

## FCC Chairman Hits Back at Net Neutrality Critics

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ARTICLE DATE : March 3, 2015

pcmag.com

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler today hit back at those who argue that the agency's net neutrality plan takes an antiquated approach to regulation.

Wheeler was in Barcelona for Mobile World Congress, where he told attendees that the FCC will serve as the Internet's referee. If there's a dispute, the agency will step in.

The FCC's rules reclassified broadband as a telecom service rather than an information service under the 1934 Communications Act. It was basically a way for the agency to gain more authority to regulate ISPs, but critics argue that the agency is just applying 30s-era regulation to the Internet.

Wheeler, however, strongly disagreed. "Let's be real clear, this is no more regulating the Internet than the First Amendment regulates free speech in our country," Wheeler said, echoing the statement he gave at [the FCC's open meeting last week](#).

Internet regulation would involve rate regulation, tariffs, and getting into the details of how ISPs set up their networks. "We don't do that," Wheeler said.

Indeed, the net neutrality rules apply Title II of the Communications Act to ISPs, but not all of its provisions. Things like rate regulation or requirements about contributions to the universal service fund are not included.

"We are for an open Internet," Wheeler said of the FCC. "That is not the regulation of the Internet," but rules that say no government or company can block the people's ability to use the Web.

"We want network operators to be as innovative as possible," he continued.



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Critics like the GOP FCC commissioners said that Wheeler caved to the demands of President Obama, who backed a Title II approach in late 2014. When asked today about why he chose to go the Title II route, Wheeler did not mention Obama, and said that he was instead swayed by the "consumers and innovators and investors" with whom he spoke during the months-long rulemaking process.

For more, check out [5 Things You Need to Know About the FCC's Net Neutrality Plan](#) and 7 Groups Who Love, Hate (and Really Hate) the FCC's Net Neutrality Plan in the slideshow above.

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