SAN ANTONIO - Lyrics performed by Pearl Jam criticizing President Bush should not have been censored from a webcast by AT&T Inc., a company spokesman acknowledged Thursday.

AT&T, through its Blue Room entertainment site, offered a webcast of the band’s headlining performance Sunday at Lollapalooza in Chicago. The event was shown with a brief delay so the company could bleep out excessive profanity or nudity.

But monitors hired by AT&T through a vendor went further and cut two lines from a song to the tune of Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall." One was "George Bush, leave this world alone" the second time it was sung, and the other was "George Bush find yourself another home," according to the band's Web site.

AT&T spokesman Michael Coe said that the silencing was a mistake and that the company was working with the vendor that produces the webcasts to avoid future misunderstandings. He said AT&T was working to secure the rights to post the entire song — part of a sing-along with the audience — on the Blue Room site.

Blue Room offers live concerts, sports interviews, video game advice and other entertainment content that requires a high-speed Internet connection. Although viewing the content is free, San Antonio-based AT&T uses the site as a way to promote its DSL broadband services.

Besides Pearl Jam's show, AT&T showed 21 other performances ranging from Pete Yorn to G. Love and Special Sauce during the three-day Lollapalooza music festival. Coe said no other complaints have been made about censoring.

Pearl Jam said in a posting on its Web site that in the future, it would work harder to ensure live broadcasts or webcasts are "free from arbitrary edits."

By MICHELLE ROBERTS, Associated Press Writer
12 minutes ago

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"If a company that is controlling a webcast is cutting out bits of our performance — not based on laws, but on their own preferences and interpretations — fans have little choice but to watch the censored version," they said.

The alternative rock band and Internet advocates were also using the incident to try to draw attention to the prospects of Internet service providers like AT&T deciding to give preferential treatment to content they favor or have deals with, leaving the rest on slower-moving Internet bandwidths.

Jenny Toomey, executive director of the Future of Music Coalition, said that although net neutrality wasn't being violated in this case, it still raises questions about whether AT&T and other service providers can be trusted not to hurt artists.

Internet speeds that depend only on the size of files, not the kind of content that's in them, is a democratizing force, she said.

"We've got to protect that, and artists get that," Toomey said.

AT&T and other providers would like the ability to charge more for transmitting certain kinds of data, like live video, faster or more reliably than other data but have insisted such premium services would help, not hurt, consumers.

Coe said, regardless, the issue of net neutrality is entirely separate from the mistake during the Pearl Jam show.

"This was our own Web site," he noted.

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On the Net:

Edited Webcast as posted on YouTube by the Future of Music Coalition:

http://tinyurl.com/37wst3

AT&T Blue Room: http://attblueroom.com

Pearl Jam: http://pearljam.com