Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers and governments regulating most of the Internet must treat all data on the Internet the same, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or method of communication. For instance, under these principles, internet service providers are unable to intentionally block, slow down or charge money for specific websites and online content.

In the United States, net neutrality has been an issue of contention among network users and access providers since the 1990s. In 2015 the FCC classified broadband as a Title II communication service with providers being "common carriers", not "information providers".  
Until 2015, there were no clear legal protections requiring net neutrality. Throughout 2005 and 2006, corporations supporting both sides of the issue zealously lobbied Congress. Between 2005 and 2012, five attempts to pass bills in Congress containing net neutrality provisions failed. Each sought to prohibit Internet service providers from using various variable pricing models based upon the user's Quality of Service level, described as tiered service in the industry and as price discrimination by some economists.  
In April 2014, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported a new draft rule that would have permitted ISPs to offer content providers a faster track to send content, thus reversing its earlier net neutrality position. In May 2014, the FCC decided to consider two options: permitting fast and slow broadband lanes, thereby compromising net neutrality; and second, reclassifying broadband as a telecommunication service, thereby preserving net neutrality. In November 2014, President Barack Obama recommended that the FCC reclassify broadband Internet service as a telecommunications service. In January 2015, Republicans presented an HR discussion draft bill that made concessions to net neutrality but prohibited the FCC from enacting any further regulation affecting ISPs. On February 26, 2015, the FCC ruled in favor of net neutrality by reclassifying broadband as a common carrier under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 and Section 706 of the Telecommunications act of 1996. On April 13, 2015, the FCC published the final rule on its new "Net Neutrality" regulations. These rules went into effect on June 12, 2015. However, FCC chairman Ajit Varadaraj Pai proposed an end to net neutrality in April 2017, awaiting votes from the commission. It was later announced on November 21, 2017, that a vote will be held by FCC members on December 14 on whether to repeal the policy.

* January 12, 2003 – Law Professor Tim Wu coins phrase Net Neutrality while discussing “competing contents and applications.”
* June 27, 2005 – Supreme Court decides that “communications, content, and applications are allowed to pass freely over the Internet's broadband pipes”
* September 1, 2007 – “Comcast begins interfering with Bittorrent traffic on its network.”
* January 9, 2008 – FCC investigates Comcast traffic policy and treatment of Bittorrent traffic.
* August 9, 2010 – Google and Verizon try to cut deal to make larger parts of internet to be exempt from protection from the net neutrality rules from the FCC.
* December 21, 2010 – FCC creates “Open Internet Rules” which “established high-level rules requiring transparency and prohibiting blocking and unreasonable discrimination to protect Internet openness”.
* September 23, 2011 – The Federal Register publishes the Open Internet Rules.
* May 13, 2014 – FCC releases new proposal including new rules on allowing “fast lanes and slow lanes online”
* June 13, 2014 – FCC investigates large companies such as Netflix for interconnection policies.
* July 15, 2014 – FCC opens up on Public Knowledge for public comments, received 1.1 million comments on the first day. Determined that "less than 1% of comments were clearly opposed to net neutrality."
* September 15, 2014 – FCC receives 3.7 million comments in total. “The FCC's server crashes again as millions more people, companies, and advocacy organizations weigh in on the open internet rules.”
* February 26, 2015 – FCC passes the Title II Net Neutrality Rules. “In a 3–2 party-line vote, the FCC passes open internet rules applying to both wired and wireless internet connections grounded in Title II authority.”
* June 12, 2015 – Net neutrality rules go into effect.
* June 14, 2016 – New rules are upheld by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.
* January 23, 2017 – President Trump names Ajit Pai as new FCC chairman.
* April 26, 2017 – FCC Chairman Ajit Pai announces plan to reverse Title II regulations.
* May 1, 2017 – A U.S. appeals court declined to reconsider a rehearing of the FCC’s net neutrality case.
* May 18, 2017 – The FCC voted 2–1 to start rolling back net neutrality regulations; this vote marked the beginning of a lengthy process required to modify the existing rules, and it did not actually change said rules.
* June 6, 2017 – Amazon, Reddit, Netflix and many other internet organizations announce that they will hold a simultaneous "Day of Action to Save Net Neutrality" on July 12 in a final attempt to convince the Republican-controlled FCC to keep the current net neutrality rules.
* July 12, 2017 – The net neutrality 'day of action' occurred, involving many major companies and the original founder of the Web, Tim Berners-Lee.
* July 17, 2017 - Comment Date for "Restoring Internet freedom" NPRM
* August 30, 2017 - Reply Comment Date for "Restoring Internet freedom" NPRM