

SaveTheInternet.com: *Anatomy of a victory*

Grassroots Overpowers Big Media

In 2006, companies like AT&T, Verizon and Comcast spent more than \$175 million on advertising, lobbying, campaign contributions and slanted research, trying to destroy the Internet's most important founding principle: Net Neutrality. Known as the "First Amendment of the Internet," Net Neutrality ensures that the public can view the smallest blog just as quickly as the largest corporate Web site.

The telcos predatory plan was thwarted by the grassroots SaveTheInternet.com Coalition (STI), launched by Free Press in April 2006. Standing together were hundreds of small businesses, librarians, civil libertarians, journalists and thousands of bloggers and YouTubers. Over 800 organizations from across the political spectrum—including the Christian Coalition, Consumers Union, American Library Association, ACLU, MoveOn and Gun Owners of America—were also part of this effort.

Described as one of the most successful online campaigns in history, the Coalition proved more powerful than any phone company-backed legislation and lobbying effort. By flooding Congress with more than 1.5 million petitions, letters and phone calls, STI ultimately derailed the entire 2006 Telecommunications Act—a deeply flawed bill backed by mega-corporations.

The Site Behind the Success

Recently granted the "Best Activism Web Site" Webby award, the SaveTheInternet.com site exemplifies dynamic interactive Web design at its best:

ACT: With just one click, STI makes it easy to make your voice heard and [join](#) the Coalition. By just inserting your [zip code](#), you'll get a list of your local media outlets and useful talking points, making it simple to write a letter to the editor of your hometown newspaper in just minutes. The site also makes it easy to [call](#) your local member of Congress or [contact](#) them in writing.

BLOG: The STI blog has been rolling for over a year with hundreds of citizens weighing in on the issues and sharing important news and resources.

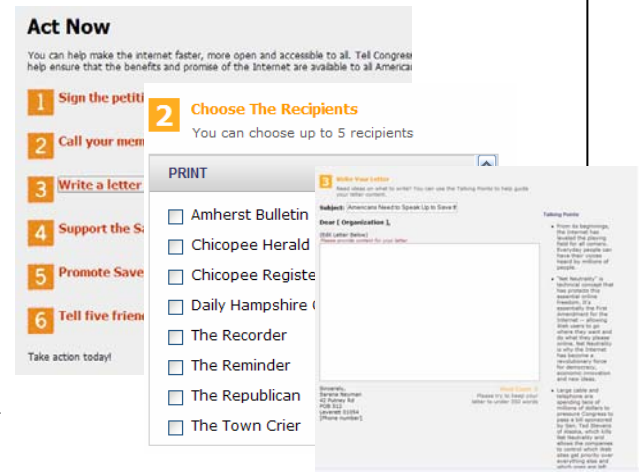
PROMOTE: The site provides downloadable [link buttons](#), making it easy to promote the site; it also makes it easy to [forward](#) the link to friends.

LEARN: STI features a full archive of [press releases](#), [FAQs](#) and a [sign up](#)

to receive daily alerts and updates.

TELL: This newest feature lets you tell the FCC in your own words (and photos), why we need a free and open Internet. The initial response has been tremendous, with hundreds of visitors sharing their stories in the first few days of the campaign.

SUPPORT: Major policy decisions are being made in Washington that will shape the Internet for decades to come. With your help, we'll counteract the flood of industry-biased information barraging elected officials daily (for every 100 telco industry lobbyists, there's only one public interest media advocate)—and beat Big Media at its own game.



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What's Next

Encouraged by its success, STI is now pushing for this bigger goal: universal access to neutral, high-speed Internet at fair prices. We are advocating a national Internet policy that will make the information superhighway a public thoroughfare—bringing the transformative spirit of free speech and free markets into every community.

We're carrying forth the grassroots momentum of 2006 and have already convened more than 40 "in-district meetings" between Net Neutrality supporters and their elected members of Congress. Our goal is to get in front of every senator and representative with the message that protecting Net Neutrality and expanding access to the Internet is essential for economic growth, free speech and innovation in America.

AT&T, Verizon and Comcast will return this year—with their lobbyists, lawyers and phony grassroots groups—to try to discredit our work, mislead the public and seize control of the future of the Internet. But thanks to the grassroots power of the SavetheInternet.com Coalition, we now have a larger and more powerful collective voice with which to tell Congress to advance the public's interests, instead of merely following industry dictates.

