

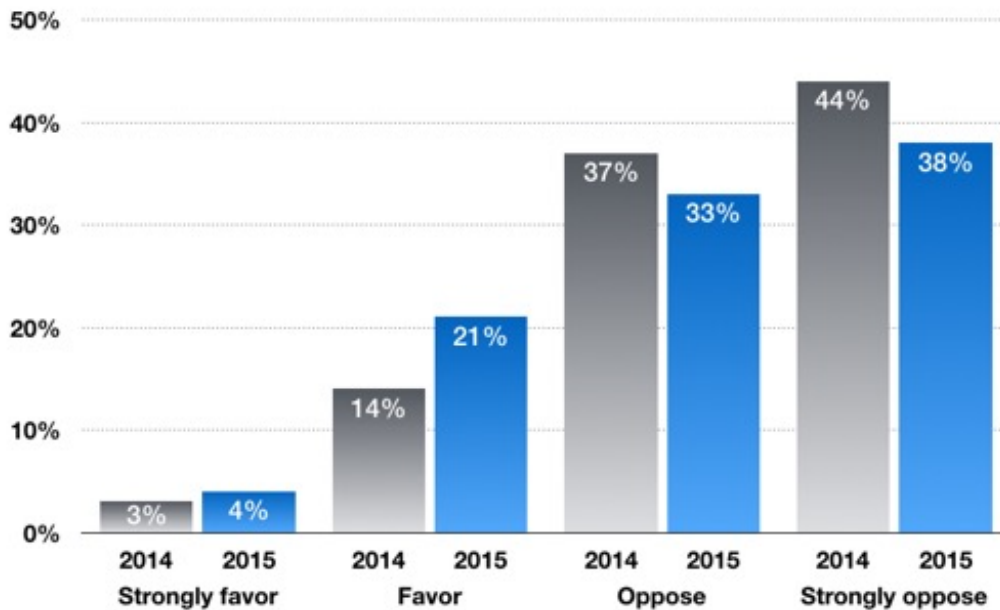
National survey shows public still opposes Internet 'fast lanes' but resists government regulation

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CENTER FOR POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Fig. 1 - Opinion about allowing Internet service providers to charge some websites or streaming video services extra for faster speeds ("fast lanes")



A new study by UD's Center for Political Communication shows most people still oppose Internet "fast lanes." But the study also shows Americans are reluctant to give the federal government power to regulate "net neutrality."

As a federal court considers new national rules on Internet service, a new study by the University of Delaware's Center for Political Communication shows most people still oppose Internet "fast lanes." But the study also shows Americans are reluctant to give the federal government power to regulate "net neutrality."

The study shows that a large majority of people surveyed still oppose Internet fast lanes (71 percent). Opposition is down from a similar survey one year ago (81 percent), when President Barack Obama announced his support for new net neutrality rules. Such rules would restrict Internet providers from offering "fast lanes" in the form of premium service to web streaming operations such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon.

The UD survey reveals a new partisan divide on the net neutrality issue between Republicans and Democrats, with Republicans more likely to favor allowing Internet service providers to charge extra for premium speeds. In 2014, opposition to fast lanes did not differ significantly by political party.

Lindsay Hoffman, the center's associate director, observed that in just one year, public opinion about this previously low profile issue has become politically polarized. "When political leaders like President Obama and senator and presidential candidate Ted Cruz, who called net neutrality 'Obamacare for the Internet,' take a position on an issue like this, it becomes politicized for the public."

Paul Brewer, the center's director, pointed out that research on the net neutrality issue is quite new, and the 2015 survey shows that public responses on this issue depend on how the question is asked. "When respondents are asked about 'government regulation' to achieve [net neutrality](#), 48 percent are opposed," Brewer said. "There's a disconnect here; most Americans oppose Internet fast lanes, but nearly half also

oppose government regulations to accomplish that goal."

The Federal Communications Commission is defending its Internet service regulations in court against industry challengers who argue that the FCC has no power to regulate Internet service as it has telephone and television in the past.

The FCC rules were imposed last June, to keep Internet providers such as Verizon and Comcast from blocking or slowing web access to some users, and selling premium Internet privileges to others.

"The study also shows a modest increase in how much people have heard about the issue since last year." said Brewer.

The telephone survey of 901 U.S. adults was conducted by the University of Delaware's Center for Political Communication from Nov. 11-17, 2015. CPC Director Paul Brewer supervised the study.

Full details of the study are available at the center's [website](#).

Provided by University of Delaware

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