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Net Neutrality

The Ethics of Managing the
Internet's Infrastructure

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- Prohibits restrictions on specific uses of the internet
 - Attempts to prevent tiered service akin to cellphones
- Promotes the freedom of the press
 - Should blogs be considered press?
 - Should youtube?
- Treats all forms of information equally

The Open FCC

The FCC has adopted four ways the internet should remain open:

- Open Devices
 - Allow for introduction of new devices
- Open Applications
 - Applications should not be restricted to specific networks
- Open Services
 - Allow 3rd-party re-selling of services
- Open Networks
 - Provide wholesale network capacity on a non-discriminatory basis

Comcast v. FCC

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- 2007: The FCC orders Comcast to stop tampering with services provided.
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- 2010: The US Appeals Court decides that because Comcast is exempt from Title II and Title VI of the Communications Act, the FCC did not have the authority to issue the order.

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The FCC does not have authority over "information services," except where needed to fulfill its other duties -- called ancillary authority. Therefore the FCC can not police the internet's infrastructure without reclassifying its service type.

Other Cases of Non-Neutral Access

- Apple blocked Skype use on the iPhone
- Google refused to route Google Voice to rural areas
- Madison River Communications blocked their DSL customers from using the Vonage VoIP service
- AOL (America On Line) blocked all e-mails that mentioned www.dearaol.com (later called a 'glitch')

So, what does all this mean?

- Telecoms are experiencing conflicts of interest due to the unforeseen power the internet has.
 - 15 years ago, the potential the internet held wasn't anticipated, and it's infrastructure suffers the consequences
- In order for the FCC to ensure that the internet remain open and free (as in speech), it must reclassify ISPs as "telecommunications services," or else forfeit control to big business.

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