

Singapore Centre for Applied and Policy Economics (SCAPE)

Policy Forum

Title	Net Neutrality
Speaker	Assoc Prof Julian Wright Department of Economics National University of Singapore
Date	8 April 2008
Time	4:00pm – 5:30pm
Venue	AS2, 03-12, Lim Tay Boh Seminar Room Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS 1 Arts Link, Singapore 117570
Chairperson	Assoc Prof Albert Hu Department of Economics, NUS

Abstract

Some broadband network operators (like AT&T) have said they want to charge content providers (like Google) for sending information to their subscribers. They have also suggested creating special Internet “fast lanes” for particular websites. Critics fear that this could be the end of the Internet as we know it. Although end-users already pay for tiered access to the Internet, the Internet currently functions in a more-or-less neutral way, allowing consumers to connect with content providers (e.g. ebay, Google, Yahoo) without the interference of network operators. However, existing technologies enable network operators to gain control over information exchange on the Internet, discriminating between different content based on the identity of the uploader and downloader or in terms of its use.

In response, a coalition of content providers and user groups has lobbied the U.S. Congress to introduce a regulation that would protect the neutrality of the Internet. This debate has become known as the Net Neutrality debate. Well-mobilized coalitions now exist on both sides of the question, and the issue has received a great deal of public attention in the U.S. (As an example, YouTube has more than 600 videos on “net neutrality”).

At stake, potentially, is the open and interconnected platform nature of the Internet. On the other hand, network operators argue such discrimination is necessary to adequately cope with applications that are increasingly time-sensitive and demanding on bandwidth. In this talk, I will try to provide an overview of the economic issues that arise in the net neutrality debate, drawing on the economics of industrial organization and network economics.

About the Speaker



Dr Julian Wright is an Associate Professor at the Department of Economics at the National University of Singapore. He has a PhD in economics from Stanford University.

His areas of specialization are in network economics and competition policy. His recent research interests include work on two-sided platforms, exclusive dealing and collusion. He has studied and consulted for industries such as mobile telephony and card payment networks, where his work is frequently cited by policymakers. He is also editor of the Review of Network Economics and Associate Editor of the Journal of Industrial Economics.

More information on his research can be found at: <http://profile.nus.edu.sg/fass/ecs/jkw/>

Seating is on a first-come-first-served basis and admission is free.

Please indicate your attendance with:

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