



What's in the FCC's new net neutrality rules?

by [Grant Gross](#), IDG News Service

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission voted Dec. 21 to create new network neutrality rules for broadband providers.

The 194-page [order contains several provisions](#):

Transparency: The order will require broadband providers to "publicly disclose accurate information" about their network management practices, the performance of their services and their commercial terms. The goal is to provide information "sufficient for consumers to make informed choices regarding use of such services," the FCC said in a press release.

No blocking: The rules will prohibit wire-based broadband providers from blocking legal Web content, applications and services. The order will also require broadband providers to allow harmless devices to be connected to their networks. The no-blocking rule is subject to reasonable network management.

Exemption on no-blocking rules for mobile broadband carriers: The order does not prohibit mobile broadband providers from blocking some Web content and services, but it does prohibit them from blocking services that compete with the carriers' voice or video telephony services. The FCC will monitor the mobile broadband industry for signs of anti-consumer behavior, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said.

No unreasonable discrimination: The rules bar wired—but not mobile—broadband providers from unreasonable discrimination against legal network traffic, with reasonable network management again the exception.

Exemption for specialized services: Specialized, or managed services, are exempt from the rules, for now, the FCC said. The FCC will monitor the broadband industry for signs that providers are hurting the public Internet or

acting in an anti competitive manner by pouring more resources into specialized services, the FCC said.

Paid prioritization of Web traffic: Any commercial agreements between broadband providers and other companies that would allow providers to prioritize some types of Web traffic would likely violate the prohibition on unreasonable discrimination, the rules say. Those types of commercial agreements would "raise significant cause for concern," the FCC said in its press release. "This departure from long-standing norms could cause great harm to innovation and investment in and on the Internet."

Complaints: Broadband customers and providers of Web applications and services will be able to file informal complaints through the FCC's Website, without paying the normal fee for formal complaints. Customers and others can also file formal complaints after notifying the broadband provider. The FCC will allow requests for expedited action on complaints.

"What's in the FCC's new net neutrality rules?" Comments

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By [Moeskido](#) Mon Dec 27 13:14:13 PST 2010

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So in short, a consumer like me will now get a more complete description of how a service provider can charge me more for bandwidth that connects me to their competitors. Got it.

Remember when regulatory agencies actually regulated?

By [lkrupp](#) Mon Dec 27 14:20:32 PST 2010

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"The rules bar wired—but not mobile—broadband providers from unreasonable discrimination against legal network traffic.."

What, exactly, would constitute "illegal" web traffic?

By [leicaman](#) Mon Dec 27 14:30:13 PST 2010

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lkrupp said

"The rules bar wiredâ€”but not mobileâ€”broadband providers from unreasonable discrimination against legal network traffic.."

What, exactly, would constitute "illegal" web traffic?

Kiddie, snuff and crush porn. 

By [polyfade](#) Mon Dec 27 14:43:15 PST 2010

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"No blocking" – does that mean my ISP, Optimum Online, can no longer block me from serving on port 80? It's ridiculous my ISP considers it a security risk. Yet, if I pay them an extra \$15/month, that risk magically goes away.

When do these rules go into affect?

By [LelandHendrix](#) Mon Dec 27 15:36:52 PST 2010

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lkrupp said

"The rules bar wiredâ€"but not mobileâ€"broadband providers from unreasonable discrimination against legal network traffic.."

What, exactly, would constitute "illegal" web traffic?

Junk packets, DDoS attacks, other malicious network manipulation.

It was a distinction that had to be made. Previously, network operators rejected or filtered out this activity out of self-preservation. With networks now being required to do what consumers ask of them, a distinction of legitimate (legal) use had to be made.

By [LelandHendrix](#) Mon Dec 27 15:47:25 PST 2010
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polyfade said

"No blocking" â€"does that mean my ISP, Optimum Online, can no longer block me from serving on port 80? It's ridiculous my ISP considers it a security risk. Yet, if I pay them an extra \$15/month, that risk magically goes away.

When do these rules go into affect?

That Is EXACTLY what that means, however it is not quite so simple and may not apply to you.

If your ISP has within its terms of service, with you and your plan, that specify outright that you cannot operate a server, you are bound by your carrier's TOS. This falls under "Transparency." I would use the new complaints provision to challenge it though.. You could argue that you'd like to use something that requires a response from your machine on :80 but who knows what that outcome would yield. They are obviously being obtuse by calling it a security issue, unless they are afraid you might host a phishing page, but that's covered under legal use.

Why should they care if you want to run a web server? Unless it were to be high volume, in which case they could more easily give you a uplink quota or throttling as long as it's transparent.

Oh well, if you're wanting to host a page you could always specify another port in the URL, but that isn't tidy and sort-of defeats the purpose, right?

These rules still can't force an ISP to provide a service they don't want to provide, and nor should they. Hopefully you have another choice in ISP-- which is the only way free-market influences can work.

By [SuperMatt](#) Mon Dec 27 16:47:05 PST 2010
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Why are wireless networks held to a different standard? Is a reason given?

By [johndrake](#) Mon Dec 27 19:24:41 PST 2010
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SuperMatt said

Why are wireless networks held to a different standard? Is a reason given?

Can you say

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They had a lot going on behind the scene of this new "law"