

W15

**Wednesday
Morning**

Fax

from

**The
Castle
Press**

**The Castle
Press** uses

*200-line printing
screens for sharp-
focus resolution.*

Federal hearings on e-mail "postage" charges

The Senate Commerce Committee began hearings in Washington February 7th on whether to allow AOL and Yahoo to charge a "postage" fee for guaranteed delivery of advertising e-mail.

- The two huge internet service providers plan to offer preferential treatment to companies that pay from 1/4¢ to 1¢ for each e-mail message delivered.
- The proposed system would assure participating advertisers that their messages — marked, for instance, "AOL Certified E-Mail" — would go to the targeted sales prospects' inboxes.
- The ISPs, according to The New York Times, claim that charging for advertising will help cut down on the junk e-mail and online scams that have made the Internet an increasingly iffy way for companies to reach customers.
- A less altruistic reason for the plan, critics say, is that the ISPs predictably will realize millions of extra dollars a year if the government okays the system.

Under the proposed system, AOL and Yahoo would continue to accept advertisements from non-paying senders. However, paid messages — including order confirmations and personalized airline low-fare offers — would go directly to the user's mailboxes, without passing through spam filters.

"The last time I checked," said AOL's Nicholas Graham, the U.S. Postal Service "has a very similar system to provide different options. In certified U.S. mail, he pointed out, you "get assurance that if

*About 75% of all e-mail is spam.
— Postini*

what you send is important to you, it will be delivered, and delivered in a way that is different from other mail."

- The Senate committee hearings will consider legislation that legalizes "Net Neutrality." In essence, it would ban Internet access companies from assigning preferred-customer status to advertisers.

Spam clogs millions of e-mail boxes, the Times notes. The problem has grown so severe that many observers have suggested that demanding that all e-mail senders pay some sort of fee would help drive out spammers.

Claptrap, says freepress.net. "The end of Net Neutrality would shift the online revolution into reverse. If the nation's largest telephone and cable companies are allowed to limit the fastest services to those who can pay ... the rest of us — upstart Web services, consumers, bloggers, and new media makers alike — will become blocked from digital-age innovations."

CEO Ed Whitacre of SBC (now AT&T) takes a more hard-nosed approach. "How do you think (advertisers) are going to get to customers? Through a broadband pipe. Now what they would like to do is use my pipes free, but I ain't going to let them do that."

The Castle Press — *your best choice for a
printing partner since 1931.*



1222 North Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena, California 91103
1-800-794-0858
www.castlepress.com

(2.15.06)