



ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION

Protecting Rights and Defending Freedom on the Electronic Frontier eff.org

In Defense of a Neutral Internet

Network neutrality—the idea that Internet service providers (ISPs) should treat all data that travels over their networks equally—is a principle that must be upheld to protect to future of our open Internet.

Unfortunately, the FCC is considering a plan that would allow some Internet service providers to make special deals to speed traffic to certain websites, New websites that don't have a special relationship with ISPs, and can't afford to buy their way into such a relationship, will face new barriers to success, leaving users with even fewer options and a less diverse Internet. This kind of “pay-to-play” runs contrary to the neutrality principles upon which the Internet was founded and that have been essential to its growth as a platform for innovation and free expression.



The harms of network discrimination

Most conversations about network neutrality revolve around how Internet providers might speed up consumer access to websites in exchange for special access fees, and rightfully so. But there are plenty of other ways ISPs have meddled with our connection to the Internet. We've seen Internet providers interfere with peer-to-peer file sharing, like when Comcast blocked BitTorrent connections in 2007. In 2012, AT&T blocked Apple's FaceTime video calls from working on its mobile data network. And in 2013, Verizon disputed updating its network architecture to allow for streaming video services.

Defending the Net will require a combination of solutions

There's no “silver bullet” for net neutrality; we need to take a multi-faceted approach. Part of the solution is to stop Internet service providers from unfairly discriminating against some applications, or interfering with access to some sites. Transparency is also key: ISPs must be open about how traffic is managed over their networks in order for both users and the FCC to know when there's a problem. Local governments can also play a crucial role by supporting competitive municipal and community networks. When users can “vote with their feet,” service providers have a strong incentive not to act in non-neutral ways.

It's our Internet, and we're going to fight to protect it

We want the Internet to live up to its promise, fostering innovation, creativity, and freedom. We *don't* want regulations that will turn ISPs into gatekeepers, making special deals with a few companies and inhibiting new competition, innovation and expression.

Visit DearFCC.org to submit comments to the FCC's official Open Internet docket. Fill out the form to submit your comments, and tell the FCC why the future of the open Internet matters to you!

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