



## *e-newsletter* December 2009



### Seasons greetings from the Communications Consumer Panel

#### Latest news...

#### **Delivering digital inclusion**

Speaking at the Inside Government conference on delivering digital inclusion Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley welcomed the Government's plans to provide an extra £30 million for UK online centres and outlined what else needs to be done to promote digital inclusion: "We need to do more to support those already online, and provide the motivation for people to want to get online." She went on to say that the stakes for delivering digital inclusion are high and getting higher as more vital services are provided solely online: "However, the opportunities are there to be grasped. We have a new Champion for Digital Inclusion, a Digital Participation Consortium, and a government commitment to deliver broadband to everyone at an adequate minimum speed, at least for now. If we can make sure the needs and perspective of citizens and consumers are at the heart of all of this activity then I believe we stand a real chance of delivering digital inclusion in the UK."

Read Anna's full speech on the website:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/digital-participation/delivering-digital-inclusion>

## Ofcom's year ahead

It's that time again when Ofcom sets out its stall for the year ahead, and the Consumer Panel identifies the key consumer priorities that the regulator should focus on. Writing to Ofcom Chair Colette Bowe, the Panel pressed home the need for Ofcom to push for improvements in the way that communications providers handle complaints, develop a system to make switching communications services simpler and more consumer-friendly, explore how mobile coverage can be improved and take a strategic view of the value and use of information in consumer decision-making. The dialogue continues, and Colette Bowe has committed Ofcom to play its part to secure positive outcomes for consumers. The Panel is pleased to see that the regulator's intended priorities for 2010/11 include supporting the Digital Participation Consortium, making progress on mobile and broadband not-spots, improving switching procedures and implementing the regulatory framework for super-fast broadband.

You can find copies of the Consumer Panel letter about Ofcom priorities for 2010/11, and Colette Bowe's response at:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/ofcoms-work-priorities-and-plans/annual-plan>

## Following up on Digital Britain in Scotland

The report of the Communications Consumer Panel and Consumer Focus Scotland seminar discussion on how the recommendations in Digital Britain will be implemented in Scotland is available now on our website:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/digital-inclusion/digital-scotland>

## Digital participation cross-party group for Scotland

Consumer Panel member for Scotland, Fiona Ballantyne, reports that a new Digital Participation Cross Party Group has just been launched in the Scottish Parliament. The new group of MSPs (members of the Scottish Parliament) will meet outside organisations and members of the public to talk about how Scotland can maximise the social and economic benefits derived from the development of digital technologies. See the Scottish Parliament website for further information:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/MSP/crossPartyGroups/DigitalParticipation.htm>

## Deutsche Telekom-France Telecom merger of UK operations

The Consumer Panel has written to the European Commission to lay out its concerns over the proposed merger of T-Mobile and Orange. In a joint letter with Consumer Focus, the Panel made clear its desire to see a detailed review of the proposal and its preference for a referral to the relevant UK authorities. The Panel is aware that the merger may have both positive and negative impacts on consumers but emphasises that these effects cannot be known without full analysis. Read the full submission here:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/telecommunications/mobile-markets>

## Don't forget the Panel blog

Read what the Panel members are saying and doing by going to our home page and click on the Blog link at:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog>

## Are you on our mailing list?

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[www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk)