

Comcast CEO: Full steam ahead on Time Warner deal

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Comcast Corporation chairman & CEO Brian Roberts speaks at a Comcast presentation at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

Comcast CEO Brian Roberts is moving "full steam ahead" with the company's proposed \$45 billion acquisition of Time Warner Cable despite the uncertainty raised by President Barack Obama's call for tougher regulations on high-speed Internet service providers.

As part of its [commitment](#) to getting the Time Warner deal done, Roberts said Comcast Corp. still intends to spend about \$20 billion during the next two years to improve its Internet service and other products.

Roberts' stay-the-course remarks, made to reporters during a presentation Wednesday in San Francisco, contrasted with a cautionary statement from AT&T's CEO Randall Stephenson. In earlier appearance at an investment conference, Stephenson said AT&T Inc. is scaling back on its spending plans until the Federal Communications Commission determines the new rules governing Internet service providers.

The FCC has spent most of this year re-examining the regulations after a federal appeals court overturned guidelines designed to ensure all Internet traffic is treated equally, a concept known as "net neutrality." The reversal raised worries that Internet service providers might create a two-tiered system that would enable them to charge fees to give preferential treatment to the online content delivered by companies that can afford to pay the tolls.



Comcast Corporation chairman & CEO Brian Roberts demonstrates a voice activated remote control while speaking at a Comcast presentation at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

Comcast, AT&T and other major Internet service providers insist they have no plans to create special toll lanes. But Obama signaled earlier this week that he doesn't trust them, urging the FCC to impose utility-like regulations that were originally drawn up 80 years ago to ensure telephone carriers didn't try to control its customers' calls.

If these rules are transplanted on to the Internet, Comcast and its industry peers say the U.S. economy will suffer because they will have less incentive to invest in upgrades that will expand Internet networks into new market and make them run faster. If that were to happen,

innovation inevitably will suffer too, the providers maintain.

Roberts said he doesn't know why Obama decided to push for a regulatory crackdown on Internet [service providers](#).



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"We are trying to work with the FCC, with the Congress, with the administration to forge an outcome that everyone can live with and doesn't do harm to the investment cycle and innovation cycle," Roberts said.

Obama's stance on net neutrality has spurred speculation that Philadelphia-based Comcast may face more difficulty gaining regulatory

approval of its Time Warner Cable Inc. acquisition, which was announced nine months ago.

Comcast still expects to close the deal with New York-based Time Warner Cable by the end of March, Roberts said. If the acquisition is approved, Comcast will have more than 32 million Internet service subscribers.

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