

## Canada Post charging for e-mails

E-mail charges proposed by Canada Post AND legislation is going forward.

The last few months have revealed that the Government of Canada is attempting to quietly push through legislation that will affect your use of the Internet. Under proposed legislation Canada Post will be allowed to bill email users out of "alternate postage fees".

Bill 602P will permit the Federal Government to charge a 5 cent surcharge on every email delivered, by billing Internet Service Providers at source. The consumer would then be billed in turn by the ISP.

Toronto lawyer Richard Stepp, QC is working to prevent this legislation from becoming law. The Canada Post Corporation is claiming that lost revenue due to the proliferation of email is costing nearly \$23,000,000 in revenue per year. You may have noticed Canada Post's recent ad campaign "The nothing like a letter".

The average citizen receives about 10 pieces of email per day. Since 1998, the cost to the typical individual would be an additional 50 cents per day, or over \$180 dollars per year, above and beyond their regular Internet costs. Note that this would be money paid directly to Canada Post for service they do not even provide.

The whole point of the Internet is democracy and non-interference. If the Canadian Government is permitted to tamper with our liberties by adding a surcharge to email, who knows where it will end. You are already paying an exorbitant price for snail mail because of bureaucratic inefficiency. It currently takes up to 6 days for a letter to be delivered from Mississauga to Scarborough. If Canada Post Corporation is allowed to tinker with email, it will mark the end of the "free" Internet in Canada. One backbencher, Liberal Tony Schnell (NB) has even suggested a "twenty to forty dollar per month surcharge on all Internet service" above and beyond the government's proposed email charges. Note that most of the major newspapers have ignored the story, the only exception being the Toronto Star that called the idea of email surcharge "a useful concept whose time has come" (March 6th 1999 Editorial)

Don't sit by and watch your freedoms erode away! Send this email to all Canadians on your list and tell your friends and relatives to write to their MP and say "No!" to Bill 602P.

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I guess they can't pass this until after Jan. 23 but lets be prepared.