

ALA prepares to help protect the open Internet

In May, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to open a new Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on ensuring the open Internet. ALA, the Association of Research Libraries, and EDUCAUSE followed up with key FCC staff and shared the perspective of education, research, and learning organizations and examples of what's at stake for our community and our users.

Beyond the most basic challenges to equitable access to information and intellectual freedom, higher education and libraries are generators and subscribers of critical educational and cultural content that could suffer under a two-tier or "fast-lane" approach to network neutrality. ALA asks that libraries e-mail the ALA Washington Office (lclark@alawash.org) examples of Internet Service Provider (ISP) slowdowns, lost quality of service relative to subscribed ISP speeds, and any other harm related to serving community needs.

Presidential contender Senator Jim Webb addresses 2014 ALA Annual Conference

The midterm elections are steadily approaching, and libraries need to be prepared. This year, former Virginia Senator Jim Webb detailed the upcoming national election season and the ways that libraries and library funding will be affected during "Washington Update," a session held at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference. Called a potential presidential candidate by *The Washington Post*, Webb has been a combat Marine, counsel in Congress, assistant secretary of defense and Secretary of the Navy, Emmy-award winning journalist, accomplished filmmaker, and author of ten books.

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House passes flawed USA FREEDOM Act

In May, the House of Representatives passed a version of the USA FREEDOM Act (by a vote of 303–121) intended to end the "dragnet"-style collection of Americans' phone records by the government, but which even many of its principal authors and sponsors acknowledged did not go far enough to protect citizens' privacy. As a result, ALA and many of its coalition partners issued strong statements acknowledging that much more needs to be done. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) has vowed to bring a stronger version of the USA FREEDOM Act before the committee this summer.

Workforce Investment Act moves forward

In May, the U.S. House and U.S. Senate drafted "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," a bill on workforce investment, which acknowledges the work libraries do to help the public gain important employment skills and find jobs—and the legislation allows libraries to be paid for these efforts. Thanks to their continuous work, libraries are part of this bill.

E-rate engagement continues

In May, library and school broadband took center stage at a daylong FCC workshop on e-rate modernization. The workshop convened library professionals, education administrators, nonprofit leaders, and local government officials to discuss a host of connectivity topics, including the importance of internal connections in libraries and schools; the need to provide "last mile" connections to library patrons and students living in underserved areas; the challenges and benefits of collective Internet access and network services purchasing; and the challenge of improving technical assistance services in libraries and schools. 