The Internet runs on “user-generated content.” Everyday, people around the world create and share millions of videos, stories, pieces of art, podcasts, listings for handmade products or opinions without needing a TV network, radio station, art gallery, or magazine column.

Thanks to current legal frameworks, Internet companies that host those videos, stories, and listings, can do so without sifting through it, meaning they can host more content. If a website had to review everything you post before it published, it would not only slow online posts to a crawl, but Internet companies simply wouldn’t be able to provide a platform for as many digital entrepreneurs. These companies can also host content without facing constant lawsuits if one user is unhappy about another user’s content. If Internet companies had to vet everything they host or worry about getting sued, they would host far less content and create far fewer opportunities for digital entrepreneurs to launch their businesses and reach their audiences.

All of that gets missed in the current debates playing out in Congress. While lawmakers focus on specific actions from a handful of large companies, they talk about changing legal frameworks that support the whole ecosystem of digital entrepreneurs.

What’s happening?

Thanks to the Internet, launching a small business, creating content, selling products and services, and growing an audience has never been easier.

Unfortunately, when many policymakers think about changing Internet policy, they consider the impact on a handful of companies and people who run them. In reality, everyone who uses the Internet—especially those who run a business online—has a stake in Internet policy debates, especially as policymakers consider changes that could inadvertently make it harder for digital entrepreneurs to make, sell, and share their content online.

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