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## Final Remarks

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Is the Internet a “public space” in the sense that it commands the same status as a public good? This further prompts the question whether it is an essential good to be accessed by all and at the same rate, as Wu later asserts that the Internet is “almost as necessary [as electricity] to contemporary life.”

A lot of things come into play with the Internet – one must first purchase a computer or device and pay for all the costs and fees associated with the product. Designating a service as essential opens up the issue of whether the product necessary to use it is also an essential good. Companies could still provide their site to Internet users at a slower and cheaper rate, just as drivers could forgo a toll to save a buck in exchange for a longer detour. Either way, both get to the same destination.

Though consumers may benefit from faster service, eliminating net neutrality is also something that would curtail innovation and inhibit new competition from startups that do not have the funds to partner with Internet providers. A new product or service could be deferred because the firm did not have the same access to the market as a larger firm.

Whoever is responsible for and best at enforcing it, net neutrality had this going for it: it is a relatively stable, relatively open playing-field for competition. As noted, the fact that companies tried to get around it via copyright protection privileges shows that it is, in fact, doing something to enforce freedom of competition. Now, without it, there is an opportunity for concentration of power, with regard to Netflix, for example. Concentration can lead to instability, and instability leads to popular calls for state regulation, which tend in practice toward cronyism. Certainly, such a trajectory is not inevitable, but it is now more likely, giving good reason for pause at the idea that we do not need net neutrality – or something like it – in the future.

The absence of net neutrality will likely impede this bastion of ideas. Open access to the free market, including the “ultimate marketplace of ideas,”

is indispensable to human flourishing, and without such economic liberty the creation of wealth for all members of society may be needlessly inhibited.

Muslims can stand on both sides of net neutrality. Some Muslims may fear that faith advocacy can be curtailed by leading Internet providers who request a fee from these advocacy groups to be able to travel on the fast track. On the other hand, some Muslims may oppose net neutrality due to the fact that regulations may hinder innovations in the future.

Apart from net neutrality, various issues with regard to the technological developments have been brought to light. Regardless of whether and if so, how technology has an impact on our work, families, or faith, what we need is technology with a heart—one that beats for us.