

FEBRUARY 2014

Panel bulletin

This month...

Panel and ACOD publish workplan for 2014/15

The Panel and ACOD have published their proposed workplan for 2014/15.

The proposed workplan explains the Panel and ACOD's role, describes the different ways in which we engage with issues, explains how we have chosen our proposed priorities for the coming year and sets out the areas that we propose to address. We are now seeking stakeholders' views on the issues that we have provisionally identified. A copy of the workplan can be found [here](#)

We look forward to receiving your comments - please send them to contact@communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk by 19th March 2014. Please state if you wish your response to remain confidential.

New research reveals premium rate service customers concerns

PhoneyPayPlus is calling for all sections of the premium rate telecoms industry to work together to improve consumers' experiences as they publish [new research](#) into customer service in the premium rate services industry (PRS).

The research's findings include:

Over a quarter (26%) of those who contact PhoneyPayPlus make seven or more contacts about their issue with organisations without resolution, and another 37% have made contact between three and six times.

On average, complainants to PhoneyPayPlus have been charged £32.14 by the PRS they complain about.

62% of PhoneyPayPlus complainants held the company behind the service responsible for their issue, a further 33% consider that their phone provider is responsible.

The number of unnecessary complaint journeys have reduced and become somewhat more straightforward since the previous research in 2009.

PhoneyPayPlus was rated highly for customer support and contact.

There were examples of good practice amongst the industry's own customer services.

A full copy of the research, *Understanding Consumer Journeys: Premium rate service and micropayment markets* [can be found on PhoneyPayPlus' website](#)

98.5% of television viewing watched on TV screen in 2013

In 2013, just 1.5% of television viewing was on other screens such as tablets, laptops and mobiles, according to the figures released by Thinkbox. Thinkbox is the marketing body for commercial TV in the UK, in all its forms - broadcast, on-demand and interactive.

The average viewer watched just over three hours, 55 minutes of TV a day during 2013. Of that figure, just three minutes, 30 seconds a day of live stream viewing was via PCs and mobile devices.

Details of the research can be found on the [thinkbox website](#)

Consumer activism on the rise?

People are more likely than ever to take action against companies they're not happy with, although millions still choose to 'grin and bear it' according to [new research from Ombudsman Services](#) (OS).

The OS first *Consumer Action Monitor* states that there were 38 million complaints about products and services last year - equating to a complaint every 1.2 seconds.

And it found that people are keener to take action when they have a problem, with nearly a third (32 per cent) saying they are more likely to complain about poor service now than they were a year ago.

The most common sectors for complaints were energy (17 per cent), retail (17 per cent) and internet telecoms (14 per cent).

Echoing the findings of the Panel's [Going Round in Circles?](#) research, the research also found that many who have a problem still take no action, with 40 million problems not pursued - partly down to the perception that complaining is 'not worth the hassle'.

These disgruntled customers deem the process of complaining to be potentially tiresome with time and effort identified as the main reasons holding them back.

A copy of the full report can be found on the [Ombudsman Services website](#)

Calling all text relay users

As there will be some changes to the text relay service from 18 April 2014, Ofcom wants to check if, and how, these changes deliver a better service. Therefore, Ofcom has commissioned Opinion Leader and Facts International to carry out research to find out about the experiences of text relay users both now and then again in 2014 when the new service is in place.

Ofcom therefore wants to talk to as many different users of text relay as possible before 17th March. The research team would like to hear from anyone who is 16 or over, and is willing to complete a short survey (either online or face to face with an interviewer) and diary task. There will be a £30 thank you payment upon completion of the diary. Communications support will be arranged, if you would like this.

If you would like to take part in the research please either register your interest at www.facts.uk.com/ofcomtextrelay or call one of the research team at Facts International on 01233 648492.

Please mention this research to anyone else you think may be interested, so they can take part too.

Digital Communications Infrastructure Strategy

In July 2013, the Department for Culture Media and Sport published Connectivity, Content and Consumers - Britain's digital platform for growth. This report recognised the role that digital infrastructure and connectivity has in delivering economic and social benefits. The report announced the intention to develop a digital communications infrastructure strategy to ensure that the UK has the right infrastructure in place to meet the needs of users in 2025-30 and ensure that the UK remains a leading digital nation.

The DCMS has now published the [terms of reference for the strategy](#) and is inviting views on the issues that it seeks to address. The Department is happy to hear from all users, consumer, business or public sector, with thoughts on the future demand for connectivity, the drivers for that demand, how this demand can be met and who needs to do what to ensure our infrastructure is capable of meeting user demand over the next 10-15 years.

These contributions will be used to inform an interim report, which DCMS aims to publish in July 2014, that will be the subject of further consultation. The finalised strategy is due in December 2014.

Views should be provided by 28 March 2014

Volunteers and organisations urged to help others 'spring online'

Volunteers and organisations are being urged to get involved with this year's Spring Online campaign to help more people to get online and improve their digital skills.

Spring Online is Digital Unite's award-winning digital inclusion initiative that makes it possible for thousands of people, often older people, to try out using computers, tablets and the internet.

During one week (31 March - 4 April 2014) thousands of free Spring Online taster events and sessions are held across the UK to help and inspire local people achieve a lasting use of the internet.

Currently around 7 million people have never used the internet and 6 million of those are aged over 55 years*. Many more can't do basic online tasks like sending emails or searching the web.

Digital Unite supports all event holders with downloadable posters, leaflets and certificates, activity ideas to do with learners and friendly advice and guidance.

So whether you have access to one computer or tablet or a whole room full of them, Spring Online is an ideal opportunity to help more people make the internet part of their everyday lives.

Visit www.digitalunite.com/spring-online for more information on how to get involved.

A quarter of EU travellers switch off to avoid roaming charges

A poll of 28,000 EU citizens, carried out by the European Commission, has revealed that more than a quarter of Europeans switch their phones off for the duration of an overseas trip to avoid high roaming charges. The poll also found that 28 per cent will turn their mobiles off as soon as they touch down.

Other findings suggest that the vast majority will dramatically limit their mobile use when travelling to another EU country. Just six per cent said they check social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter as frequently as when they are at home, one in 10 will check emails in the same way, and 47 per cent will refrain from browsing the internet. Only 20 per cent will send text messages as often as they do at home, while a quarter will stop sending them altogether, and three in ten will not make any phone calls when overseas.

Further details on the research can be found [here](#)

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