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Internet Traffic Patterns: They Are A Changing

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Posted by [Neal Leavitt](#) on February 6th, 2011 at 10:17 pm



Thought I'd borrow some of the verbiage for the aforementioned headline from Bob Dylan's iconic third studio album, released in 1964.

Last fall I penned a story for IEEE *Computer* on how the increasing practice of networking peering is changing Internet traffic patterns.

A few key points/thoughts now as a number of these traffic patterns will significantly impact marketers this year:

Internet traffic has historically flowed through network service providers' backbone networks to large networks – this is all changing, primarily because of peering – when networks directly connect to each other instead of paying upstream providers to carry and route their traffic.

Some other contributing factors – huge Internet portals (known as hypergiants) that carry large amounts of traffic; the growth of cloud computing; social networking; and wireless Internet access. And there are additional issues too – the growth of online video; a rise in ad-supported Internet content and the proliferation of exchange points (connections through with Internet service providers communicate data directly with one another).

In addition, peer-to-peer (P2P) communications are becoming a smaller portion of overall Internet traffic.

Right now, 30 large companies, some of which include Facebook, Google and Microsoft, generate about 30 percent of all Internet traffic. A Network Box analysis reported that five companies have also used much of the Internet's bandwidth the past two years – YouTube (owned by Google), 10.2 percent; Facebook, 5 percent; Windows Update, 3.2 percent; Yahoo's image server, 2.9 percent; and Google, 2.5 percent.

Arbor Networks did a study that analyzed global Internet traffic data collected by 110 regional networks, content providers, cable operators, and international transit backbone networks between July 2007 and July 2009. A key finding: the top 150 content companies generated 26 percent of all Internet traffic in July 2007; that figure doubled to 52 percent two years later.

Mobile data usage is also becoming a factor – Cisco reports that this traffic has been doubling annually for the past five years, faster than any other type of Internet traffic. By 2014, it will represent about 7.4 percent of all Internet traffic. Smart phones, tablet computers, and laptops with mobile broadband access are driving the migration from fixed to mobile. And this proliferation of new devices increases the number of mobile connections and contributes to Internet traffic growth.

So where's it all heading in 2011?

We're seeing more direct traffic exchanges via peering and we're also experiencing an aggregation of traffic in certain areas. And overall, as more devices of different types access the Internet and different types of global networks, the networks will need greater intelligence to handle, provide security for, and prioritize traffic.

This challenge could be exacerbated in the years to come by an increase in machine-to-machine traffic.

As the Internet consolidates, will there still be room for innovation in underlying technology or will the Internet be controlled by a small handful of content sites?

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1. [Micha Benoliel](#) says:
[February 7, 2011 at 3:34 AM](#)

Imagine a new category of internet traffic emerging thanks to the new density of smartphones, the growing number of mobile broadband users and connected devices ?

Imagine a network of phone to phone, device to device, of you being the network.

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2. [Franklyn Galusha](#) says:
[February 7, 2011 at 2:35 PM](#)

To answer the question...

"As the Internet consolidates, will there still be room for innovation in underlying technology or will the Internet be controlled by a small handful of content sites?"

Over the years the question will the Internet be controlled By a handful of Content providers is really not the important question. The important question is will the Internet be controlled by a continuously smaller number of service providers without some sort of government oversight?

Every few years the question of charging by the amount of usage a particular user consumes while accessing the Internet continues to plague us.

As major service providers continue to try to influence lawmakers in Washington. To allow billing according to usage not access. We've already seen this inaction in the last few years when service providers tried to suggest to lawmakers they should be able to charge companies like Google, Facebook and others according to their usage.

This would have a serious chilling effect on innovation and features these companies would offer us the consumer in the future. I also fear it would embolden the service providers to believe they could eventually push these fees all the way down to the consumer.

I believe some service providers are not bringing on available bandwidth which is already in the ground. This Unused bandwidth is referred to by the industry as dark fiber. There's a significant amount of that dark fiber waiting to be Lit up. So, why isn't it being turned on an used?

Inquiring minds wanna know!
What do you think?

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