

Why is internet.org bad? : india

Quoting [/u/pyaasa](#)

We must trust businesses to make profit. Regulation is job of the government and vigilance is job of citizen. This is the best arrangement because the moment businesses start talking about social good, you know they are up to something.

FB has recently renamed its internet.org package to **Free Basics** and Reliance to **Free Net**

Bombarded with advertisement and messages saying that internet.org is a free internet service to connect the masses who cannot afford an internet connection - FB and its partners have been quite successful in not only *guilt tripping customers*, but also convincing them that internet.org and net neutrality is two different things.

Let me try and explain what is wrong with internet.org:

So internet.org claims to give free internet access to millions of people who cannot otherwise afford to pay for data connectivity.

- First and foremost internet.org is not free internet access. It is a very-very restricted app that connects users to FB and a few partner websites only.

So the rest of the internet is excluded. The basic principle of internet is to keep it open - ie. *network providers should not restrict access to any part of the internet*. The internet was founded on this principle. If not for it - we would all be using hotmail of the old days, no sir no google - you search on yahoo only, what? what is skype - there is only yahoo messenger, excuse me - there is nothing called social media leave alone FB, youtube? and the worst of all - **we would all be using internet explorer 6**.

Thankx to the internet being open - it not only helped companies like Google and FB challenge Microsoft and Yahoo successfully, it also accelerated the process of innovation by making content available to all. Be it a prince or a pauper - you can access a host of services free of cost on the internet - be it maps, bet job posting, be it education, be it travel ... the list is actually very long

And the open internet by levelling the playing field also made sure that the market leaders stay on top of their toes all the time - you have to provide the best product and service all the time, otherwise your users will move to your competitor no matter how big you are and how many billions you have in your marketing budget. If not - how come FB is successful even though Google spent millions on its own social media platform?

So in summary - *it is unfair for the likes of FB to restrict access to internet in the name of charity and create a walled garden only it controls*. **If you let FB do this now, what is stopping Google from making its own walled garden - remember world over Google controls 65% of the search, above 80% market share of mobile OS, biggest e-mail service, youtube ...**

The immediate argument against this is - **so what? It is free FB and Reliance are paying for it so why should you be bothered?**

There is nothing free. FB and Reliance are business that are for for profit not some charity institution. So how is money made from this service?

- User receives service free from Reliance
- Reliance provides restricted access to FB and its partners ~~as long as FB pays for it~~
- ~~How does FB pay for the service?~~ FB uses this platform to advertise and charges advertisers money to advertise on FB

- As for Reliance - ~~not only do they get paid by FB for the data~~, they also get a lot of consumers who will pay and use their other services like voice, sms, vas etc.

EDIT:

[/u/AksksA](#) pointed out that Telecom operators do not get paid by internet.org. The internet.org website has a vaguely worded statement that Telecom operators are not paid for data usage of internet.org users (This could as well mean that the user does not pay the telecom operator). While I could not find any definitive statements about the financial arrangements between the operators and FB.

The whole idea of telecom operators not getting paid by FB makes no business sense. Why would any operator drive users to FB and a few websites for free? After a period when the user is able to pay for the internet - they may no longer continue with the operator, but they will access these websites - no matter which operator they are using. In a day and age where Operators are demanding the OTT operators should be forced into a revenue arrangement - this does not make business sense at all.

So till I can find some definitive statements of financial arrangement - I am going to strike off the parts that talks about revenue sharing. You may also want to read [this interview](#) where Zukerberg talks about introducing ad driven revenue for internet.org as well in the long term.

Remember funds for Advertisement dont grow on trees - they are built into the cost of the products. These poor people cannot afford to pay Rs. 199 for the internet, how are they going to afford to buy stuff advertised on the internet? It is the rest of the consumers who pay for their data connection, and who can afford such things, who are going to end up paying for the advertisement.

If you think you are doing some sort of charity by supporting internet.org - think again. You are trusting a for profit organization to do charity with you money. ie. put poor people before its own profit motives.

Another way internet.org may affect data users in the long term is when the tipping point reaches. **What happens when there are more users connected through internet.org platform to Reliance than those people like you and me who pay for it? Or what happens when Reliance is getting paid more from FB than all the paid data users like you and me?** Who is going to listen to your shitty complains of bad connection and slow internet? What is stopping them from increasing the monthly subscription charges? They dont care about you - they are already making more money thru the *free* platform.

Like [/u/bindasguy](#) pointed out - in a day and age where Telecom service providers send unsuspecting users SMS with links to VAS services that when clicked on activate services for which money is deducted from these unsuspecting customer, how are we to trust them that they will not embed links within internet.org which when clicked will take the user to web pages outside internet.org for which the normal data charges are deducted from the user.

If you still have questions or objections - please ask. I will try and justify my position to the best of my abilities.

TLDR: *internet.org is like telling girls wearing leggings or drinking is bad, or telling engineering students wearing jeans is bad; or may be it is like Motabhai and his Jumla, or it could be a zero loss theory, but I really think it is about AAP and corruption.*

So what can you and me do?

Will update this part with your suggestions

- for one - you can bring more visibility to this argument
- Feel free to copy and past this anywhere - FB, Twitter, G+, LinkedIN, any platform
- If some one can make a post on Change.org or similar websites with clear objectives - we can share it here.
- If any one has ideas on how to make this # trend - please share.

Common arguments and misconceptions

- Please correct people when they say *Free Internet*. internet.org has less than 50 websites - this in no way constitutes the internet, let alone any kind of representation of the internet and its vast resources.
- Get people away from the rich vs poor argument. They are basically guilt tripping you into agreeing. If arguments against internet.org is elitist - so is any argument for it - by arguing for it are we not saying that the poor are not capable to choose for themselves and are not able to pay for themselves, therefore we must choose what is good for them and make it available to them. Is let them choose and we will make it available to them not a better arrangement?
- Read the following [link](#) to understand how internet.org is a gateway for monopoly and abuse for FB - thank you [/u/neutralWeb](#)
- Something is better than nothing argument. First and foremost there are other models that can get users actually connected to the whole of internet, why would any one insist on internet.org model? Secondly - does this model not constitute abuse of the user - who is a first time user and does not know what the internet is? Is FB not trying to take advantage of the users lack of knowledge? And who will guarantee this platform will be free of abuse - no censorship and no selective bias? Is it really in India's national interest to let the next million/billion users be controlled by FB?

[/u/ankata](#) analogy is great. Just cause it will solve the hunger problem - we cannot give Maggie to all the poor people, when we know that it could have harmful effects in the long term.

- Something is better than nothing argument - technical level. On a very technical level - the cost of providing some internet instead of providing full internet to a user is the same if not more. So if bandwidth is the concern here - why not allow all the websites on the internet - on low bandwidth like Edge?
- [/u/evereddy](#) rightly points out that this is no longer just a Net Neutrality issue. This is a social cause - where the government/regulators which primarily has the social mandate of the people to consider the long term good of these un-connected masses and not be a sellout to lobby power.