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An Ethical Position on the Principle of Internet Neutrality

An Application of Kantianism and Utilitarianism

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Ethical analysis of net neutrality provides strong evidence in support of the principle. Internet neutrality (or “net” neutrality) is described by the Federal Communications Commission as the principle that “broadband service providers cannot block or deliberately slow speeds for internet services or apps, favor some internet traffic in exchange for consideration, or engage in other practices that harm internet openness” (“The Open Internet”). In other words all data flowing through an Internet Service Provider’s (ISP’s) network is treated equally as if one packet of data was indistinguishable from any other with respect to content. This principle has proven controversial in recent years as technologists, policy makers, and profit-seeking firms have expressed competing concerns. We evaluate the principle through the application of the ethical theories of Kantianism and Utilitarianism and find strong support that net neutrality should remain in place.

Works Cited

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