Net Neutrality

**Overview:**

* Net neutrality is the idea that Internet service providers (ISP’s) should treat everything that goes across the Internet equally.
* ISP’s like Comcast, Verizon and Time Warner oppose net neutrality and want to charge content providers fees for “fast lanes” because they say they aren’t getting a return on the billions they invested in copper, cable and fiber optic lines that provide the Internet service.
* Many websites like Google and Amazon, most consumers using the Internet, and non-profit groups like “Free Press” as well as dozens of others support net neutrality because they believe the tiered system the ISP’s want to implement is discriminatory and that the fees imposed to the content providers will ultimately be passed on to us, the consumers.

**Timeline:**

***1996*** – *Telecommunications Act* – Net neutrality introduced. Congress passed a law that required the Internet to be a non-discriminatory platform which guaranteed equal treatment for everyone over the Internet

***2005*** – After a decision by the United States Supreme Court, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruled that Internet via cable and DSL technology was exempted from the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This opened the door for the ISP’s

***2010*** – *Open Internet Order* – Implemented in 2010 by the FCC, forbids ISP’s from blocking services or charging content providers for access. Verizon appealed this

***2014*** – The Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia Circuit struck down the net neutrality rules for anti-blocking stating that the FCC did not properly justify the anti-discrimination and anti-blocking rules. However, part of the Open Internet Order was left intact so the FCC still has “general authority” to regulate how Internet service handle access

Discussion Questions

**What is the definition of Net Neutrality?**

**Why is this important to us, or what are some potential issues pertaining to this concept?**

**Is anyone familiar with the Telecommunications Act of 1996? Or does anyone know why this is significant to net neutrality?**

**From the reading, can anybody tell me about the FCC’s latest proposed rules, or what’s happened this year concerning net neutrality?**

**What do you guys think will happen with all of this? Do you think net neutrality will gain some strength or will the ISP’s start charging for these “fast lanes?”**