Samuel Bailey

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Final Project Part One

The internet has been a part of the world since January 1st, 1983. Although giving the internet such a birthdate seems almost impractical. If we consider how the under workings of the internet, we come to a conclusion that its origin is hard to locate. We know it’s somewhere around the late 1920’s to early 1980’s. In the modern first world people only seem to care about two things, money and power. Therefore, this arises the great question of who owns the internet. After we learn that the internet is just a network of networks, we have a realization that no single person or company can own the internet. Supposing this answer being true, which it is, the modern world cannot live with the fact that they don’t have some sort of control of something. Thus, the birth of net neutrality. In short net(network) neutrality is the principle that ISP(Internet Service Providers) must treat all internet communications equally and cannot discriminate on user, content, website, or platform. Although net neutrality may seem straight forward regarding access for internet communications, it’s actually symbolic for a much larger issue of who should have more power and control in the modern world.

Network Neutrality for the internet has been a discussion for around a decade. Ten years is a long time and a lot can happen. There’re many decisions that can happen throughout ten years of one topic. When we think about history, we look at the thought of not only what happened in the past but also why it happened. It wasn’t until in 2003 when a professor from Columbia University released a formal paper and used the term ‘network neutrality’. A way that this can relate to a social issue is that phone companies and internet providers can do just about anything they want to our connection and there is nothing we can do about it without network neutrality. Without it ISP’s can regulate certain things from being said either political or a social issue. Things can be manipulated in the news and on other platforms shifting the way we think or act. Historically through changing the way people think we can shift an entire culture to believe or not believe whatever issues we want. Through a history lens we can focus on three main things, social lens, political lens, and economic lens. Some people thing that the only thing that matters is politics, through this lens we can see how net neutrality makes a huge impact. This lens isn’t only about politicians and governments, but also about laws that have been passed and much more. Net neutrality is so important for the political lens since it can literally control what people can and cannot have access to. Let’s say in Portugal for example, their government charges them for certain forms of media and news. If those that can’t afford certain media or similar things, then they may not know how to think about certain situations that may happen in the world. Many people in North Korea don’t know about everything that was going on years ago since they were so restricted on everything.

Through the lens of humanities net neutrality, I would say has one of its larger effects. By definition the humanities lens focuses on human culture, language, literature, arts, and philosophy as well as human actions and works. Although on surface level this may seem like it has no effect from net neutrality but it’s of the upmost importance to this specific lens. Human culture has been passed down from generation to generation. Some things that people learn and do are only from word of mouth before it gets documented. Let’s say information about a certain topic, maybe human rights, and freedom of speech. If someone makes a post about what they believe in a forum and then there is a news article of the opposite of that post the government can slow the speed on the forum resulting in only loading of the news article. Although this isn’t directly against the freedom of speech it comes very close. Net neutrality also allows removal of the forum if it misaligns with certain beliefs. Which is directly against freedom of speech that shapes our human culture. The last few decades have shifted the entire culture to the forefront of what it is today. Without freedom of human culture there’s not telling what could be different. Very specifically some arts are banned in certain countries, and without net neutrality they may never be able to be seen. Let’s take china for example, in 2017 they censored some online content about a painting that speaks(not literally) about higher authorities watching us all the time. China is one of the countries without net neutrality and because of this that painting will never be seen until China allows it. This a perfect example of the effects of net neutrality in the humanities lens.

Now specifically for the thought process of Natural and applied science we must think through how net neutrality works with things like biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, sociology, & geography. Net neutrality is a law or rule, so it doesn’t directly affect many of the topics that I’ve just mentioned on surface view. However, if we dig a little deeper, we can see how net neutrality has a large voice in this lens. Something that all these topics have in common is that they are all major school subjects to learn. Throughout the last decade and especially through the year of 2020 online learning has become a very normal and realistic reality. Depending on where you live in the world and depending on your financial status it may become difficult to learn these subjects all together.

Social Science is the study of how humans interact with each other. Nothing is more of an elephant in the room about human interaction in 2020 except there hardly wasn’t any at least not in person. Which is a perfect example of net neutrality and the effects of it through the social science lens. The pandemic of 2020 threw the entire world into isolation and for ISP’s that charge for communication is a huge profit opportunity. What we quickly find out is that human interaction becomes something that can be controlled by not ourselves but the companies that provide us internet. Only at the mercy of a large corporation are we allowed to communicate, and at any moment if these companies are having low-income months, they can turn to us and charge people to use specific regions of the internet.

In conclusion, these four lenses help us to see problems in the world at a different angle. An example to help us understand the importance of seeing things through a different lens is quite literally a camera. Professional broadcast equipment doesn’t look at cameras through the just someone’s eyes, but people analyze their broadcast cameras from graphs and analytical numbers instead of what their eyes can see. This new gained ‘lens’ is exactly what helps us see things differently. Just like with the History, Humanities, Natural science and Social science lenses. Around 2014 whenever net neutrality hit the news heavily it was causing division in our world. Socially the media had different opinions about the subject which caused strife between people. Currently in 2021 the topic has seemed to die down and people don’t particularly speak about it in the media anymore. This is mainly because the US was debating over the law around 2014 but there are still many countries today that have not made the decision yet and we face larger problems with this law not in play, we can already see some side effects of internet pricing changing due to not having this law. One thing that ISP’s are doing is charging not only for internet speeds but now they are starting to charge for how much internet we use and what parts of the internet we can view with our connection. Issues in technology will always have a pro and con. There has been and will always be two sides to this coin. Not only is there two sides of the coin but the pro’s and con’s actually change based on your lens. Some people in a different culture will think differently of net neutrality then I do, and everything that I believe to be a con someone else might see it as a pro. What matters most is being able to see things differently this isn’t just about just one topic either. Being able to see someone’s side of thinking will change our approach to topics of technology in the modern world. This way of thinking is what will move humans forward together instead of diving backwards.

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