

Net Neutrality vs. Reasonable Network Management

Net Neutrality has an inherent bias against network management.

- **Infinite Bandwidth Assumption:** The core tension here is that net neutrality proponents consider network management unnecessary because adding bandwidth could cure all network congestion ills.
- **Fault Capital Efficiency:** Another tension is the financial reality of capital efficiency, meaning networks are designed to accommodate average usage, not maximal spike usage, because it is too costly.
- **Free Lunch Assumption:** Yet another tension is that net neutrality proponents believe that the cost burden of adding additional bandwidth capacity to enable video should be paid by others, not them.
- **Not Technology Neutral:** Columbia Law professor Tim Wu, who coined the term “net neutrality,” said it “*is best defined as a network design principle.*” At core, net neutrality is about government permanently mandating one 30-year-old network design over all other competing network designs.
- **Bans Network Intelligence:** Technically, net neutrality is about whether the government restricts broadband networks to being “neutral” or “dumb” with “intelligence” limited to the network edge, or allows networks the freedom to be “smart” with “intelligence” inside the network.

Network Neutrality defines network management as discrimination.

- **Assumed Guilty:** By overstating that all Internet bits are equal, which is untrue, net neutrality assumes any differentiation of traffic is per se malevolent discrimination, not legitimate management.
- **One Size Does Not Fit All:** The Internet’s most defining characteristic is its diversity not its equality. People have vastly different needs, wants, means, preferences and priorities, which the Internet can and does meet. Applications also have diverse requirements for bandwidth, latency, quality of service, etc.
- **Management is Legitimate.** *Prioritizing* or *scheduling* multiple tasks, or *managing* scarce resources are not per se discrimination, they are essential and legitimate everyday management functions.

Net Neutrality is not a “practical” principle; the word “reasonable” exists for a reason.

- **Work in Progress:** The Internet is not a finished product or a perfect self-sustaining system. The Internet is a complex evolution of thousands of diverse private networks, hundreds of diverse technologies, and tens of thousands of network managers with diverse resources and approaches.
- **Not a Perfect World:** No one has perfect foresight. Internet networks must have the management latitude and flexibility to efficiently respond to unforeseen developments, problems and threats. Rigid network management rules would hamstring the Internet’s efficiency, reliability, and resiliency.
- **Policy by Exception?** The Internet has long handled billions of communications every day without incident. Net Neutrality proponents irresponsibly propose to apply regulations to 100% of Internet communications because of unproven allegations with .0000000001% of Internet traffic.
- **What “Reasonable” Means:** rational; endowed with reason; within the bounds of common sense; not excessive or extreme; marked by sound judgment. Managing network congestion to maintain quality of service expectations is the quintessential practical definition of “reasonable.”