

## IN THE NEWS:

# Congressional Action on Internet Data & Privacy

### Overview:

- A set of internet privacy rules, put into motion by the Obama administration and passed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) last year but not yet in effect, was rolled back by Congress last week, and signed by President Trump this week.
- The rules would have limited the ability of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to collect, store, share, and sell user information to other companies without consumers' permission.
- Many of the largest digital media companies, like Facebook and Google, collect data on consumers, but ISPs, it is argued by those that support the Obama-era regulations, can collect data on all web use, not simply on select sites or applications.
- ISPs in the United States are also regionally dominant, which complicates matters further, as consumers often have few or no options on service, particularly in rural areas.
- Proponents of the rollback argue that the original regulation was confusing and expensive to implement and enforce.

### Required Reading:

- [What to Expect Now that Internet Providers Can Collect and Sell Your Browser History](#), Washington Post
- [House Votes to Block Obama-era Online Privacy Rule](#), Fox News
- [Trump Signs Bill Rolling Back FCC Privacy Rules for ISPs](#), Engadget
- [The House Just Voted to Wipe Away the FCC's Landmark Internet Privacy Protections](#), Washington Post
- [U.S. Consumers Lose Privacy Protections for Their Web Browsing History](#), The Guardian
- [House Passes Bill Undoing Obama Internet Privacy Rule](#), The Hill

### Questions for discussion:

- How do you decide what to prioritize when trying to balance privacy versus convenience?
- How does this issue highlight the challenges that come as presidential (and party) administrations transition?
- Who owns user information online? Who should own this type of data?
- How has the development and growth of the Internet challenged traditional rules and regulations of privacy in the U.S.?
- Do you know the respective roles of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) or the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) in the U.S. government?
- What is your day-to-day knowledge of internet privacy rules? How do you think these rules impact your life?