

Net neutrality balancing act

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Researchers in Italy, writing in the *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management* have demonstrated that net neutrality benefits content creator and consumers without compromising provider innovation nor profits.

There is a war raging online between those who wish to modulate, control and throttle the flow of information, usually the internet service providers (ISPs) and [content creators](#) and consumers who seek neutrality. Net neutrality is the principle on which open democracy and social benefits of the communication age can best be played out, the latter two parties argue. Governments and regulatory authorities must guarantee [net neutrality](#) in other words. In contrast, the ISPs suggest that their being blocked from modulating the use of bandwidth cuts into their profits and will ultimately stymie technological development and the broadband upgrades to the services they provide, whether that is data, voice, video.

Researchers in Italy, writing in the *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management* point out that net neutrality involves equity in electronic communication whereby data and information carried by an operator is treated uniformly regardless of the actual content, the application or service provided or the identity of the sender and end user. Francesca Di Pillo of the Università degli Studi di Roma 'Tor Vergata' and colleagues have now analysed the pros and cons of sticking to net neutrality or pandering to the ISPs demands. Their results - based on a game theory model - suggest that even in a world of universal net neutrality the scope for large profits and reinvestment is steady and

would provide the ISPs with sufficient freedom to keep their shareholders happy and at the same time upgrade the telecommunications technology as necessary regardless.

Consumers and content providers always see greater benefits in the net neutrality environment, the team demonstrated. Given that the European Union currently operates under a competitive scenario, regulators must take into consideration the user experience and any potential loss of benefit to them if ISPs are allowed to move from net neutrality to discriminatory regimes. Moreover, their [game theory](#) analysis shows that contrary to ISP "opinion", they show that the conditions for network innovation can in fact also be guaranteed under net neutrality.

More information: "Net neutrality versus discrimination in internet access: winners, losers and investment incentives" in *Int. J. Technology, Policy and Management*, 2014, 14, 232-249

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