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Congressional Democrats want you to think that they're going to [save the Internet](#). But the Internet never needed saving. That was true when the Obama administration first passed "net neutrality" regulations in 2015 and also when those regulations were repealed.

On Wednesday, House Democrats proposed a bill to bring back those old rules and reverse a 2017 deregulation by the Trump administration. It's called, with apocalyptic flair, the Save the Internet Act. The issue of net neutrality is relatively complex, and proponents have done a great job of leading the public to believe that without its framework, the free and open Internet we've come to know and love is a goner. But time and experience have proven that this isn't true.

To unpack the meaning of the debate, I spoke to Gerald Faulhaber, a business economics professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who served as chief economist at the Federal Communications Commission from 2000 to 2001. When I call him to ask about net neutrality, he just sighs. "This fight has been going on for what, 10 years?" he says. "It's really boring."

From the 1990s until recently, the Internet was doing just fine. Then the idea of net neutrality gained prominence in 2015, when the FCC approved the Internet Conduct Standard and classified the Internet as a public utility, something that certain large companies providing services online, such as Amazon, Netflix, Facebook, and Google, supported.

The new rules regulated the Internet like a public utility, based on rules nearly a century old. The FCC amassed more legal authority over Internet service providers, such as AT&T and Verizon, which stood opposite their tech-giant peers in the debate. The argument went that without these new regulations, ISPs would trample their customers by offering unequal access to the web — block some sites, zero-rating access to others that paid or entered partnerships, and charging certain services for their inordinate use of spectrum, supposedly to the detriment of consumers.

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Then, in December 2017, the FCC under the Trump administration voted to roll back the public utility classification and turn over regulatory oversight to the Federal Trade Commission. Nothing bad has happened in the time since. But if the government goes back to regulating the Internet like it's your land-line telephone company, something bad likely will happen.

"There will be no innovation left," Faulhaber says. "Nobody wants to go into a regulated business. That's not where you go to make money. That's not where you go to innovate." Public utility regulations, he points out, are designed for mature, stable services without much innovation.

Antitrust laws and the FTC can already deal with problems created by ISPs, which have always had a financial incentive not to make their customers unhappy. Thanks to market forces, which encourage ISPs to compete with each other, you can still enjoy [streaming “Russian Doll”](#) without net neutrality, just like you could from the mid-1990s until 2015.

Despite the hype, the Save the Internet Act is just another strip of federal red tape that will discourage investment in tomorrow's Internet. And the net neutrality advocates who did so much to scare people in 2017, at this point, have a lot of explaining to do. – [Washington Examiner](#)

NBC initially launched its direct-to-consumer service NBC News Signal in October 2018 on an experimental basis. But now, NBC has rebranded the OTT service as NBC News Now and plans to relaunch it in early May. The OTT service will be supported by advertising and will be free to consumers, whether they subscribe to NBCU-owned cable networks or not. NBC News President Noah Oppenheim announced the news Monday at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas. He said NBC News Now will initially provide eight hours of programming per day with live updates at the top of every hour in addition to breaking news, when that happens.

The company plans to expand to 24/7 news coverage over the coming months. Oppenheim said the service would be a way for people who don't have cable TV to access the top news of the day via streaming video. "It will be something you can access on Apple TV or Roku or any of those other boxes," said Oppenheim, according to a [report in Variety](#). The service won't just regurgitate news gathered for NBC's broadcasting and cable networks. It will also include original reporting specific for the streaming video audience.

When NBC News Signal launched in late 2018, Nick Ascheim, senior vice president of digital at NBC News Group, said, "There is a growing segment of people who have never had a cable subscription, but who are just as hungry for smart news as the prior generations of news watchers who have consumed NBC News for decades. These consumers—who are up to date on the headlines but are seeking a deeper understanding of the news of the moment—are increasingly turning to OTT devices for 'lean back' news consumption or an on-the-go informative experience, and that's exactly what NBC News Signal will deliver." – [Fierce Video](#)

A Verizon wireless outage is impacting customers along the East Coast on Tuesday, the company said. "We have confirmed there is a texting outage on the east coast. Our technicians are fully aware we have a ton of customers that are being effected, and we're working non-stop to get this matter resolved as soon as possible," the company tweeted. There was no estimate for repair or how widespread the text outage was.

The texting outage prompted outrage, complaints and frustration from Verizon customers. Customers tweeted their frustration as Verizon customer service worked to address the concerns. At least one Twitter user created a hashtag for the event: "Let's start a hashtag movement for @verizon & @VZWSupport to show them that they don't need to be troubleshooting our phones with us, but rather they need to troubleshoot their network with widespread outages right now. #FixTheVerizonOutage," a Twitter user identified as Russ Sedam posted. – **USA Today**



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