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The Federal Communications Commission's Open Internet Rules (net neutrality rules) are the pillars that ensure an open and accessible Internet. Net neutrality means that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) cannot discriminate packets based on their contents. Every packet must be treated equally (as long as the content is legal).

On May 18, 2017, the FCC voted to move forward with Chairman Pai's proposal to remove net neutrality rules. The removal of these rules would allow Internet Service Providers (i.e. companies that lay the cables through which the data packets in the Internet run) to create a tiered information system. Content providers and ISPs that could afford the "fast lane" will receive inherent advantages that are denied to start-ups and other small companies. Eliminating the net neutrality rules would further consolidate market power into a handful of ISPs and technology companies, stifling innovation.

Despite the protestations of the ISPs, the deliberate slowdown of Internet content companies (which include big corporations such as Netflix and smaller start-ups) has and does occur. A well-documented example is the 2014 contract negotiations between Netflix and Comcast. The Internet, like the wired phone system that predates it, depends on the various companies that

operate the cables to agree to carry each other's' data. However, with the rise of the Internet and massive content companies, cable companies are now demanding that certain companies pay extra for the benefit of using these shared lines. The effect is that whenever a dispute arises, the cable company can deliberately route traffic to lower bandwidth cables which result in a higher latency on consumer's devices.

The Netflix-Comcast dispute is indicative of this disparate power arrangement, as reported by Qz, Time Magazine, the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNet, and a plethora of smaller media outlets. During the Netflix-Comcast dispute, Netflix subscribers experienced a substantial increase in latency which affected the Netflix's streaming service.

The net neutrality rules ensure that Comcast and other ISPs cannot use their economic power to treat data packets differently. It prevents Verizon from favoring its native content over the content of the third party producers. The net neutrality rules provide for the Internet what the Microsoft anti-trust cases provided for the Windows Operating System, an open system that allows fair competition on a dominant platform.

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