

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Net Neutrality And People With Disabilities**  
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This paper explores the issue of net neutrality (also known as network neutrality) as it relates to Americans with disabilities. The framework of net neutrality has been advanced by some in recent months as being a proconsumer approach to regulation of the Internet. In fact, as this paper seeks to demonstrate, access to the public Internet requires not only that the network be open, but also that it be useable by all of us.

Government regulation is required for accessibility, for everything broadband gives us today and for the unpredictable exciting new services and benefits to come. Would a net-neutrality mandate limit or even roll back accessibility? We do not yet know. We do know, however, that a dumb or dark network is not the way to go: it did not work in the era of Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) and certainly will not work for Pretty Amazing New Services (PANS).

An open and intelligent network may also lower end-user costs for consumers with disabilities. The paper concludes that net neutrality should not be mandated at this time. Rather, Congress should look to the NIST or the FCC to explore the many complex issues involved, particularly impact on accessibility and sophisticated services such as protocol conversion, telepresence, and video signing.