

Why your Netflix pastime is in danger

Destruction of net neutrality would ruin the internet



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Do you play League of Legends or watch Netflix? If the Federal Communications Commission's new plan goes through, you might need to start paying extra.

The Trump administration's new FCC chair, Ajit Pai, has set into motion a plan to overturn the 2015 net neutrality protections that millions of Americans came together to demand.

In short, net neutrality requires that Internet service providers like AT&T, Comcast and Verizon treat each website and all traffic fairly. This means ISPs cannot require subscribers to pay extra for access to specific websites, or intentionally slow down traffic.

The dangers of a non-neutral Internet were clearly illustrated when the New York Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Spectrum-Time Warner Cable, alleging that they had intentionally slowed down League of Legends

and Netflix traffic. Once Netflix paid up, its traffic went back to normal, effectively ensuring that the company was held for ransom.

The implications of this are staggering – any new Internet startup could be required to pay just for customers to be able to access their product. Things we take for granted today, like Facebook and Snapchat, would have never been able to gain traction in the first place, because early users would have had to pay.

We've already seen how being nicked and dimed at every step can demoralize an industry — just look at air travel. Anything

you do, you need to pay up, from checking a bag to even picking your seat. No one ever looks forward to air travel.

The FCC is mostly alone in wanting to overturn net neutrality; the United Nations declared Internet access as a fundamental human right in 2016. Americans on all sides of the political spectrum are in favor of strong net neutrality protections. In fact, according to one poll from the University of Delaware, 81 percent of Americans are in support.

Of course, the FCC has made it as hard as possible to leave

comments, but comedian John Oliver has created a handy website to simplify the process: just go to <http://gofccyourself.com/> and click "+Express" to leave a comment.

If you want to use a form letter, you can use the Electronic Frontier Foundation's <https://dearfcc.org/> for an easier to fill out form.

We have 90 days to leave comments before the FCC conducts a final vote to move forward with the proposal. Make your voice heard to defend a neutral Internet.



Graphic by Raphael Villagracia