

# New Poll: Americans Overwhelmingly Support Existing Net Neutrality Rules, Affordable Access, and Competition Among ISPs

July 10, 2017

Americans overwhelmingly support net neutrality principles and oppose efforts to repeal the FCC’s 2015 Open Internet rules, according to a recent nationwide poll on technology policy.<sup>1</sup>

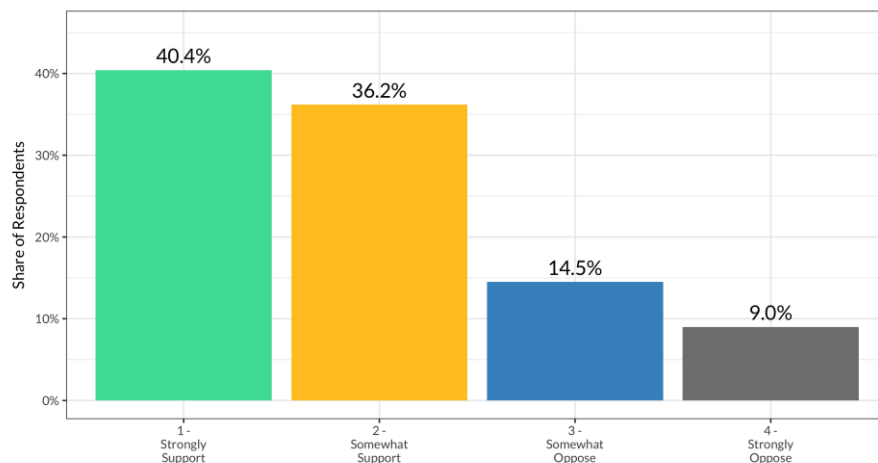
The poll also found a broadly shared belief across party lines that the internet is essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that government has a vital role to play in expanding internet access, including by providing subsidies to help low-income Americans afford access.

Online privacy remains a significant concern, and the public resoundingly believes that the lack of competition among internet service providers (ISPs) and media companies is harming consumers.

## Net Neutrality

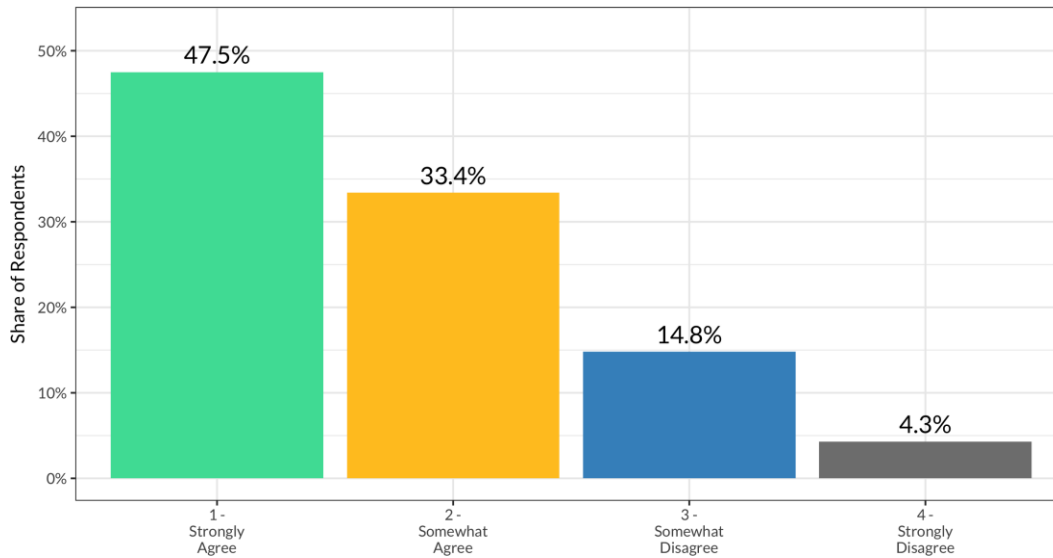
- **Americans of all political parties overwhelmingly support the values of net neutrality and want to preserve existing net neutrality protections.** A strong majority (77 percent) of Americans support keeping the existing net neutrality rules in place. This view crosses party lines, as 73 percent of Republicans, 80 percent of Democrats, and 76 percent of Independents want to keep the FCC’s Open Internet rules. 81 percent of Americans agree that ISPs should not be able to block or throttle websites or charge extra for preferred access to consumers.

*Do you support or oppose keeping the net neutrality rules, which are already in place?*



<sup>1</sup> Polling was conducted by Civis Analytics on behalf of Freedman Consulting, LLC of 2,475 adults online in English and Spanish, June 22-23, 2017. Portions of this research were also supplemented by a national phone poll of 256 adults conducted via cell phone and landline in Spanish and English, June 22-30, 2017. Findings from the combined online and phone polling are indicated with a \*. Results reported do not include respondents who did not answer the question.

*Internet service providers should not be allowed to block users from certain websites, slow them down, or charge extra fees to reach consumers*



- **Americans embrace a Title II vision of internet service.** A strong majority (88 percent, 48 percent strongly) agree that “when I buy internet service, I am paying to transmit information between my computer and the websites I visit, free from interference.” This finding demonstrates that the public views internet access as a Title II telecommunications service, similar to phone service. Americans recognize the vital role the internet plays, with 83 percent agreeing that the “internet is essential infrastructure, like roads and bridges.”
- **The public recognizes the open internet’s benefits for small business and free expression.** There is a shared agreement (90 percent of respondents) that “protecting a level playing field on the Internet makes it easier for small businesses to grow and succeed.” And 91 percent say that “the internet gives everyone a chance to make their voices heard.”

### Affordable Internet Access

- **Most Americans believe the internet is essential.** A very strong majority of Americans (75 percent) agree that “internet access is essential, and everyone needs it in the 21st century economy.”<sup>2</sup> This view is broadly shared across party lines – 84 percent of Democrats, 67 percent of Republicans, and 68 percent of Independents agree.\*
- **Federal subsidies to make internet affordable for low-income Americans are popular.** There is bipartisan agreement that the federal government should provide funding to help low-income Americans afford internet access: 70 percent support such a policy, including 86 percent of Democrats, 52 percent of Republicans, 51 percent of 2016 Trump voters and 85 percent of Clinton voters.\*

<sup>2</sup> \* indicates results from the combined online and phone polling.

## Privacy, Surveillance, and Law Enforcement

- **Nearly nine in ten Americans believes they have a right to secure their personal information, even from the government.** A resounding 89 percent of respondents believe that securing personal information online should be a right.\* Additionally, 79 percent of Americans think existing laws are not enough to ensure that intelligence agencies like the NSA respect Americans' privacy.\* Eighty-four percent of Americans believe that creating government-mandated backdoors into encrypted devices would put their information at risk.
- **The public wants law enforcement agencies to get warrants before accessing their private information.** There is overwhelming agreement (89 percent, 61 percent strongly) that technology companies should not turn over users' personal information (like e-mails) to the government without a warrant. Most survey participants (71 percent) agree that information gathered without a warrant for national security purposes should not be used for other ends, like prosecuting domestic crimes.
- **The public remains concerned about internet service providers' sales of consumer data.** More than eight in ten Americans (83 percent, 68 percent strongly) oppose "allowing your internet service provider to sell information about your activities online, like what websites you have visited, without first asking your permission." This concern over internet service providers' respect for privacy is an area of bipartisan agreement: 85 percent of Republicans, 82 percent of Democrats, and 78 percent of Independents oppose ISPs' sales of such information without affirmative permission.

## Competition and Consumer Protection

- **Americans are concerned about mergers, and want more choices and competition in their media and internet options.** A large majority of Americans (83 percent) agree that mergers between media companies and ISPs raise costs for consumers, and 75 percent of Americans believe that a lack of competition among ISPs causes the cost of internet service to be higher than what it should be.\* Almost nine in ten (87 percent) say that consolidated control of local TV stations is bad for communities.
- **The public believes government has a vital role to play in protecting consumers online.** Most Americans (86 percent) believe the government has a role to play in protecting consumers online. Additionally, Americans (83 percent) generally agree that the government should prioritize preventing companies from hurting consumers before the harm occurs, rather than focusing on punishing violators after the fact. Specifically, 87 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Republicans believe in taking this proactive approach. However, 88 percent believe big ISPs "have more influence on lawmakers than ordinary American internet users do."