

**Title:**

Mr

**Forename:**

Mark

**Surname:**

Stephenson

**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?:**

An increase in availability, and therefore uptake, of mobile technology by consumers and businesses. With this, hopefully, a positive effect on the economy, too.

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

Modern developments in mobile devices allow businesses to propogate around the country from virtually anywhere; this allows consumers access to whatever kind of

product of service they want, when they need it most. With the increased use of mobile devices, costs should hopefully be lowered, too, allowing even further use of the technology.

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

Not being a business owner, I can only speculate that regulation might be needed to stop giant monopolies overtaking smaller, independent businesses in price wars, etc. The focus should lie on ensuring that companies deliver exactly what they promised - there's simply too much small print in the communications industry these days (for example, the "unlimited" broadband packages with fair usage policies).

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

The scope is extremely high. Technological innovation should be encouraged, however in doing so, a great flood of new technology will surely surge into the market. An important aspect to consider is the public's part in assisting this development; e.g. open source software development programs should be made available for internet communities who want to change the mobile world.

**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?:**

A well functioning market would have a steady flow of new technology, however not so rapid that phones become outdated immediately after going on sale. Today's market - where phones released one or two years ago are still enjoying popularity - is a good indicator already.

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

Short, accessible surveys, whether online or off, would provide every end user with a chance to voice their concerns. This would also be a relatively low-cost way of getting feedback.

**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?:**

Personally, I do not foresee the emergence of any new major carriers. The handful of phone brands which consumers use today are likely to stay prevalent. With mobile broadband, I can only reiterate the importance of allowing internet technologies to merge with mobile ones. Development of useful and practical applications for phones is going to be a huge boon to the phone industry, as evidenced by emerging

technologies such as the iPhone's "apps" platform and the upcoming Google phone, whose software is largely open source and community based.

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

I have used a mobile phone personally for around 10 years and am familiar in writing software and web content which could be ported to phones with relative ease. I am by no means an industry experienced expert!

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

The most important thing to do is allow consumers a voice. This survey itself is an attempt to do so, however most will be put off by its length and complexity. Only short, concise forms which take seconds or minutes to complete will suffice for receiving most consumer feedback.

**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?:**

To a large degree, the balance is good today. As mentioned, phone technology is improving but at a good rate which will not leave consumers feeling isolated after their purchase.

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

In some ways, it improves it - mobile services bring people together in social networks, etc. and allow them to communicate and reach each other much more easily. However, there is growing concern about people becoming isolated from the "real world" - for example, children who are illiterate but are perfectly fluent in "txt" language, or people who rely on their devices so much that it actually causes them physical stress to be without them.

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

Mobile devices, generally being small and compact, have gained notoriety among the elderly who cannot easily operate them due to their size and foreign interfaces. Granted, the majority of consumers are young, however surely mobile devices could be of great benefit to older people to ensure their safety and security, etc. Therefore, focus might be put on developing devices and software targeted at the elderly or vulnerable.

**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?:**

Privacy and security are of the utmost concern in today's litigious world. With the propagation of social sites such as YouTube, etc. consumers are much more aware of the flaws in their mobile devices which might allow their sensitive information to be discovered and put to nefarious purposes. Improving software security is important, but so is reassuring consumers.

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

Outside, there is no problem with coverage in Scotland. However, inside every single supermarket I enter, I receive no signal at all. This is probably due to the building materials of supermarkets, but it is frustrating nonetheless.

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

As mentioned, a great increase in technology ported from the internet, and hopefully an increased focus on open source ventures.

**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?:**

N/A

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

The mobile industry is already rife with competing companies and prices are relatively low. I do not see the need for further increases.

**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?:**

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

**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?:**

N/A

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

N/A

**Additional comments:**

One concern of mine which prevents me from fully using my mobile phone, and indeed prevents me from wanting to contact others on mobile devices, is a small but particular issue which I feel is unjust in today's market. I am unsure if this is relevant to this survey, however I will voice my concern anyway. If I phone someone's mobile phone, either from my own mobile or from a house phone, and that person's phone is either switched off or goes unanswered, I am immediately charged a large connection fee (in BT's case, this is 13p) for simply "being connected" to that phone, even if I don't leave a message. This means that if I phone a mobile, discover that it's switched off, and immediately hang up after even 1 second of "connection" time, I am still charged a relatively large cost simply to discover that I can't talk to the person! This is a massive discouragement for me, and makes me very careful about calling mobile phones as I rarely wish to leave a message on someone's answering machine. This is an issue I would like to see addressed, with one solution being, perhaps, to charge the caller only if they leave a message and don't simply hang up immediately.