



CARL Statement on Net Neutrality

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) would like to express its support for net neutrality in order to ensure equitable access to online information and services for all Canadians.

Net neutrality is the principle that internet service providers should not be allowed to give preference to, influence, or discriminate against online content based on its ideology, origin, format, content, or destination, and that all content should be equally available to all. As such, net neutrality protections prevent internet service providers from prioritizing delivery speed and connectivity for content creators they support or who are willing to pay additional fees, and from creating different pricing plans which limit access to specific information and services. Net neutrality is essential to innovation and a level market, as it ensures that the content shared by large corporations is not prioritized over that of non-profit organizations, start-ups, and minority groups, and that access to information is not determined by how much a user is able/willing to spend on cable-like internet packages.

It is heartening to see that Canada remains committed to the principle of net neutrality at both the government and regulatory level. In addition to the safeguards against discrimination and content control that are featured in the Canadian Telecommunications Act, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage, have affirmed Canada's continued support of the principles of net neutrality. Statements from the Chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Ian Scott, as well as a number of decisions issued by the CRTC, also endorse net neutrality at the regulatory level.

Although Canadian consumers and creators remain in control of their internet usage, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recent decision to eliminate protections for net neutrality is still likely to affect Canadian internet traffic that routes through the U.S., possibly limiting the range of information and services available to Canadians. As such, CARL supports the inclusion of a net neutrality provision during the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) renegotiations, and any other future international trade negotiations.

CARL wishes to emphasize that protecting net neutrality is an important part of promoting the values that research libraries uphold, including openness, freedom of expression, diversity, and equitable and affordable access to information for all Canadians.

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