



**Should you worry about net neutrality ending? This one chart tells you why you should.**



By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF DECEMBER 13, 2017

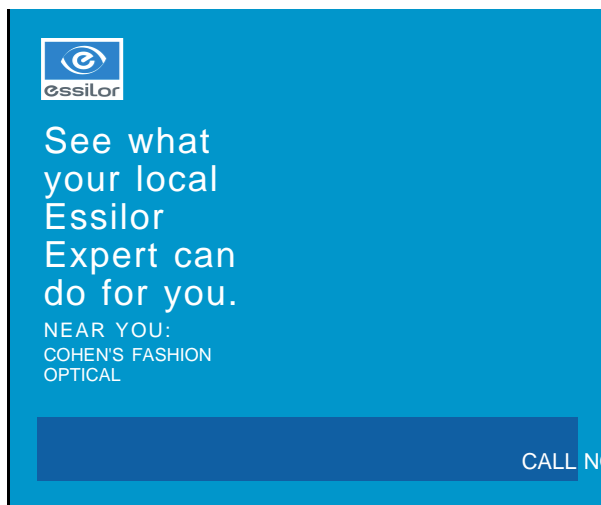
There's been a lot of speculation about what could happen if "net neutrality" rules are repealed in a vote later this week, much of it frightening in nature.

Your favorite websites and apps could load slowly, while others may not load at all, unless you — either directly or indirectly — cough up more money for better web speed and broader access.

Some online content could be blocked and free speech censored altogether, no matter how much you're willing to pay. Start-up web companies may struggle to gain their footing.

ADVERTISEMENT





Essilor logo: A blue square with a white 'E' inside a circle, and the word 'Essilor' below it.

See what your local Essilor Expert can do for you.

NEAR YOU:  
COHEN'S FASHION OPTICAL

CALL NO

Those fears, however, are largely, if not entirely, hypothetical. The truth is no one is sure what will or won't happen. Experts and [stakeholders](#) have [predicted](#) a wide [range](#) of possible [outcomes](#), including that the repeal [may wind up having no discernible impact](#) on the Internet.

Get **Metro Headlines** in your inbox:

The 10 top local news stories from metro Boston and around New England delivered daily.

Sign Up

But if even just some of those worries come to fruition, there's one simple fact that highlights how many consumers will be left essentially powerless to do much about it.

The vast majority of households in the United States have little, if any, choice which company they get their Internet access from.

That means if you find yourself unhappy with your Internet service's speed, access, or other features in a post-net neutrality world, you may just have to learn to live with it.

About 40.6 million households

nationwide, about 34 percent, are connected to only one Internet provider (i.e. companies such as Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, Time Warner) offering entry-level download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second. That's according to a recent [analysis](#) of data from the Federal Communications Commission.

#### RELATED LINKS



[Read Story](#)

#### What is Net neutrality ?

The FCC is expected to torpedo net neutrality this morning. Here's a primer on the issue.

ADVERTISEMENT



Another 51.8 million households, or 44 percent, can choose between just two companies to buy Internet from at that speed, the analysis found.

A much smaller chunk, 16.4 million homes, or about 14 percent, have access to three or more such providers. (Another 9.3 million homes are not connected to any Internet provider offering speeds of at least 25 mbps.)

#### How many Internet provider options US households have

Healthy competition? The chart below shows the estimated number of US households that have access to none, one, two, or three-plus Internet service providers offering speeds of at least 25 mbps, which is considered the minimum standard for broadband.

■ NONE ■ ONE ■ TWO ■ THREE OR MORE



**SOURCE: Economists Incorporated analysis of FCC data**  
MATT ROCHELEAU/GLOBE STAFF

Shane Greenstein, a Harvard Business School professor and an expert in the digital economy, said the [consolidation](#) of cable companies and Internet providers over the years has helped bolster the fears that are the cornerstone of the argument for keeping the existing net neutrality rules in place.

“The typical city in the United States has just two providers,” he said. “You’re pretty lucky if you have three.”

He and other experts said cost is a major reason why consumers don’t have more options. Connecting homes with wires is expensive. And wireless technology is not yet capable of delivering the quality Internet service of a wired connection.

ADVERTISEMENT

---

If consumers had more choices, it might lessen the fears about repealing net neutrality rules.

“Ultimately, getting more broadband options to people is really important” said Daniel Lyons, a law professor at Boston College who specializes in telecommunications.

*Matt Rocheleau can be reached at [matthew.rocheleau@globe.com](mailto:matthew.rocheleau@globe.com). Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)*

[Show 2 Comments](#)

## Top 10 Trending Articles

Viewed

Commented

Shared

---

Mass. authorities face steep hurdles in shutting down sex trafficking

Ideas | Linda Rodriguez McRobbie: Too old to be president? Science says yes.

The backyard mechanic who is taking on Tesla

Julia Ruth Stevens, Babe Ruth’s last surviving child, dies at 102

Road to Recovery: Drugs took their children, but not their hope that others might be saved

Six things to know about Michael Bennett, the newest Patriot

‘SNL’ tackles R. Kelly sex assault accusations with parody of CBS interview, Pete Davidson monologue

Yvonne Abraham | Recycling can’t fix what really ails us

Patriots could be diving into the quarterback market

Can a former agent succeed in running the Mets?

Ashland finally gets its own noodlery

A new service takes travelers from Boston to New York in a Tesla, for \$99

Steelers are driven by fear, and other Combine leftovers

Give your china cabinet a ‘cheeky’ makeover

‘Text me when you get home.’ We shouldn’t have to say it. But we do

Daughter recalls mother’s inspiring role in story

Boston. Racism. Image. Reality: The Spotlight Team takes on our hardest question

‘Your friendly neighborhood copy chief’

Who are you calling senior? For older folks, some terms are fast becoming radioactive

Turbulence injures 30 on flight from Istanbul to New York

Sex trafficking is in plain sight in Massachusetts communities

Recycling can’t fix what really ails us

First lady has a growing ease in her official role, but not politics

Tara Sullivan: Enough with the PED excuses

At SXSW, Elizabeth Warren defends call for breaking up tech giants

New Orleans Saints fans need to get a grip

As UMass makes a big bet on online education, rivals offer words of caution

Drugs took their children but not their hope: That others might be saved

[Kyrie Irving, Celtics finish off Lakers this time](#)

[Centrists squirm as 2020 Democrats swerve left](#)

[Most Popular In Metro](#) →

### Subscribe Now

[Digital Access](#)

[Home Delivery](#)

[Gift Subscriptions](#)

### My Account

[Manage my Account](#)

[Mobile Customer Service](#)

[Sign Up For Newsletters](#)

### Contact

[Help](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Globe newsroom](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Order back issues](#)

### Social

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Google+](#)

### More

[ePaper](#)

[News in Education](#)

[Archives](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Terms of service](#)

[Terms of purchase](#)

[Work at Boston Globe Media](#)

© 2019 Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC