

# FREE SOFTWARE MANCHA, WEST BENGAL

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To,

RS Sharma,

Chairman, TRAI

CC: Vinod Kotwal, Advisor (F&EA), TRAI

Dear Sir,

The internet for millions of Indians has been a great force for freedom. Today, however, this medium of liberation is under threat. The principle of net neutrality, the cornerstone of an open and free (as in freedom of internet) is under attack. TRAI must intervene to ensure that a public utility does not become a Balkanized collection of private internets.

**Question 1: Should the TSPs be allowed to have differential pricing for data usage for accessing different websites, applications or platforms?**

No. Service providers must not be allowed to put in place differential pricing for data usage based on the content being accessed / platform being used

**Question 2: If differential pricing for data usage is permitted, what measures should be adopted to ensure that the principles of non- discrimination, transparency, affordable internet access, competition and market entry and innovation are addressed?**

The use of differential pricing is a grave threat to the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, affordable access, competition , market entry and innovation. If service providers become the gatekeepers of the internet, these principles will vanish one by one. Many other models have been proposed by various stakeholders for the same.

**Question 3: Are there alternative methods/technologies/business models, other than differentiated tariff plans, available to achieve the objective of providing free internet access to the consumers? If yes, please suggest/describe these methods/technologies/business models. Also, describe the potential benefits and disadvantages associated with such methods/technologies/business models?**

The simplest solution would be to provide free internet and limit it not by content but by volume of download/upload or time. We also recommend the use of the Universal Service Obligation Fund for promoting such activity and building infrastructure.

Question 4: Is there any other issue that should be considered in the present consultation on differential pricing for data services?

It has been learnt that a few weeks ago, TRAI directed Reliance Communications to put Free Basics on hold. In the aftermath of this, Facebook launched a massive campaign to generate support for Free Basics tapping its user base in India, and for a while even in the U.S. It would seem that many users of Facebook have ended up supporting the Free Basics scheme without understanding the full import of the consultation process. We request TRAI to make a note of these methods used for influencing this public campaign.

- 1) Abhijit Roy, School of Media, Communication & Culture, Jadavpur University
- 2) Ashoke R. Thakur President, FSWMB,
- 3) Binoy Das IIT Kharagpur
- 4) Debesh Das Jadavpur University
- 5) Malini Bhattacharya Former Professor of English, Jadavpur University
- 6) Samantak Das Dept. of Comparative Literature, J.U.
- 7) Kubalay Banerjee [Journalist - Ei Samag]
- 8) Sukanta Chandhuri Alumnus Dept. of English, J.U.
- 9) Partha Pratim Ray, Ray, Dept. of Physics, J.U.
- 10) Kaustav Chatterjee. WBFSM
- 11) Sudip Sengupta WBFSM
- 12) Subhrajit Das Physics Dept., J.U.
- 13) Rajat Ghosh
- 14) Sudip Paul. Film Studies, J.U.
- 15) Ritaj Gupta IR PGI, J.U.
- 16) Subhendu Das FS PG II JU
- 17) SOURAV MUKHERJEE Film Studies (PG-II) J.U.
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- 20) Tannoy Maitra Research Scholar, JU
- 21) Sayoy Misra Jadavpur University



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~~Abhishek~~ Ananda Ghosh - 7/1/16

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