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Please support Net Neutrality for many reasons you should too, internet services are way over priced already changes need to benefit consumers with lowered cost thank u.

The fight for net neutrality goes to round two

Woody Leonhard

By Woody Leonhard

With 1.1 million (and counting) consumer comments to ponder and an alliance of tech companies nipping at its heels, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission enters round two of the fight for net neutrality.

The end of the 120-day public-comment period ends Sept. 15 ? at which time the real fight over access to the Internet begins.

This is the third installment of an ongoing series on Internet neutrality. The March 27 Top Story, "Why and when net neutrality is important," highlighted how the topic of equal access to the net is more complex than commonly assumed. The article put a Netflix/Comcast agreement into its proper context ? showing how the deal wasn't a threat to net neutrality but simply a more efficient way for Netflix to stream its content over Comcast's network.

The May 8 Top Story, "Net neutrality: What it is, why you should care," discussed round one in the Federal Communications Commission's current attempt to rewrite Internet-access rules. The story pointed out the liabilities in the FCC's proposal for consumers; it ended with a call to weigh in via the Save the Internet blog.

(If you don't feel up to speed with the technical details of net neutrality ? beyond sound bites ? I suggest you check out the May 8 Top Story. Then follow that up with Stephanie Crets's blog, "A neutral guide to net neutrality," which looks at the topic from a slightly different angle.)

Here's a short review of the issues. This past April, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler put forth a proposal that would, for the first time, allow Internet service providers (ISPs) to create "fast lanes" for content providers willing to pay for the privilege. The proposal included changes that ISPs have been pushing for years ? though with some minor concessions for consumers. (Calling them consumer protections seems too generous.) For example, ISPs could not (in theory) charge consumers more for specific data streams. In other words, a content provider such as Netflix could pay, say, Comcast for a faster pipeline; but the extra cost could not be passed along to the end consumer. (However, any consumer who wants to keep Netflix from going jaggy might have to pay Comcast for an overall faster connection.)

What net neutrality looks like depends on your perspective ? consumer, content provider, service provider, etc. ? but for most of us, the FCC's fast-lane proposal doesn't make the cut. It's not even close. (Paul Venezia's May 27 InfoWorld article has an excellent summary of why the proposal fails the net-neutrality smell test.)

On May 15, the FCC voted 3 to 2 ? along political-party lines (two Republicans dissented) ? to put the proposal out for 120 days of public comment. The commission would then make a final decision in mid-September.

In his May 15 U.S. News