The Past and Future of Net Neutrality

a discussion with

Aaron Perzanowski J.D.
David L. Brennan Professor Emeritus of Law

March 2, 2018 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Dampeir Room, 2nd Floor of Kelvin Smith Library
11201 Euclid Ave

On December 14, the Federal Communications Commission voted to repeal its 2015 "Net Neutrality" regulations on internet service providers. Those regulations had prohibited blocking (providers blocking lawful websites or apps), throttling (slowing the transmission of lawful data), and paid prioritization (creating an internet fast lane for companies that pay extra, or the provider's own content, and so putting other content in the "slow lane"). Repeal was highly controversial with about 22 million comments submitted as part of the "Notice and Comment" formal process. Most were real. And, as an alleged threat to internet access, it attracted a lot of attention from CWRU students.

One side claims the regulations discouraged investment that would improve web access. The other claims repeal favors big businesses and will allow the internet to look more like cable TV – with extra charges for the "best" content. Others claim that the dream of a "democratic" internet is already dead, as giant corporations dominate both content (Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google) and connections (Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, Spectrum), and the business model of websites like CNN and ESPN makes it harder and harder to avoid irritating advertising. And others ask, if "Net Neutrality" is so important, how did we do without regulation before 2015?

With so many questions, we need a legal scholar to parse them out. So we will gladly welcome Professor Perzanowski to explain…

The Friday Public Affairs Discussion Lunch is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, emeriti and other members of our communities to learn and question each other about public policy issues at the international, national, and local levels. Faculty and other speakers share their research and experience to get beyond the headlines and repetition in the mass media, and the wild rumors of the internet. Lunch is brown bag, but cookies and some beverages are provided by the Center for Policy Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences.

http://fridaylunch.case.edu/