

NRIC Encourages Publication of Peering Criteria to Promote Transparency

Because no one provider directly connects a plurality of sites within the Internet, interconnection between providers is necessary. The form of interconnection known as "peering", in which Internet providers agree to exchange traffic for their respective customers but not for third parties, is commonly deployed and widely accepted.

Internet providers do not and can not peer with all other Internet providers. They make conscious decisions as to which providers they will peer with, and under what business terms. In the United States, the decision to peer, or to decline to peer, is driven by market forces, rather than by government regulation. Moreover, there is no legal obligation to disclose these decisions or these terms.

Over the past year, several of the largest Internet providers in the United States have voluntarily chosen to openly publish the basis on which they decide with whom they will peer. In the opinion of NRIC V, this has been a positive development, both for U.S. industry and for the global Internet community. It has significantly enhanced transparency of process in the industry.

NRIC V encourages other Internet providers, and especially the large "backbone" Internet providers that comprise the core of the modern Internet, to consider, consistent with their business practices, publication of their criteria for peering.