

June 2010

COMMUNICATIONS
CONSUMER
PANEL



Panel newsletter

Latest news...

Just telling people the benefits of the internet won't get them online - ask them what they need first

Motivation is key to getting people online, so to tackle social inclusion by getting consumers connected we have to start with their views and experiences, Panel Chair Anna Bradley told delegates at the Inside Government *Tackling Social Exclusion Through Technology: Delivering Digital Inclusion* conference this week. She challenged the audience to think about adopting the approach taken by the Panel in the development of the Consumer Framework for digital participation: "If we don't understand the issues from where consumers sit we'll never be able to provide the right help and support to get them online." She said that it is not yet known what position the new government will take on putting public services online. She warned that it is really important to recognise that some people are never going to go online and suitable offline alternatives need to be in place.

For a copy of Anna Bradley's presentation to the Inside Government conference go to

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

A copy of *The journey to digital participation* can be downloaded from our website at:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/FINAL%20DP%20RESEARCH%20REPORT%202.pdf>

NGA not reaching parts of the south west

Panel member Roger Darlington, recently chaired a workshop on "Partnership Building in next generation access (NGA) in the South West. This was the first in a new series of conferences on NGA organised by the Independent Networks Cooperative Association (INCA). Around 20% of the region does not meet the universal broadband commitment of 2 Mbit/s. The conference supported local initiatives to take NGA to parts of the country where the market will not deliver. But there was concern about the lack of clarity from the new government over public funding for 'final third' projects. An important question when it is likely that most of the region will fall into the 'final third'.

To read Roger's blog in full about the NGA south west meeting go to:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog-post/78>

In short ..

Watch this space...

Mid-July will see the launch of the long-awaited mystery shopping exercise into what information customers are given about how to cancel their contracts if they get poor or no mobile coverage.

Panel meetings...

To read minutes from previous meetings go to: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/agenda-and-minutes/2010>

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Digital Scotland

Panel member for Scotland Fiona Ballantyne is part of a new group taking forward issues about how Digital Britain could impact Scotland. The group says that Digital Britain raises issues that could have a significant impact on the country. It is putting forward a collective and consistent view to the UK Government as it develops its new broadband policies at UK level and submitted a *Scottish Position Paper* to the Westminster Government. Some of the issues the group have commented on are:

- Clarity on what is meant by ‘universality’ and when broadband universal service will be delivered.
- Broadband Delivery UK must be proactive in identifying the parts of the UK which do not currently achieve 2 Mbps and suggests a requirement for accurate mapping of the Scottish telecoms infrastructure.
- Making Scottish locations part of the USC and NGA technology pilots would provide challenging pilot locations for BDUK.
- The group believes that BDUK must have a “future-proof” mindset - and that the USC should be delivered by NGA technologies wherever possible, and can keep pace with consumer demands.
- BDUK/UK Government must consider the need to improve digital skills to drive take-up; including at grassroots and school level.
- 100% coverage for NGA should be aspired to. But, if it remains at 90% it must mean 90% of Scotland otherwise it would have little benefit for rural Scotland.

To read Fiona’s blog in full about the steering group meeting go to:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog-post/75>

BT Basic passes 600K

The Panel has been tracking the take-up of BT Basic, the scheme for people on benefits such as income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance. BT agreed with Ofcom to close their other two schemes when BT Basic reached 600,000 customers. This limit has just been reached and In Contact Plus (ICP) has been closed, and the Light User Scheme (LUS) will follow once the last few customers have moved over to BT Basic. “So it’s taken four years but at last there is a single, new, more targeted low user scheme in operation,” Panel member Roger Darlington writes.

To read Roger’s blog in full go to:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog-post/77>

From the future of TV technology to the digital dividend: the June Panel meeting

This month’s meeting took in a breadth of communications issues:

- **Looking into the future:** Members considered a presentation on how television technology is changing and how this could impact on consumers.
- **Spectrum:** Ofcom plans to employ technical solutions to address the majority of coverage gaps in order to mitigate disruption to consumers following its decision to clear the 800MHz spectrum for EU-wide mobile broadband use. Members advised Ofcom to ensure that MPs are told if the plan impacts on their constituencies and ensure Digital UK identifies consumers who will not be helped by the currently available help, i.e. consumers with limited sight and without internet access.
- **Non-geographical calls:** Some consumers pay higher costs for calls to non-geographic numbers, such as 0800 and 0845, if they call on their mobile. The Panel advised Ofcom on its aim to restructure the existing regulations to meet the needs of consumers and ensure a functioning market for services provided on non-geographic calls. There is confusion about how much the calls cost and consumers need greater clarity, the Panel says.

Don’t forget the Panel blog...

Read about the latest news from Panel members by going to our home page and click on the blog at:

www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog