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The New York Times has endorsed Tim Wu, the progressive candidate for New York lieutenant governor, in its editorial pages. The newspaper argues that the Columbia University law professor deserves the job despite his lack of political experience — largely due to Wu's promise to fight for consumers on access to broadband and other tech issues.

"Mr. Wu has an impressive record in the legal field, particularly in Internet law and policy," the Times wrote. "Widely known for coining the phrase 'net neutrality,' he has been an adviser to the Federal Trade Commission as part of his efforts on behalf of consumers to keep the Internet from 'becoming too corporatized.'"

The endorsement is a sign that technology, long relegated to the fringes of political discussion, has finally become a dinner-table issue and the basis for a viable campaign platform. As the Web keeps taking over ever larger chunks of the economy, the policies that govern it have become increasingly relevant to the average consumer. Large, public debates like the one involving SOPA and PIPA, or cellphone unlocking, or net neutrality, have a direct effect on what Americans can do with their connected devices and the services layered on top of them. And that's made tech a hot-button issue.

While political candidates have been using digital technology since the dawn of the Internet, rarely has it become a subject for debate in its own right. More often, technology has been the set-up to gotchas and punchlines, as when President George H.W. Bush (deservedly or not) had his infamous run-in with a grocery store scanner. In his 2008 campaign for the White House, Barack Obama voiced his support in a town hall debate for net neutrality. But that moment was overshadowed by a much larger debate about war and health care.

Since then, broadband has become much more important to our lives — and so has preserving access and competition when it comes to that industry. It certainly helps Wu that he's taken a populist stance against big, incumbent cable companies that voters already find easy to criticize. But there's a bigger story here about the insinuation of technology into our daily lives that makes a platform like Wu's far more effective than it might've been in the past. — Brian Fung, *Washington Post*



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