Net Neutrality means that all information flowing over the internet must be treated equally. With the repeal, Internet Service Providers – like Comcast, Crocker, Verizon, or GCET – will be able to decide how different sites run. They can block sites they don’t like or charge money to companies to allow their sites more bandwidth, i.e., the ability to load faster on people’s computers.

This has ramifications for libraries as the repeal has the potential to impact sites our patrons use – library databases, streaming video services, audio- and e-book download vendors, and historical image collections. This may also affect our circulation, as all transactions are done over the internet, our ability to answer reference questions in a timely fashion, and our patrons’ use of the internet either in-house or wirelessly to apply for jobs, seek out medical information, or do homework research.

Companies and individuals will most likely have the option to keep their service speed at current levels if they are willing – or able – to pay for the privilege, but essentially the repeal “gives broadband providers financial incentive to govern the openness of the internet, paving the way for models in which consumers pay for priority access, and those who can’t pay are limited to a “slow lane.”” (New York Public Libaries, Op/Ed; *The Verge*; 12/13/17)