

Why Net Neutrality is Not a Mainstream Issue

It's not a Democratic vs. Republican issue; it's a fringe vs. mainstream issue.

Net Neutrality is a fringe issue and a factional business dispute.

- **Legislating Network Design?** Columbia Law Professor Tim Wu, who coined the term “net neutrality,” said it “*is best defined as a network design principle.*” Why would Congress want to pass a permanent law that freezes in place a 30-year-old network design and effectively forecloses future network design innovation and the emergence of a new next-generation Internet?
- **Dumb or Smart Network?** Technically, net neutrality is about whether the Government dictates that broadband networks must be “neutral” or “dumb” with “intelligence” limited to the network edge, or allows networks to be “smart” with “intelligence” included in the network.
- **Silicon Valley Factions:** Cisco states: “*Innovation inside the network is just as important as innovation in services and devices connected to the Internet.*” Google & eBay seek network neutrality regulations that proactively favor “edge” innovation in services and devices.
- **Online-Broadband Factions:** Online business interests believe Internet consumers should shoulder the cost of maintaining/upgrading the Internet; broadband interests believe online producers should help consumers shoulder the cost of maintaining/upgrading the Internet.

Net Neutrality is not sound Democratic policy.

- **Highly-Regressive:** A neutral or “one-tier” Internet would be highly-regressive because lower-income, low-bandwidth-usage consumers would be forced to subsidize the spiraling costs caused by the highest-bandwidth users and the biggest most-profitable online companies.
- **Abandons Key Priorities:** A neutral Internet would disallow “prioritization” of traffic for key Democratic priorities: *emphasizing and helping* public safety, first responders, the disabled community, schools, libraries, telemedicine, and rural/underserved areas.
- **Slows Universal Broadband Adoption:** Internet regulation of access prices, terms and conditions, would discourage necessary infrastructure investment and destroy incentives to rapidly deploy broadband to all Americans, especially in rural and under-served areas.
- **Corporate Welfare:** The online companies, which use the most bandwidth and benefit the most from the Internet, would pay the least under a neutral one-tier Internet. In a one-tier neutral Internet, consumers increasingly subsidize the spiraling usage of online companies.

Net neutrality is not sound Republican policy.

- **Internet Regulation:** Net neutrality would reverse Congressional policy: “*to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet...unfettered by Federal or state regulation.*” Net neutrality would also reverse the competition purpose of the 1996 Telecom Act “*to promote competition and reduce regulation...to encourage the rapid deployment of telecommunications technologies.*”
- **Industrial Policy:** Net neutrality would have Government second-guess markets and consumers in determining market winners and losers, demand for new products and services, and deciding which innovation and standards would be encouraged or disallowed.