

#NET NEUTRALITY

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Net Neutrality debate: Three opinions that provide an alternate view

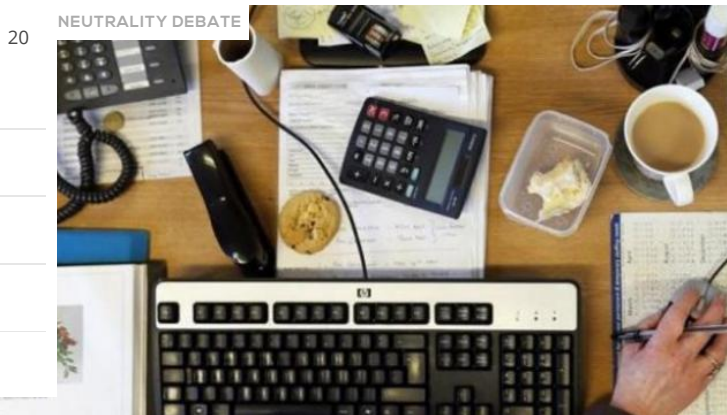


Image: Reuters

By tech2 News Staff / 15 Apr 2015 , 18:42

Unless you've been living under a rock, the term 'net neutrality' may sound quite familiar by now. In the past couple of days, everyone had been actively sharing explanatory posts on social media about net neutrality, its benefits, and how telcos plan to violate it. Petitions are being signed to coax Trai into rethinking its 'paper' and massive public outrage even **forced Flipkart to back out of Airtel Zero**. There are some who also believe that India shouldn't rush into making any decision and weigh the **pros and cons on both sides** before taking a drastic decision.

While everyone has something to say, here are three opinions that you must definitely consider before taking a side.

Unforeseen problems may arise

Firstly, lets look into the new rules passed in the US, as a result of some pressure from **President Barack Obama**. FCC had outlined its rules in support of net neutrality asking ISPs not to block or ban content or create fast or slow traffic lanes.

However, some believe it doesn't really address any major problems. A report by **Time** has emphasized how it is all in for net neutrality, but there are other major unforeseen problems that could arise due to it in the future. Net neutrality doesn't really fix major problems like the cost and slow Internet speeds.

"These regulations are positive step, but those swept up by the hype might end up disappointed when the real thing finally arrives. That's because net neutrality doesn't seriously address anything cable companies are currently doing, nor will it help with the number one issue most people care about: the price and quality of their service," according to the report.

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By tech2 News Staff

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By Ashish Magotra

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We as an emerging nation have been facing slow Internet issue for sometime now, which could be sidelined. There could be lack of competition, and nothing much would really change for the average user.

“Competition is scarce because it’s prohibitively expensive for a new company to build its own fiber network. The FCC could have fixed this problem by requiring “last-mile unbundling,” a policy that would force major broadband providers to lease their own networks to competing ISPs, when it reclassified broadband under Title II of the Communications Act. However, Chairman Wheeler explicitly ruled unbundling out of any net neutrality regulation,” the report says.

“I’m not saying net neutrality is actively bad. We’re better off in a world with these kinds of restrictions. That said, the new rules should be seen as little more than a preventive measure for abuses that have largely yet to occur,” the report further adds.

Curb new business ideas

Similarly, Jeffrey Dorfman’s article on **Forbes** suggests net neutrality in turn could curb new business ideas. “This is a bad idea for the same reason that only having vanilla ice cream for sale is a bad idea: some people want, and are willing to pay for, something different. Forcing a one-size-fits-all solution on the Internet stifles innovation by blocking some companies from turning new ideas or business models into successful products,” he writes.

“The last thing we should want is a government agency picking winners and losers on the Internet. And enforcing net neutrality is picking winners and losers even if it looks like it is just “leveling the playing field.” He may think it is not, but it completely blocks certain business models and stops any possible innovation that might emerge if given the option of seeking differential access to bandwidth,” he further adds.

Regulations should come up organically

“There is **no reason for India to be hastening up** any kind of action on net neutrality. The government needs to be well-informed of the inputs, views and thought processes of various stakeholders and then take a customized approach depending upon the specific customized requirements of Indian nation and the expected growth of the Indian mobile web,” suggests Pavan Duggal, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, India’s leading expert and authority on Cyberlaw & Mobile.

There are arguments about how **net neutrality is important** for India’ Digital dream. It is also important for small businesses and startups, especially considering that India is becoming a breeding ground for startups and entrepreneurs.

“However, the conditions in India are dramatically different. India is a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, and Democratic Republic under the Indian Constitution. With second-largest population in the world, we are constantly growing and evolving Mobile Web where increasing majority of Indian are only accessing the Internet through their mobile devices,” he said.

Duggal believes the American experience on net neutrality could indeed provide various learnings for the Indian experience. However, the fact still remains that India will need to carve out its own specific way, going forward in the context of the net neutrality.

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R.Sundaram · a day ago
I have a fundamental question. Suppose I open a great state of the art Jewelry Shop and also provide free luxury AC class transport from wherever the customers are using the City Road Network , am I infringing on the road neutrality since the other start up jewelry shops cannot afford to ferry customers?. Today, in Indian Roads while cars and motorized vehicles have almost eliminated pedestrians why don't we have road neutrality campaigns?. I think the youngsters are protesting too much. Over time, hopefully, sound economics will prevail. To me unbundling at the last mile seems to care more for the customers now and even in the future.

Ashish · R.Sundaram · a day ago
Sir, if you do it no one would care. But if DTC provides free rides to your showroom, then every one will cry, Try and understand the problem.

Subhashis Chowdhury · 2 days ago
Difficult for m to accept the argument of Dorfman. To me the internet is analogous to the electricity supplied to households. The companies do not levy differential charges based on

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electricity supplied to households. The companies do not levy differential charges based on the devices, do they? It's based on usage. In the internet world too, content wins. And let their be differentiation in apps and content which will automatically drive traffic. He cites one example of how in California electricity charges are based on usage. But how many such instances do we have. I also did not understand how Face, Instagram, Linln etc.have grown on account of non-Net Neutrality

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Jithin • 2 days ago

For those confused about Net Neutrality here's something in simple words:

Paying for Road Tax depending on the purpose of travel OR to put it in even simple words
Paying Electricity bill based on the brands you use.

If this is discrimination of the highest order then please join #savetheinternet movement.
Lodge your protest

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Boss • 2 days ago

No, no, no no, no. No one will mess with the internet. You will leave the internet alone. Govts, ISPs, large corporations - keep your filthy hands out of the internet and mind your own business. Do not fiddle with it, do not screw it up.

If it is not broke, do not fix it.

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disconcertedivinity • 2 days ago

Point One: Unforeseen consequences: We have been living with a neutral internet for quite a better part of the century now. Internet has generated a huge industry in its wake. If the detractors of net neutrality are so sure, they should also talk about the unforeseen consequences of limiting a particular amount of data and bandwidth to a certain web portal. As of today what most people see is, there are more unforeseen consequences of the new, harebrained ideas from Google, Facebook, Reliance and Airtel.

Point Two: The neutral internet has actually generated more new business ideas than any other industry except probably the war industry. It will continue to do so. For people who want to pay more, there is faster internet, paid subscriptions to various web based services managed by real, serious supercomputers, better machines for personal use. The internet is filled with services where you get a better product for paying more. Internet is more capitalist today than ever. It won't curb any new ideas and it will satisfy the billionaires and paying class well. But if these paying people want their treatment and service to be exclusive to themselves, they won't get it. Because it violates the basic tenets of equality and humanity.

Point Three: Yes, Hon. Duggal, India is a sovereign, socialist, democratic etc country. But if Indians were so concerned about setting up their own specific ways, why didn't they set up their own Internet. Internet is a fine product of globalization. If all the rules regarding it used to shadow the ones made by American courts, why all of a sudden do we need independent laws and regulations. That is stupidity.

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