



## NewsClips

August 15, 2017

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Google on Monday said it canceled the website-hosting registration for the neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer, hours after GoDaddy Inc. told the site it needed to find a new host. Google, a unit of Alphabet Inc., said it canceled Daily Stormer's registration because the site violated its policies against inciting violence. A spokesman declined to specify what content on the site violated the policy.

Daily Stormer for years has posted hateful content criticizing Jewish and nonwhite people. On Sunday, the site ridiculed Heather Heyer, the 32-year-old woman who **was killed Saturday** while protesting a white nationalist rally, kicking off a string of web-service companies trying to sever ties or distance themselves from the site.

Late Sunday evening, GoDaddy said on Twitter it had given Daily Stormer 24 hours to find a new web host. The company said it generally doesn't take action on complaints that would involve censorship of content, but that given the recent events in Charlottesville, the Daily Stormer article violated its terms of service by "promoting, encouraging, or otherwise engaging in violence against any person." Daily Stormer didn't respond to a request for comment.

Extremist groups increasingly use the internet to spread their message and gather recruits, forcing tech companies to grapple with how to handle such activity, trying to maintain a tricky balance of protecting free speech without hosting hateful content. Several hours after Google pulled the website registration, a YouTube spokeswoman said the video site had also terminated Daily Stormer's YouTube channel because of hate-speech violations.

Facebook Inc. said it removes links to Daily Stormer shared on Facebook—unless the caption clearly condemns the content in the post—because the site often praises hate crimes. The company said it relies on users to flag the posts to remove them. Facebook said it initially allowed an event listing for the Unite the Right white-nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., but pulled the listing shortly before the rally when it became clear the event could result in violence.

On Monday, Daily Stormer registered its site with Google via an automated process shortly before 11 a.m. ET. About three hours later, Google said it had canceled the registration, and that it may take up to 48 hours to take effect, adding that it isn't the hosting provider. Without a website registration, a site will appear offline to visitors. To use its web address dailystormer.com, the site will now have to find one of the thousands of accredited companies to register the site.

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It isn't clear who now is hosting the Daily Stormer site. Companies whose web services were used by Daily Stormer distanced themselves from the site, particularly as they took heat from social-media users trying to unearth the host. Toronto-based Tucows Inc. denied ever giving a home to the site. Michael Goldstein, vice president of marketing at Tucows, said Daily Stormer used its so-called contact-privacy service, which blocks a site's domain information to the public. The site "violated our terms of service and we no longer need to provide that service to that domain," Mr. Goldstein said.



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In [a tweet](#), GoDaddy pointed to San Francisco-based content-delivery network Cloudflare Inc. as hosting provider. Cloudflare said it isn't the host, though it appears to provide services that mask the true host's identity, according to Whois.com, which allows users to search for website domain registrations and hosting providers. "Cloudflare is aware of the concerns that have been raised over some sites that have used our network," the company said in a prepared statement.

Cloudflare said it cooperates with law enforcement but declined to comment on who is hosting the Daily Stormer site, citing company policy. Its website says the company will provide contact information for the hosting provider if an abuse report is found to be legitimate. The moves by Google and GoDaddy to crack down on the far-right website come in the wake of violent clashes in Virginia between white nationalists and counter-protesters, and they could signal increasing hurdles to maintaining a presence online. The Southern Poverty Law Center [called on](#) GoDaddy to pull technical support from two other sites.

The online campaign against Daily Stormer caught fire Sunday evening after Amy Siskind, president of the progressive-activist group New Agenda, pointed out the Daily Stormer article to hundreds of thousands of followers on social media. "People were torn whether we should be giving it the light of day," Ms. Siskind said. But "there's a certain human boundary that was crossed."

She sent a tweet and wrote a Facebook post urging GoDaddy to boot the site, and pushed others to write to the company. GoDaddy's announcement it was severing ties with Daily Stormer came in a reply to a tweet from Ms. Siskind. Ms. Siskind said she doesn't have a long-term plan to get other extremist websites shut down, but will continue to call for Daily Stormer to be removed from web-hosting services. — *Wall Street Journal*

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Pushed by its new Republican chairman, Ajit Pai, who seems to have never met a regulation he didn't want to kill, the Federal Communications Commission has [proposed repealing](#) the tough net neutrality rules his predecessor, Democrat Tom Wheeler, adopted in 2015 and replacing them with ... well, [that part's not clear](#). One possibility Pai floated is to have the FCC punt oversight of broadband providers such as Comcast and AT&T to the Federal Trade Commission, which can do little more to first-time offenders than tell them they'll be punished if they transgress again.

Pai's retreat would be the fifth pivot by the commission since phone and cable TV companies introduced always-on, high-speed Internet connections in the late 1990s. The regulatory gyrations haven't damaged the open, innovative nature of the Internet, at least not yet. But the uncertainty isn't helpful, and it isn't likely to end if Pai gets his way. The next time a Democrat takes the White House, a

new FCC chairman will almost certainly push more vigorous efforts to prevent Comcast, AT&T and company from putting their thumbs on the Internet scales.

The obvious answer — and it has been obvious for years — is for Congress to prohibit broadband providers from picking winners and losers online by monkeying with the data on their networks, and to give the commission clear authority to enforce that prohibition. But lawmakers have been unwilling to arbitrate the dispute between broadband providers, which have toyed with the idea of extracting tolls from websites and services to support new business models, and Internet-based companies, which don't want to face any new barriers to competing online.

The heat generated by Pai's proposal — the commission has received [20 million public comments](#) thus far, albeit many of them form letters generated by advocacy groups — and by congressional Republicans' controversial move to [repeal the FCC's broadband privacy rules](#) in March, might finally get Congress moving. Leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee [announced](#) last month that they would hold a hearing in September on "ground rules for the Internet." "With almost everyone in agreement about fundamental principles to prevent anti-competitive behavior such as throttling and blocking, I think we are closer than ever to achieving a lasting resolution," Chairman Greg Walden (R-Ore.) said in a statement.

As encouraging as that may sound, the initial witness list for the hearing betrays a dismaying ignorance about why net neutrality is an issue. The committee set the hearing up as something of a clash of titans, inviting the chief executives of the largest broadband providers and the biggest Internet companies, such as Google, Facebook and Netflix. The only thing missing was a steel cage.

The point of having net neutrality rules isn't to protect multibillion-dollar Internet companies. It's to give other companies a chance to join or topple them. The rapid pace of technological change makes even companies with enormous economies of scale vulnerable to disruption, especially when consumers can easily switch from one shiny online object to the next.

No question, Facebook and its ilk would prefer not to have to pay Comcast or Verizon for priority access to its customers if broadband providers were allowed to impose such fees. But if push came to shove, those are the companies that could and would pay. The start-up trying to be the next Facebook could not. Curiously, Pai and other Republicans have voiced less concern about the prospects of these smaller online businesses — the ones likely to inject a crucial dose of innovation into the 21st century economy — than the ability of giant, consolidating broadband providers to invest in faster, more widely available services. Better broadband connections in rural America, poverty-stricken inner cities and other underserved areas is a most worthy goal. But those connections shouldn't come at the cost of net neutrality.

Leading broadband providers insist that they support an open, neutral Internet. The problem, they say, is the utility-style regulations the Wheeler-led FCC imposed to achieve that end. The Democrats on the commission voted to do so, however, because a federal appeals court said it was the only route to enforceable rules that would prohibit broadband providers from blocking or slowing connections to lawful sites and services, or to prioritize connections for a fee.

Pai's hands-off approach is the wrong answer. If Republican lawmakers don't like applying decades-old utility-style regulation to broadband providers, they need to work with Democrats to give the commission explicit new authority to protect the open Internet from interference. Otherwise, the fight over how to do that will be always-on too. — *Los Angeles Times editorial*

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After rolling out its ultra-fast gigabit speeds in much of its footprint nationwide, Comcast is now launching the service in its hometown.

The Philadelphia-based company announced Monday its DOCSIS 3.1-powered gigabit speeds, capable of downloading a full-length movie in seconds, are now available in Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, Chester and Delaware counties in Pennsylvania, as well as New Castle County in Delaware and most of South Jersey excluding Burlington and Camden counties. It's already been made available in Utah, Detroit, Tennessee, Chicago, Atlanta and Miami, among other markets, and was [expanded to more than a dozen new markets](#) including Seattle, Houston, San Francisco, Colorado and Oregon in June.

In the past, gigabit speeds, have only been available through professional installation of new cable lines, but the DOCSIS 3.1 tech — which was first piloted in Philadelphia at the end of 2015 — allows the speeds to work on existing lines with just a modem upgrade. The plan is being made available to Philadelphia-area customers at the same introductory offer initially available in other markets in the

West and Midwest, \$79.99 a month for 12 months with an everyday price of \$104.95 a month with no term contract.

"We know consumers need an Internet provider that can deliver speed, and we have been on a pace of doubling our network capacity every 18 to 24 months, ensuring that we stay well ahead of demand," Senior Vice President of Comcast's Freedom Region Jim Samaha said in a statement. Cable overbuilder RCN rolled out 1 Gbps speeds to customers in Delaware County previously, so it's not the first time gigabit speeds are available in the region. Comcast's announcement, however, marks the first time the speeds have become widely available by a cable provider.

Verizon's Fios network launched its Fios Gigabit Connection back in April, with downloads reaching 940 Mbps, for \$69.99 a month or \$79.99 for a bundle including it. It's available in parts of the Philadelphia area, but customers must use a locate-by-zipcode tool to find out if they can access the service. – ***Philadelphia Business Journal***



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