

AT&T CONFIDENT ITS PARTNER IN CRIME WILL LET IT TAKE OVER T-MOBILE

Here's the last paragraph of a Politico article describing the considerable extent of AT&T's paid influence in DC.

AT&T said Monday that it is "confident" it can secure federal approval as it presents its case for T-Mobile, and both companies signaled Monday that they hoped to wrap everything up in about a year. AT&T declined to comment on its lobbying and PAC efforts and whether those efforts would be stepped up as it pushes for merger approval.

Now, the Politico piece is worth reading just for a sense of how corrupt the upcoming approval of the merger will no doubt be.

But somehow Politico forgot to mention the **other** reason AT&T will be granted the right to buy T-Mobile in spite of its clear assault on key principles of competitive capitalism: because the government owes AT&T.

Or, to put it another way, AT&T and the government have become so closely entwined in their joint program spying on Americans that the government cannot be said to be an independent reviewer of AT&T's business.

Not only that, but by having AT&T take over T-Mobile, the government will get more unfettered access to Americans' phone records. As Chris Soghoian explains:

While it is little known to most consumers, T-Mobile is actually the most privacy preserving of the major wireless carriers. As I described in a blog post

earlier this year, T-Mobile does not have or keep IP address logs for its mobile users. What this means is that if the FBI, police or a civil litigant wish to later learn which user was using a particular IP address at a given date and time, T-Mobile is unable to provide the information.

In comparison, Verizon, AT&T and Sprint all keep logs regarding the IP addresses they issue to their customers, and in some cases, even the individual URLs of the pages viewed from handsets.

While privacy advocates encourage companies to retain as little data about their customers as possible, the Department of Justice wants them to retain identifying IP data for long periods of time. Enough so that T-Mobile was called out (albeit not by name) by a senior DOJ official at a data retention hearing at the House Judiciary Committee back in January:

“One mid-size cell phone company does not retain any records, and others are moving in that direction.”

If and when the Federal government approves this deal, T-Mobile’s customers and infrastructure will likely be folded into the AT&T mothership. As a result, T-Mobile’s customers will lose their privacy preserving ISP, and instead have their online activities tracked by AT&T.

So no wonder AT&T is so confident they’ll get to do what they want, and to hell with the interests of consumers. While this deal offers zero benefit for consumers, it does give the government just what it wants.