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ABSTRACT
In 2006, a major telecommunications bill failed because it did not include guarantees for something called “net neutrality.” Republicans strongly opposed including these guarantees, while Democrats strongly favored them. The debate over net neutrality continued during the long campaign leading up to the 2008 presidential election. When the Obama Administration took office in 2009, the new chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Julius Genachowski revived the idea of codifying net neutrality rules. In April 2010, the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia Circuit ruled against the FCC’s attempt to prevent Comcast from restricting certain types of file sharing applications on its network. The FCC adopted a new strategy because of the Court’s action. It opted not to undertake a major revision of the Telecommunication Act of 1996, but instead to attempt to regulate Internet service provision under modified “common carriage” rules just as basic telephone services had been previously. An attempt will be made here to explain these choices.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
Jeffrey Hart is professor of political science at Indiana University Bloomington and a member of the Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics Advisory Committee. He has conducted research in international politics, international political economy and the politics of high technology industries for more than 25 years. His professional career has focused on the politics of international economic competitiveness in advanced industrial nations, and, specifically, on the politics of software, hardware, and telecommunications. He has recently completed a project on globalization and published in 2004 by Cambridge University Press, a book on the politics of high definition television (HDTV) Technology, Television, and Competition: The Politics of Digital TV. For more information on his research and other interests, see http://php.indiana.edu/~hartj/.