

A lot of people have been arguing if there are valid reasons to implement rules and regulations for Net Neutrality to large Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Many organizations will tell you that the market will sort itself out in ways that are better for the customer. And ISPs will tell you that any type of regulation prevents them from building high speed networks for phone, video, and telephone services. But I do not believe this to be true.

You might ask who I am to make comments about the nature of large data networks. I have been a Network Engineer for the largest special effects company in the world, along with film companies, animation companies, and video game companies. I currently have a job working for one of the largest internet search companies in the world (who's views are not represented here), helping to manage one of the busiest global networks. Someone might say I know a thing or two about the Internet and networking in general.

I am also, as you can imagine, a buyer of internet access for personal use. From the perspective of a customer buying internet service, I want access to all internet sites using the shortest path to a destination (google.com, yahoo.com, gamespy.com, etc...) from my ISP. What I don't want is my ISP deciding what level of service I should receive from when trying to reach a site. I pay an access fee and I expect all services to be treated equally, regardless if they are paying the ISP (which is just a form of blackmail) for increased access to it's customers or if they are a competitor to the ISP in one of their markets (IP Telephony for example). ISPs are paid to carry my traffic to my destination, not to make decisions on my behalf for their benefit.

I want to touch on my comment about ISPs blackmailing internet sites. If large backbone providers such as AT&T, Level 3, etc.. or end user providers such as AT&T and comcast are allowed to prioritize traffic based upon the criteria of where the data is destined to, ISPs will attempt to utilize that power to blackmail internet sites into paying them money or creating deals to give certain sites better performance across their backbones or to their end users, destroying the competitive spirit of the internet. Today, someone goes to google or yahoo based upon the belief that the site is better at search. But if net neutrality isn't enforced, it will be who can strike the best deal with various providers. This is not helpful to the end customer, it's destroys the ability to allow small companies to innovate against the larger companies who can put a stranglehold on upcoming internet companies by gaining an edge with connectivity to the end user. Every ISP is already funded for profit by end users. Large internet companies also already pay the ISPs for what is called transit connectivity. There is no necessity for internet companies to pay more for increased service levels and

priority.

The ISPs are interested in destroying net neutrality in order to destroy new competitors to their businesses. IP Telephony, sometimes called Voice over IP (Voip) is a new and growing business that is in competition with existing ISP's expansion plans (comcast) or existing business (AT&T). By allowing them to prioritize their own traffic for these services to end users who are paying for internet access, you prevent competition in this growing market, limiting it to what your internet provider is offering. Destroying net neutrality allows ISPs to limit the available bandwidth for a service such as Vonage to their customers, taking the choice of using Vonage (or another company) as their Voip provider to only allowing the customer to use that of the ISP. How is this better for the customer?

Allowing ISPs to do away with net neutrality only allows large companies to blackmail large internet sites and large companies to crush smaller startups. With net neutrality, customers gain the choice of who is their Voip provider. AT&T, Vonage, and Comcast are all on the same playing field, regardless of what the end customer's ISP is. That's choice. That's good for the consumer.

Net neutrality is choice, innovation, and is what end customers of ISPs pay for.