

Network Neutrality is a very important issue to me as a public citizen with an interest in free speech and as a software developer with an interest in the free market. Cincinnati, like most places, does not have much competition among internet service providers. There are only two companies which I as a consumer can receive internet service from, neither of which I am satisfied with. The most important attribute of my broadband connection is that all of the data that I send and receive is treated neutrally. Any sort of tiered service which creates a dichotomy within the data I send and receive would be a violation significant enough not only for me to switch services but for me to move my geographic location to gain a non tiered service.

Free speech is a serious issue here. My primary interaction with the public sphere is conducted online and I feel that this is not uncommon. Any sort of filtering by the ISPs is a threat to my ability to speak freely on the medium of my choice. ISPs have a history of finding creative and inconspicuous ways to censor public discourse, Prodigy and AOL in the early 90s are good examples.

It has been said that Video & Audio streaming are a big concern as the increased load could slow down the network. If these technologies were to overload the network I see no reason why ISPs cannot improve and expand the network. Fiber optic technology can provide all of the bandwidth necessary and then some. Many ISPs have been posting record profits and their stocks are doing quite well so I do believe they can afford it without charging a premium for certain data tiers. If they refuse to expand and improve the network for paying customers such as myself then the free market SHOULD allow for consumers to choose another ISP that does meet their needs. Until it is possible for me to choose an alternative service (it currently is not), compromising network neutrality does not create a free market situation, it creates a localized monopoly or duopoly. Other companies cannot create their own network in my area and become a new competitive ISP and so there is no room for new competition to move in. I understand why other companies are restricted from moving in and becoming new ISPs but by not allowing geographical competition, but in exchange the ISPs should not be allowed to take advantage of their geographical control.

I am NOT a Pirate! I must be clear about this. I purchase and download music from a legal provider (emusic.com) as an alternative to iTunes, which is a high traffic activity. These downloads could easily be mistaken for copyright infringement by ISP filters. emusic.com and other legal vendors already pay for their internet connection on their end the same as I do for mine. Large downloads from emusic.com qualifies as high bandwidth activity. If emusic.com or other small legal companies were extorted to pay for a high speed tier or if they were frequently blocked on suspicion of copyright violation, I don't believe they would survive. Without this freedom of choosing from whom to legally purchase music my options could be reduced to a select few sources or illegal pirating.

Compromising network neutrality will not effectively reduce copyright infringement. I am not a lawyer and am less informed on some other issues of the debate but as a software developer and a

computer scientist I know a lot about this. Pirating is like cockroaches, you can't kill them all and they will reproduce at a rate that is impossible to keep up with. Software pirates have superior technology, technical intelligence, and more time and resources than ISPs do. Trying to 'outgun' the copyright violators aka pirates is a losing battle. The way to eliminate or minimize piracy is to promote the free market and allow new and ingenuitive companies to figure out how to legally sell copyrighted material. emusic.com is a good example. The way to promote these types of companies is by preserving network neutrality.

The current model is the customers of the ISPs pay for their internet connection on their end, and Companies pay for their internet connection on their end. Why should anyone have to pay again? There is no need for a third charge.

Currently I pay an affordable flat monthly fee that is indiscriminate of how much bandwidth I use. This is a good model. The internet is a great source of academic research (see the folding@home project). Without network neutrality, academic research and development on the internet would become as dismal as the R&D Labs of ISPs, which may be why I still do not have a fiber connection.