T, Comcast, Verizon; you should really look twice when you see Verizon doing all these commercials about downloading music. They're trying to cultivate a habit for people so that you start to associate Verizon with music. And what will eventually happen once the Net Neutrality thing goes through, then they'll come back and be the ultimate music site. And then all of these independent artists who they're not in favor of, who they don't have a relationship with, who can't pay whatever money, they might not be able to get on the Verizon site.

AT&T has already opened up a music portal, and they've been advertising it as the ultimate place to get all of your musical needs. So, in other words, these companies that just provide phone service are now starting to move inside the entertainment arena in anticipation of being able to have these high-speed connections that nobody else will.

MOI JR: How do you think that that is going to affect the digital divide on Black, Brown, and low income communities?

Davey D: You're going to see that immediately, because what's happening is that people in our community are catching the most heat. In Chicago, they just found out all of this information about Commander Jon Burge who was torturing people. Ok, now they might do a headline on the paper, but they're not going to tell you the behind the scenes story; they're not going to interview everybody who is there etc. etc. And people need to know about the information so that they can either come up with new strategies, find out who they need to talk to, or at least keep their eye on the case.

Well now, if you have the internet either inaccessible or somebody like you as a journalist want to provide some information or some insight, you can't communicate to one another. That's basically what this boils down to.

They're trying to find ways to make sure that people who don't have a voice never get a voice. And the internet was providing that, and people were stepping up their game, starting to do their own radio stations online, do their own magazines, do their own websites, their own distribution, and all the sort of stuff that they were doing online, and it was bringing people to a point of parity with the big boys.

Now they want to change that and basically shut it off. So anything that we need to have exposed is going to be very difficult to do, because of the change that they want to bring to the internet. Some people might say that "now we'll just go back to the traditional ways, which is, I'll go print my own newspaper or I'll start my own television station, or I'll do whatever." But what is happening with the price of energy going up and some of these new labor laws and these new copyright things that are getting ready to come down the pipe, that is going to be even more expensive than going online.

MOI JR: How can people keep up with the Net Neutrality Act. I know that you have [www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com), but how else can people keep up with some of the information in regards to this Act?

Davey D: The main site that you go to is [savethenet.com](http://savethenet.com) or [savethenet.org](http://savethenet.org); that's the main one. Now just to show you how devious the people on the other side are, what they did was they used similar language to talk about this situation. So they have a campaign called "Hands Off the Internet," and they have a nice little cartoon to make it seem like they're down with the people.

So when you watch their cartoon, it's like, "Yeah, we don't want nobody messing with the internet, and that's why we're saying Hands Off the Internet. Support that." If you see that cartoon or hear that title, "Hands Off the Internet," that's AT&T trying to pull wool over your eyes and act like they're your best friend, when really they're trying to stifle you in the end.

The other thing that you need to know is that they've been spending up to a million dollars a day talking to people in Congress, lobbying your Senators, so like when I called Dianne Feinstein's office, she still doesn't have an opinion. This thing has been in front of her for six months, and she still doesn't have an opinion, which means that she might be on the fence in terms of taking money from AT&T or Comcast or Verizon. So those are the people that you need to stay away

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from.

[www.savetheinternet.org](http://www.savetheinternet.org) or [www.savetheinternet.com](http://www.savetheinternet.com) are the two places that you should go to, and they could give you all the breakdown on it.

Email Minister of Information JR at [blockreportradio@sfbayview.com](mailto:blockreportradio@sfbayview.com) and listen to the Block Report at [www.myspace.com/blockreportradio](http://www.myspace.com/blockreportradio)  
Keep up with Davey D at [www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com)

This interview between two old friends, JR and Davey D, alerting us to a looming corporate-government threat to our freedom of information and communication on the internet is taken from the Aug. 23 edition of the San Francisco Bay View newspaper, and we are spreading the word through this list until our website, [www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com) is back online. A popular website that drew 2 million hits a month; it's been badly hacked and is now under reconstruction.

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