

Background

One of the most important features of the Internet is its openness: It uses free, publicly available standards that anyone can access and build to, and it treats all traffic that flows across the network in roughly the same way. This design has made it possible for anyone, anywhere to easily launch innovative applications and services, revolutionizing the way people communicate, participate, create, and do business—think of email, blogs, streaming video, and online shopping. The FCC is focused on ensuring that every American has access to open and robust high-speed Internet service—or broadband.

What Is the “Open Internet”?

The “Open Internet” is the Internet as we know it, a level playing field where consumers can make their own choices about what applications and services to use, and where consumers are free to decide what content they want to access, create, or share with others. The FCC adopted the Open Internet rules to ensure that the Internet remains a powerful platform for innovation and job creation; to empower consumers and entrepreneurs; to protect free expression; to promote competition; to increase certainty in the marketplace by providing greater predictability for all stakeholders regarding federal policy in this area, and to spur investment both at the “edge,” and in the core of our broadband networks.

What Is “Net Neutrality”?

Network, or “net,” neutrality is just another way of referring to Open Internet principles.

Do Open Internet Rules Regulate Internet Content or Applications?

No, the FCC does not regulate Internet content or applications. To the contrary, the purpose of Open Internet rules is to clarify high-level, flexible rules of the road for broadband to ensure that no one—not the government and not the companies that provide broadband service—can restrict innovation on the Internet.

The FCC and Open Internet Rules

There are three basic Open Internet rules:

1. **Transparency:** Broadband providers must disclose information regarding their network management practices, performance, and the commercial terms of their broadband services;
2. **No Blocking:** Fixed broadband providers (such as DSL, cable modem, or fixed wireless providers) may not block lawful content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices. Mobile broadband providers may not block lawful websites, or applications that compete with their voice or video telephony services;
3. **No Unreasonable Discrimination:** Fixed broadband providers may not unreasonably discriminate in transmitting lawful network traffic over a consumer’s broadband Internet access service.

The no blocking and no unreasonable discrimination rules are subject to limited exceptions for “reasonable network management.” To view the Open Internet Report and Order, visit http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-10-201A1_Rcd.pdf.

Complaint Procedures

If you think there has been a violation of the Open Internet rules, you may file a complaint with the FCC at:

https://esupport.fcc.gov/ccmsforms/form2000.action?form_type=2000F.

(More)



For More Information

For more information about the open Internet, see www.openinternet.gov. For more information about broadband in general, see the FCC consumer guide at www.fcc.gov/guides/getting-broadband, or visit the FCC's broadband website at www.broadband.gov. For information about other communications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554.

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