

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Steven

Surname:

Suckling

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?:

Not applicable

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?:

As a consumer of a range of mobile and wireless services the provision of joined up price plans that cover all mobile and communication needs. For example, BT landline and broadband, BT vision and BT web phone are all separately billed and then a separate mobile provider adds a fourth dimension.

Joined up customer service delivery should be a requirement of providers, for example, I have an O2 pay monthly phone that when I signed up for did not realise it

was provided by Carphone Warehouse and has a different level of service and support to O2!

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

Equity of access for all users.

(a) The more you spend on mobile services the more benefits you accrue and are offered on most pay monthly tariffs. For those where a mobile is an essential service but with low usage call charges need to be fair and reasonable.

(b) Signal access and call quality outside of urban areas

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

To:

- ensure there is effective competition and consumer choice
- enable market innovation to challenge the status quo
- help consumers understand/be mobile 'literate' in a rapidly developing market
- ensure providers networks provide the coverage and signal strength for services to be provided across the UK as much as possible, particularly with mobile/wireless broadband

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

The current balance between these from a consumer perspective feels about right.

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?:

Cost of services seems to be stable or even lowering over time suggesting strong competition for customers and providing value for money.

From time to time new players enter the market, eg three.

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

Choice, cost and quality of service.

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?:

Potentially less choice through consolidation in providers, perhaps the role of the regulator should be similar to that concerning supermarkets that only so much dominance be tolerated by any one provider.

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

Mobile service reliable and fit for purpose. Pay monthly customer and price plans 'do my head in'. As a consumer I feel I need to be active in the market and with my provider and do not have the time to and therefore end up paying more!

One restrictive practices that concerned me was the purchase of a Sony mobile enabled laptop where the service provider was T-Mobile and the tariff £40 per month non-negotiable and no other provider choice. I did not take the T-Mobile offer up and changed my mobile provider from T-Mobile to O2 in protest.

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

Put an onus on mobile service providers to inform customers when a revised/better value price plan comes out - they have access to them by text/email!

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?:

As previous responses - about right. As the market broadens, eg mobile wireless broadband, and wireless services become even more pervasive, the role of the regulator needs to be maintained to ensure restrictive practices are challenged.

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

Access to communication/information is becoming a pretty basic requirement in the 21st century UK. Adoption by young people generates adoption by older generations to enable effective communications across family, friends and work or other colleagues.

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

You should where a mobile service is essential or where network coverage or quality of service is poor or dominated by one supplier.

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?:

The services should operate within the framework of the law which cover these areas. If the law is insufficient then it should be strengthened, voluntary codes of practice in these areas are insufficient.

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

Very rarely, so no.

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

The pace of change and permeability of wireless services can only grow. The most likely near term changes are in web hosted services accessed by portable 'laptop' style devices with little onboard memory and programs and data held away from the device. This is a big regulatory challenge as citizens we will have access to an array of services 24/7 and geographically non-dependent but very little control of our own data!

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?:

Consumer trust and confidence that the provision of a zillion new online services and places that hold our data are regulated and that breaches in that trust are severely dealt with - ie provided under licence and the licence can be revoked by the regulator. An example here is the recent e-Bay discover of the server with xMillion customers data and credit card details on.

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

Generally no, but assure that there is competition.

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?:

Unfortunately I do not understand this question so can't respond. :-)

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?:

Unfortunately I do not understand this question so can't respond. :-)

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?:

Price comparison should be as consistent and easy as food labelling. A standard across all providers and then consumer education more likely to be effective.

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?:

Probably badly as privacy does not seem to be taken seriously. Intervention in this area is the only way to ensure consumer confidence. This could be through requiring providers to have security reports that are published by third parties with naming and shaming and for serious breaches licence revocation - for the future this will be very serious stuff.

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

To assure competition and the potential for new entrants I assume so - again I am not 100% sure I understand the question.

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

On this question, it's a disgrace and I would fully support draconian EU law and heavy sanctions against providers who blatantly rip off consumers and businesses. This is a cheap shot they have been able to milk for profit for too many years. If their costs in providing the service are this high then they should explain to the consumer how the price is reached.

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?:

As previous responses I think.

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?:

The regulator makes a requirement on providers through their/a licence to operate.

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?:

As 8.9 if we are to be a fair and just society.

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

No.

Additional comments:

Quite a difficult and long survey to complete. Suggest you tell people at the start that it will take about half an hour.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.