New rules could allow ISPs to prioritize data

The Federal Communications Commission will vote next month to repeal the neutrality rules championed by President Obama, a move that will likely be good news for the Internet. Proposed new regulations are being circulated among FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and will vote at the Dec. 14 meeting, would repeal current Internet neutrality rules, which prevented Internet service providers from blocking or throttling web content that they sought to access, as well as preventing ISPs from accepting payment to prioritise data to some degree.

Pai has criticized the regulations as heavy-handed and an overreach of the FCC's power that stifled ISP investment in network expansion and faster broadband connections. Released from the current regulations, providers with more bandwidth or fewer rules, ISPs could more freely experiment with new products for customers and expand their networks, Pai said.

"Under the net neutrality rule, the federal government will step micromanaging the Internet," Pai said in a FCC statement, "instead, the FCC would simply require that Internet service providers be transparent about their practices so that consumers can buy the service plan that's best for them and entrepreneurs and small businesses can have the technical information they need to innovate.

Passage of the rules would be seen as a victory for big telecom and cable companies such as AT&T, Comcast and Verizon. More than 94.5 million U.S. homes subscribe to broadband services, according to Leichtman Research Group.

But consumer advocates and Internet companies including Facebook, Google and Netflix are concerned telecom and cable companies could give preferential treatment to web traffic for their own services and content. Released from the current regulations, ISPs could more freely experiment with new products for customers and expand their networks, Pai said.

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As a commissioner, Pai voted against the Obama-supported rules in 2015 when Democrat Tom Wheeler was chairman. New rules would re- store a "light-touch regulatory ap- proach," said Pai, a Republican op- posed to President Trump.

The new regulations will give ISPs more leeway in their business prac- tices than the rules against prioritising some content over other content, possi- bly for payment. Also jettisoned is an FCC plan that's best for them and entrepre- neurs and other small businesses can have the technical information they need to innovate.

In the "skills" department, Jibo is lacking compared to some, suede-like Italian Alcantara fabric found in luxury sports cars. The interior, however, is well tailored, comfort-oriented for a 100-inch screen. If there is a winner here, it is Apple.

The Surface Laptop starts at $999.

Samsung TV

Samsung's marketing pitch for the TV frame — "the most beauti- ful TV you've ever seen" has some merit; I actually walked right past the TV because it resembled a picture frame on the wall. That's precisely the point: Frame TV is meant to look like that lightweight, un- cluttered-no-wall-mount wall and needs no street sign to let you know it connects to a box you have to pay for. To reinforce the concept, the TV comes with 100 pieces of profes- sional artwork you can display when you're not watching TV.

Nintendo Switch

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When you talk a Jibo (using a "very, very") command, the robot turns to look at whoever is speaking. It responds, with a bit of an annoying delay, in a robotic voice — Jibo is not designed to sound human.

Jibo is not a smartphone, or a speaker, or a photo album, or a selfie stick. It's a toy, a robot that can sit on a table or floor and any amount of distance away. This is exactly what it is, and you're going to have to get used to it. It's not Siri.