Title:

Mr

Forename:

Anand

Surname:

Kumia

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Question 1.1: What are the implications of market change for mobile and wireless services?:

You would imagine that the market competitiveness amongst the big 5 physical mobile companies that the price of data would be decreasing.

However if you compare the costs of an SMS (160 bytes) the price has been relatively constant. Furthermore if you examine the cost of termination, you can see that it now more expensive to call someone across the City of London than any city in India (both on their mobiles).

Question 1.2: How are citizens and consumers affected by developments in the mobile sector?:

Most consumers are negatively affected by mobile phone operators retaining the profit available to them by their ability to terminate using Voice over IP (VoIP) technology.

This technology is being routinely disabled by operators, on handsets, and they are also charging third-parties extremely high rates to terminate calls to one of the customers.

This means that citizens are resorting to using VoIP technology on their phones -- having to convince, teach others to use different means to achieve the same end-result: talking.

Question 1.3: What are the purposes of mobile regulation, and where should its focus lie?:

No one begrudges the profit any company -- what they do begrudge is the fact that the costs are, obviously, decreasing but there is little benefit being passed onto them.

Whether that be in decreasing contract length, decreasing data costs (SMS is data), reduced call termination rates for 3rd parties -- making increased communication more common, increased minutes and data (SMS is data) for reduced charges.

The focus should be ensuring that comparison between plans (pay-as-you-go and pay monthly) should be very easy.

For example in supermarkets products are often in 454g but there is also a comparison cost in 100g.

Regulation should ensure that every plan has the cost of data: since voice calls, SMS and data are the same (everything is digital) it will consumers to easily compare amongst plans and payment modes.

Question 1.4: What is the scope for deregulation, competition and innovation in the mobile sector?:

Unfortuately, having previously worked at a start-up mobile phone company, becoming a new entrant is excessively difficult.

Some sampling of the difficulties are:

- obtaining numbers from OfCom
- having those number be routed across operators
-- voice calls

-- SMS as well
- increasing wholesale costs

Question 3.1: What do you think are the features of a well-functioning mobile market? What evidence do you see that those features are present in the UK market?:

Decreasing wholesale costs to 3rd parties (no evidence of this); increasing value of mobile phones (partial evidence of this); easier ability to compare amongst providers (no evidence of this -- compare to comparison shopping at supermarkets); easier to move between providers (my last mobile portability attempt was 4 days in length; in Australia the maximum is allowed time is 4 hours) -- I believe OfCom has had to step in; a well functioning market would have providers to transfer customers as fast as possible.

There is really no need that every operator needs to build physical infrastructure everywhere -- there should be 3rd parties, in a well functioning market who 'rent out' their physical infrastructure.

Question 3.2: What measures are most appropriate to assess whether the mobile sector is performing well for citizens and consumers?:

- ease of comparison between plans and payment modes
- frequent reports highlighting the *WORST* operator
-- most complaints
-- worst value
-- most cumbersome to deal with (as voted by their peers)

Question 3.3: How will market dynamics change as a result of trends such as availability of new spectrum, mobile broadband and new ways of delivering voice services?:

It should become cheaper for new entrants to establish physical infrastructure. The majority of call traffic is now (internally) done by Voice over IP -- this should be decreasing the costs -- it will means that existing operators will need to decide to:
a. build / rely on their brand
b. become a commodity (but a highly reliable one)

Question 4.1: What is your experience, as an individual consumer or an organisation that uses mobile services?:

There is very little incentive for a phone operator to provide easy to compare plans.

The more difficult it is, with more choice, the less likely any one customer is to migrate.

It is scary to think that it costs me more to call next door than across the world. In both cases the same 'airtime spectrum' is in use, how can it be cheaper to call Australia / minute than anywhere in the UK?

Question 4.2: How should regulators and policy-makers respond to signs of rising consumer concern? :

- make it easy to compare value of plans
- impose strict timetables on compliance that are very tight so that the value to consumers is immediately available

Question 4.3: What are the important factors to consider in striking a balance between protecting mobile consumers and enabling markets to work flexibly? Have we got this balance right in today?s mobile market?:

The balance is not right. The market is allowed to split data into three (currently) four types: voice calls, video calls, SMS and data.

This is like a water company splitting the service they supply into 'hot water' and 'cold water' -- it is all water at the end of the day.

For a phone company, it is all data.

Question 5.1: How does the use of mobile services affect our participation as citizens in society?:

The more expensive it is to use data; the less likely people are to use it. More and more government services -- and ancillory service likes position / maps -- are extremely useful with a data enabled service.

Question 5.2: What factors should we take into account in thinking about access and inclusion issues in mobile markets?:

Question 5.3: What factors should we take into account in thinking about new services, and how those services may affect issues like protection of children, privacy and security?:

Question 5.4: Have you been affected by issues about coverage or 'not spots?? How has it affected you?:

Question 7.1: What do you see as the most influential trends and features of mobile and wireless markets in future?:

phone operators, will decide to either become big 'wireless ISPs' or huge brands. Data is the biggest thing -- it will likely dominate the traffic of all phone operators within 2 years.

Just as voice is now a fraction of all landline traffic.

Question 7.2: What new policy and regulatory challenges could the trends identified in this section bring? Which policy and regulatory challenges could they address?:

by pricing in terms of data, rather than 'voice', 'video' and 'sms' it makes comparison easier

Question 8.1: Should Ofcom do more to promote competition in mobile and wireless markets?:

It should look into termination rates operators charge each other and how to enable all customers (wholesale and retail) to easily see how much they

Question 8.2: Ofcom's strategy in telecommunications is to promote competition at the deepest level of infrastructure that is effective and sustainable. How might this strategy be applied, given future developments in the mobile sector? Under what circumstances, if ever, would it make sense to consider access regulation for mobile platforms?:

Question 8.3: What role can competition play in ensuring that future development of the mobile internet provides an open and flexible environment for a wide range of services? Should Ofcom explore open access requirements to ensure opportunities for innovation? What role might 'net neutrality? play in the mobile sector?:

Yes, open access should be a requirement.

No 'walled' / 'captured' garden on the wireless internet.

Net neutrality should be a fundamental part of the policy as it is at an architectural level.

Question 8.4: What role might competition play in addressing questions about transparency of prices, services and contractual conditions

offered to consumers of mobile and wireless services? What role should regulation play in addressing these questions?:

have comparison between plans made easier to explaining everything in terms of data.

Question 8.5: What is the best way to promote content standards and ensure privacy protection for increasingly complex content and transaction services? How will privacy issues fare in a world where services are more personal and more complex?:

Question 8.6: Will the mobile termination rate regime need to evolve or change more fundamentally? What is the best approach to adopt?:

It needs to evolve -- big ISPs charge each other for termination.

They also split themselves into two camps: those who provide transit and those who provide access.

I, as a customer pay those who provide access -- there appears to be no mobile equivalent to those who provide transit.

Question 8.7: If competition does not reduce international roaming charges sufficiently, how should regulators respond, if at all?:

Question 8.8: How might universal service and universal access need to adapt in a world where we increasingly rely on mobile services? What role might mobile play in universal access delivery in future?:

- minimum amounts of data that can be sent need to be specified so that equal access is possible for all.

However data requirements change very quickly (youtube, maps, etc.) -- so it would need to be reviewed every 6 - 9 months.

Question 8.9: Can markets and commercial agreements address issues such as ?not spots? and emergency access?If not, what role might be played by a regulator to address these issues?:

charge a universal service obligation fee if an operator can not provide a reason that the market has solved the issued.

Question 8.10: How might access for particular groups (such as the elderly and disabled users) need to evolve in future? What role can competition play in addressing these questions?:

Question 8.11: Do you have any comments regarding our proposed way forward and the objectives of the next phase of this Assessment?:

Additional comments: