



Legislating “Net Neutrality” – Necessary?

TeleCONSENSUS—a broad-based coalition that advocates modernizing the nation’s telecommunications laws—opposes “net neutrality” legislation. This legislation is unnecessary and will deter new investment in broadband network infrastructure, slow the deployment of innovative technologies, leave consumers with fewer choices and higher prices, and harm the ability of the United States to compete globally.

“Net neutrality” suggests that the Internet should be operated in a neutral manner—meaning that users should be free to visit their choice of legal Web sites, to connect video game systems and other such devices to the Internet, and to access online applications, without interference from service providers, content providers, or the federal government. Unfortunately, though, some members of Congress think “net neutrality” means that the federal government should regulate the Internet experience for providers and users alike.

The Internet is like a highway. Without enough lanes to accommodate the volume of cars, traffic jams occur. Widening the highway reduces congestion. The same principle applies to the Internet. Unless we invest in the infrastructure of the Internet, businesses and consumers will face massive traffic jams on the information superhighway as increasing amounts of high-volume traffic, like video, clog the existing transmission lines.

Legislating “net neutrality” would, for the first time, impose regulation on the Internet. The FCC’s well-established “net neutrality” principles are working. There is no evidence that broadband service providers plan to interfere with traffic from competing providers or to slow down the service of some sites in favor of others. Moreover, the intense competition among broadband service providers makes discrimination highly unlikely.

TeleCONSENSUS asserts that telecommunications markets should be driven by advances in technology, competition between telecommunications companies, and consumer choice, not by government regulation. Indeed, the intense competition between cable operators, phone companies, and others for broadband customers requires providers to quickly respond to market developments and offer differentiated services to attract business. The various pricing plans offered to broadband subscribers today are but one example of this phenomenon.

“Net neutrality” is anticipatory regulation and must be rejected. The United States cannot afford for its economy to be stuck at an Internet red light. Keep the “super” in information superhighway. Say NO to “net neutrality” legislation!

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