I have recently heard about the latest ruling for the Open Internet initiative (*Verizon v. FCC*), ruled on January 14, 2013. Although many of the supporters of Net Neutrality think that this is an automatic blow to the cause, I find that there has been some details that were overlooked when the ruling was made. This is a recap of that ruling:

> *Given that the Commission has chosen to classify broadband providers in a manner that exempts them from treatment as common carriers, the Communications Act expressly prohibits the Commission from nonetheless regulating them as such. Because the Commission has failed to establish that the anti-discrimination and anti-blocking rules do not impose per se common carrier obligations, we vacate those portions of the Open Internet Order.*

It seems as though, the underlying problem with this ruling stems from the definitions of carrier types, per FCC definitions. The definitions can be found for them on a FCC Form 477, at the following web address:

http://transition.fcc.gov/form477/inst.htm#hotlink1

According to the definitions outlined here, Verizon **is applicable** to the following definitions of :

Facilities-based Providers of Broadband Connections to End User Locations
Providers of Wired or Fixed Wireless Local Exchange Telephone Service
Providers of Interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Service
Providers of Mobile Telephony Services

Here are some examples of the services provided by Verizon, with each one reflecting a definition definiton. Links are also provided about each service for more information about it.

Facilities-based Providers of Broadband Connections to End User Locations:

- **Verizon FiOS**
  http://www.verizon.com/support/residential/internet/fiosinternet/general+support/getting+started/questionsone/85125.htm

This is Verizon's top premier internet service. It is provided through a fiber-optic network that is installed by their technicians. This is also how Google Fiber is being installed primarily as well. Even cable providers like Time Warner Cable and Comcast provide their services through fiber as well, except that the bulk is mostly underground. All of these providers' broadband service distribution methods apply to the definition of a **Facilities-based Providers of Broadband Connections to End User Locations.**

Providers of Wired or Fixed Wireless Local Exchange Telephone Service

- **Verizon High-Speed Internet (DSL)**
  http://www.verizon.com/Support/Residential/Internet/HighSpeed/Networking/Networking.htm

This is their "traditional phone line" alternative to their FiOS service, that makes use of the existing common landlines used for traditional phone jack connections. This approach is also used commonly by AT&T for their DSL service.

- **Verizon Home Phone Service – Verizon Freedom**
  http://www.verizon.com/home/phone/

Verizon provides traditional phone service through existing common landlines. This is the most primitive, yet easy way to obtain the most basic of phone services in existence. Even to this day, AT&T still provides this as a common communication service.

Providers of Interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Service

- **Verizon Digital Voice**
  http://www.verizon.com/support/residential/phone/homephone/general+support/fios+voice+service/121355.htm

By utilizing their existing broadband service infrastructure, this service allow them to provide traditional phone service, using VoIP technology. VoIP is used to also providing phone service alongside of cable service, providing a bundled service using an existing line. This is also how cable operators like Time Warner and Comcast are able to provide broadband service, while leveraging VoIP capability to also provide a "phone and internet service" bundle.

Providers of Mobile Telephony Services

- **Wireless**
  http://www.verizonwireless.com/

This is the primary service for which they are known popularly for.

As a modern wireless service provider, any carrier can take advantage of the capabilities of **Wi-Fi**. As wireless technology has evolved, more carriers of cellular and broadband services began to offer Wi-Fi as apart of their offering. Wi-Fi technology is the bridge between broadband service and cellular services. Wi-Fi can permit braodband data to be accessed and transmitted like common cellular data, utilizing the provider's existing infrastructure. Any carrier that provides Wi-Fi as apart of their services, and is *not* a reseller of such services, would automatically fall under the definitions of being **Providers of Mobile Telephony Services** and **Facilities-based Providers of Broadband Connections to End User Locations.**

After all, mobile Wi-Fi is an amalgam of mobile telephony services and facilities-based broadband service. Verizon provides broadband and wireless services. It is no surprise that they are capable of providing Wi-Fi service as well:

Verizon Wi-Fi:
http://www.verizon.com/home/wifi-wireless-internet-service/

I have also read that the ruling was also influenced by the interpretation of the FCC's Open Internet policies. They are as follows:

1. **Transparency.** Broadband providers must disclose information regarding their network management practices, performance, and the commercial terms of their broadband services.

2. **No blocking.** Fixed broadband providers (such as DSL, cable modem, or fixed wireless providers) may not block lawful content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices. Mobile broadband providers may not block lawful websites, or applications that compete with their voice or video telephony services.

3. **No unreasonable discrimination.** Fixed broadband providers may not unreasonably discriminate in transmitting lawful network traffic over a consumer's broadband Internet access service. Unreasonable discrimination of network traffic could take the form of particular services or websites appearing slower or degraded in quality.

The second and the third policies' interpretations were the primary motivations behind the latest ruling. In my opinion, I found the ruling judge's interpretation lacking any detail, obtained from thorough analysis and logical assessment.

The No Blocking policy is simple and straight-forward in regards to core data access and exchanges across different platforms. Fixed or wireless, one cannot simply block access in a knowingly manner. The problem with this policy is that it only applies to the providers themselves, and doesn't prevent "sympathizers" from implementing their own workarounds.

For example, there may be a software developer who prefers a certain provider's services personally, over a competing provider's services. What is to stop them from making their software "only work for" their "favorite provider?" Such a scenario would seem very unlikely, but with the influence of instant wealth and/or fame as a reward, what is to stop them from doing so? A web developer could simply adopt the same principles as the software developer, and keep their websites from being displayed when using a certain ISP.

The underlying requirement of the No Blocking principle is not to ask of provider to "police" the content being exchanged across their systems. It is simply asking them to make their services available for data exchange, with no strings attatched, be it fixed or wireless.

The third policy, No unreasonable discrimination, is the most mysterious of all three of the policies. The gist of this policy is the overall quality of data transmission over a provider's systems. Should a provider's service fail to meet their customer's expectation of the service that was agreed upon initially, then the provider needs to be held accountable for the shortfall in providing this service.

A user should not also have their services affected in any way, should they elect to use competing, alternative service upon the very same network.

A user should not ever have to worry if data traffic from certain locations is being given "special prioritization" above the same kind of data from any other location, no matter the source.

In summary, if Verizon wishes to continue operating their business in the U.S.and elsewhere, then compliance will have to be key in their overall strategy. It has been proven that Verizon is a Common Carrier, per FCC definitions of various carrier types. Given that the services provided by them are reflective of these same Carrier definitions, they have no other way of proving themselves excluded from FCC regulatory compliance. All licensed Carrriers are expected to comply to and follow FCC communication standards and policies.