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[Will the Outcome of the Net Neutrality Debate Derail the Cloud Computing Train?](#)

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Cloud computing is changing the game on how business is conducted and how businesses operate much like the PC revolution. And the cloud computing trend is roaring forward. A new wave of cheap mobile devices will soon provide many more people with access to the Internet and mobile app market. Then there is the tablet wave that was introduced with the iPad. Indeed, Hewlett-Packard Co Chief Executive Leo Apotheker promised to boost earnings and dividends sharply in coming years as it pushes aggressively into the cloud computing space.

However, is Senator Al Franken correct when he told the crowd at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, TX that “the party may be over [for the Internet]”? Senator Franken accused big telecommunications corporations like Comcast of hoping to destroy the openness and freedom of the Internet by changing for the amount of bandwidth used by content providers. He said the Net Neutrality debate is “the First Amendment issue of our time.”

Bandwidth is not unlimited. If large content providers such as Netflix consume a lot of bandwidth, less is left for others to use, including the millions of people that use smart phones and tablets. This excessive use of bandwidth impacts the speed at which data is exchanged and can cause the servers that are processing the data to be overworked. The Net Neutrality debate concerns whether telecommunications companies like Comcast should be able to charge those big traffic generators that consume the most bandwidth.

Framing the Net Neutrality debate with the First Amendment is probably overreaching. We all have the fundamental right to free speech, but not the fundamental right to Internet access. Like a road, we all pay taxes to have access to it, why should the information super highway be any different. But regardless of how the Net Neutrality debate comes out, the cloud computing trend most likely will not be derailed. As consumers, if we have to, we’ll just learn to pay a little more for the benefits that cloud computing affords us.

