

Net Neutrality and human rights

International trends and policy recommendations for the Internet of tomorrow



Background

“Network neutrality” is an appealing and multifaceted expression which encompasses several areas and may give rise to misinterpretations. At its core, the notion of network neutrality determines the extent to which Internet traffic management practices may be regarded as legitimate, insofar as they do not qualify as discriminatory practices and they are consistent with the full enjoyment of human rights. Yet, throughout the last decade, this polysemous formula has acquired different meanings, invading the province of telecommunications, content and security regulation.

The network neutrality debate is gaining great political momentum. Indeed, many legislators are currently scrutinizing the opportunity of elaborating and adopting legislation on network neutrality. While everyone agrees that end-users’ fundamental rights have to be safeguarded, the question remains as to how this end could be achieved, and what are the consequences (if any) of network-management practices on such rights.

Call

The [Dynamic Coalition on Network Neutrality](#), created under the auspices of the [United Nations Internet Governance Forum](#), invites researchers and practitioners to submit a position paper on the issue of net neutrality and human rights. Position papers should provide relevant background information together with one or more propositions on how to preserve fundamental human rights (such as the right to privacy or freedom of expression) on the Internet of tomorrow.

Suggested topics include, *inter alia*:

Implementation of the network neutrality principle:

- How to approach network neutrality? Regulation or co-regulation?
- Is fair competition a sufficient safeguard for fundamental rights?
- Can current examples of network-neutrality legislation be deemed as efficient?
- Is there a difference between “open Internet” and “neutral Internet”?

Impact of network neutrality on human rights:

- Analysis of network neutrality case-law: Current violations of the network neutrality principle and their impact on human rights

- How to reconcile anti-network neutrality arguments with the protection of human rights?
- From *gateways* to *gatekeepers*: assessing the role of ISPs with regard to access to information.
- Network neutrality and global access to the Internet: a “digital divide” issue
- Digital democracy: the impact of network neutrality regulation on civic participation
- Benefits and risks of Deep Packet Inspection as an Internet traffic management techniques

Submission Guidelines:

Submissions are due on September 15th, 2013. They should include the following elements:

- Title
- Short abstract (250 words)
- Position paper (between 3000 and 6000 words)
- Author’s name, affiliation and short bibliographical note

Submissions should be sent to contact@networkneutrality.info

Authors will be notified within approximately two weeks from the deadline as to the status of their contributions.