

The latest rule proposals that would allow ISPs to charge an extra toll for "prioritization" of data traffic (i.e. extortion of Netflix to pay an additional toll for the "privilege" of serving the customer already being billed by Comcast for the data bandwidth usage at issue) would be disastrous for future internet innovation and growth. As shown by the publicly available data bandwidth graphs before, during and after Comcast's "negotiations" with Netflix, Comcast clearly implemented not a prioritization scheme as claimed but rather an artificial reduction in access from the specific IP blocks used by Netflix servers. The before negotiations showed a clear non-intervention equal access while the during showed a clear intervention to negatively restrict Netflix' serving of data to Comcast customers requesting that data. Comcast clearly relied on people blaming Netflix for these issues when in fact it was Comcast taking access to restrict the access of its users. By analogy, Comcast built a gate in front of it's users' access to the same internet roads that existed prior to Comcast's intervention and then added a toll booth (paid by the service responding to the user's request) before allowing the customer to receive the data they requested across the bandwidth they had already purchased. When Netflix tried to illustrate just that in advertising, Comcast threatened legal actions against the much smaller company and thus intimidated it into acquiescence. Threats of legal action to silence dissent and the truth has long been a tool of tyrants and is clearly thriving well here.

The internet thus far has only thrived because it has been treating data traffic equally. Recent attempts to do otherwise by Comcast and Verizon have illustrated just how much outrage these policies have caused among internet users. For the FCC to implement such rules that are clearly against the public wishes and interests to a open, equal internet would go against the very purpose of the FCC. To protect the people's interests and not those of a minority of companies seeking to control and limit access to digital services as a means of extorting additional revenue from services for the privilege of serving their customers' requests.