

Paul Mickey

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### Net Neutrality

The internet is used by millions of people every day. Emails are composed, Tweets are sent, videos are posted on YouTube, and people video chat other people on Skype. To do those things a person has to have an internet connection. What if the consumer had to pay extra to do certain things on the internet. This is where net neutrality steps in. This positive concept protects the consumer from having to pay more money to their Internet Service Provider or ISP for short.

First here is some history on this topic. Net neutrality in the USA dates all the way back to the 1860's when the telegram was still around. Whereas modern net neutrality didn't gain traction until there issues in the 2000's with ISPs. One of early issues was when Comcast was slowing down access to certain websites (Goth). In this article published by IEEE Internet Computing in July 2010, an April US Court of Appeals ruled that, "the FCC overstepped the FCC had overstepped its authority in 2008 in sanctioning cable ISP Comcast for selectively throttling BitTorrent traffic on its network" (Goth). Then on December 21, 2010 the FCC voted on Net Neutrality (also known as the Open Internet Order) placing limits on ISPs "speed throttling," websites being blocked like Netflix and Skype are two websites that compete with a ISPs' (Internet Service Providers') business, and they must be transparent on network practices (Reed). This seems like a great idea when consumers first heard of net neutrality but there were still some issues.

With that all that above said there are still ways to get around those laws. A ISP could write in new terms in their user agreement without the user knowing and it still be legal. They

could also charge you extra for more data or better access to certain sites. With that said “Fast-lane” sites never became legal there was discussion on it though (Bourreau). Marc Bourreau in a March 2015 issue of The Journal of Industrial Economics asked this, “SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO TREAT (sic) all types of Internet traffic equally, that is, with no discrimination with respect to the type of content, service or application and the identity of the data transmitter, or should we instead allow Internet platforms (Internet Service Providers, ISP’s) to discriminate the traffic they carry?” This serves a basis of Net Neutrality. It does not cost an ISP extra to load a video site compared to a basic text site. My ISP back home put a bandwidth limit (also known as a “data cap”) with extra fees if we go over because they want the consumer to buy their \$100 a month cable that is offered. Whereas, you could bundle a few online services together and still be saving half if not more of your TV bill.

Even now the way people become “famous” is changing rapidly. For example, Jake Paul released a video on YouTube explaining why he left Disney Channel in favor of focusing on his content on YouTube. Also, the ads are usually better online anyway, instead of eight minutes of ads on a half hour TV show, it gets cut down to as little as a few minutes and the consumer can pay extra if they don’t want to see them at all. Then in this Media Magazine article from 2015, Dish was taken to court by Fox because Dish had a new DVR called the “Hopper” that lets users play back DVR recordings commercial-free; Dish won the right to leave that feature on, but with some limitations. Things like this is really pushing consumers towards online media.

On the other hand, people think Net Neutrality is bad because it “limits” business. House Republican Eric Cantor released a statement after the FCC voted in December 2010 saying, “Make no mistake, a thriving broadband industry will be a crucial piece of the private sector in the years ahead, and we must do everything we can to ensure long-term broadband investment

and availability.” This quote basically means that making money off from internet companies is a big deal even if it hurts the consumer. There was an article online that the Verge published earlier this year and the amount of money donated to congressmen from ISPs was mind-blowing. This is a common theme among republicans. In a July 2017 Capacity Magazine article, it was made clear that Trump and his FCC Chair Pai want to repeal these current rules. This means that if repealed ISPs could charge more to get on certain sites etc.... There are ISPs now that recently put in a bandwidth cap on home internet because the “fast-lane” charges are still illegal, so that is the alternative. Also by limiting what consumers with their internet will save the ISPs costs in the short run by not having to do long term upgrades on their infrastructure that should be done anyway. The reason why consumers are against net neutrality is because they are uneducated about the issue due to propaganda that is spread everywhere. Cox communications had an article a few years back that talked about how “cutting the cord” would be more expensive and it was full of factual errors, so the article was removed a few days later. Now according to Comcast’s website, Netflix can be viewed on their new “X1” cable box. Lawmakers want to do what’s best for business and themselves, instead of what is right for the consumer that is the person paying for the service.

Personally, net neutrality is a positive thing that helps people. More data is created every day and is transmitted back and forth through the internet. Things like email, news, videos, etc.... are utilized every day by millions of people around the world. These rules protect the consumer by limiting on how much money is spent on an internet connection and what the ISP can and cannot do.

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