

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Bradley

Surname:

Wood

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?:

Convergence of voice, data, text and mms services.

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

Considerably, as mobile voice, and increasingly mobile data services become more and more prevalent, especially for business use.

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

Its focus should lie primarily with Network providers, and to a lesser extent with handset/device manufacturers. The latter should ensure their products are as open as possible, and the form should be seriously regulated in respect of ripping off customers, especially in the area of mobile data, where serious abuses are currently taking place.

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

None at this time.

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?:

Voice and Data services charged as a function of their cost, rather than via the pricing models that currently exist. Using Skype on a handset, for example, or MSN or blackberry chat in stead of SMS should not be something that is limited, constrained or discouraged by the network operator in an attempt to protect SMS revenues. In fact, it should be encouraged as a cost saver for customers.

Customers should also be informed that there is not necessarily the need to have a GSM phone AND a separate GPRS (3G) modem, when most modern smartphones can fulfil both functions in the same handset.

Both these problems exist in the current UK market.

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

Are operators relying on customers ignorance in order to sell them more than they need? This should be measured by surveying usage compared to features of products? How many people have been locked into a contract for a 3G modem, only to subsequently realise their smartphone provides _identical_ features to the modem over and above its standard voice features?

How many blackberry users know they can use blackberry chat over 3g at a MUCH lower data price, with much higher features, compared to SMS?

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?:

Hopefully for the better. Skype and other VoIP services should become more common place on handsets. wi-fi-to-3g modems built into handsets should become

commonplace, rather than having separate devices, with separate contracts which lock customers in.

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

Not very good -- roaming charges are still bad, especially for data services. Ofcom should definitely revisit regulations here, in respect of data charges while roaming.

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

By strengthening the regulatory framework, fining recalcitrant operators, educating consumers, and providing an easier way for consumers to report dodgy operator activities. My operators call centre agents (Virgin and Vodafone) do not even know what an Alternative Dispute Resolution service is. They should be regularly checked by ofcom, and fined if their staff cannot provide assistance in this regard.

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?:

No. The balance is in the favour of operators at the moment - they are profiteering on SMS traffic and data, where there are other more cost effective ways of delivering these, or similar services.

It smacks of price-fixing and relying on consumer ignorance to make money. There is insufficient competition in the mobile operator industry in the UK and as a consequence, consumers are paying the cost.

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

It is an integral part of our society today. I don't even bother with a land-line any more (although, sadly, I am forced to have a BT land-line, which I never use, just to get ADSL broadband from another internet provider -- LLU may not have been enough... but I digress).

Mobiles are needed for business people, mums, teenagers and most other people -- they will only get more pervasive.

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

Make it easier for more operators to compete -- insist that all operators provide blind and deaf friendly devices on their networks (or encourage competition in this regard). Take these to the EU after we've done them in the UK. Also consider encouraging

networks to provide throw-away handsets, and much cheaper, no-frills, just-let-me-make-a-call handsets that are suitable for older people who are not as tech-savvy as the younger generation -- these are available already.

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?:

GSM tracking exists at the moment (faux-GPS), and is big business in Germany -- this is good for minding where your kids are (you track them on a website with map).

Regulation should exist to provide this tracking for occurring without the handset owners knowledge.

Quite a tricky area, but one that is worthy of thought.

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

Not very much, as a Londoner.

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

Convergence of voice and data not only from a handset perspective, but from a usage perspective. I see everything all going over data in the future, as this would effectively make the network more of a utility, and afford consumers choice of which voice provider (ie VOIP) software they can use (eg, skype). This should provide further opportunity for markets to develop and competition to thrive. This is analogous to how I use my PC to call my mum over the internet rather than using a land-line -- the same kind of thing should be possible via a mobile network.

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?:

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

yes - more operators are needed, more handset vendors with more accessible handsets (including throw-away ones, etc).

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?:

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?:

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?:

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

with fines.

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?:

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?:

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?:

yes -- no-frills phones, phones with big keys/screens/numbers, etc.

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: