

May 2011

COMMUNICATIONS
CONSUMER
PANEL



Panel newsletter

In short...

Have you submitted your views yet on the Panel's draft workplan 2011/1012?...

The Panel has published its proposed workplan for 2011/12, and is asking stakeholders for their views on the issues that it has provisionally identified. The consultation closes on 3 June 2011, after which the Panel will report back with the final plan. If you haven't already submitted your response, please do take time to read the workplan and give us your views on our priorities for the coming year.

Read more at: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/about-us/panel-work-programme>

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Copyright review...

Professor Ian Hargreaves has just published his review of intellectual property. *Digital opportunity* makes 10 recommendations designed to support innovation in the digital age that include: simplifying copyright licensing; and making it legal for consumers to copy CDs to their MP3 players. Read the review at: <http://www.ipso.gov.uk/ipreview.htm>

Don't forget to look out for...

The Panel will publish its annual report for 2010/2011 during June, so check the website for the latest information.

www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

Panel meetings...

To read minutes from previous meetings go to:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/angenda-and-minutes/2011>

Unsubscribe...

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Latest news...

Do you know what you're signing up to online? The Consumer Panel calls on companies to make the small print clearer

The Panel's latest research *Online personal data: the consumer perspective* has found that people are most concerned about sharing financial information such as credit/debit card details, information from social networking profiles and their mobile numbers - but just 50% of the people we surveyed said they regularly read companies' privacy policies. The Panel is asking companies to make it clear to consumers if they share data with third parties, and improve awareness so that people can make an informed choice about what to reveal online.

Panel Chair Bob Warner said: "The Panel's research will also act as a benchmark to facilitate future

studies looking at the extent to which legislative developments, industry initiatives and tools have actually empowered consumers. We are organising a roundtable discussion early in the summer with the International Institute of Communications to take the issue forward.”

To read the full report go to:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/research/online-personal-data>

Surfing improves quality of life

“New research from Digital Unite shows that access to computers and the web has been shown to improve the lives of older people,” Chair of the Communications Consumer Panel Bob Warner said, adding: “Silver Surfers’ Day is a great opportunity to encourage older people who aren’t online to take that first step and get a taste of the many benefits it can bring to their lives.” He said that digital participation could bring many social and economic advantages.

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/20%20May%2011%20Silver%20surfers%20final.pdf>

The future of communications

Culture, Media and Sports Minister Jeremy Hunt has just published an open letter inviting evidence to the Government’s review of the UK communications sector. This scoping process on how the UK communications world could look is inviting responses until June 30. The plan is that this will inform the development of a Green Paper, followed by a long consultation that leading to a White Paper and a draft bill by April 2013.

http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/news_stories/8121.aspx

Spectrum auction could bring big social and economic benefits to rural communities

Commenting on a debate on rural broadband in the House of Commons, Consumer Panel Chair Bob Warner said that Government should use the Spectrum Auction and relicensing to deliver fast access broadband to rural areas. He said that this would be a very practical approach for consumers and small businesses: “The auction should not just simply maximise income for the exchequer; it should be used to bring real social and economic benefits to people and communities, who have poor or no mobile coverage at present.”

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/Spectrum%20auction%20final.pdf>

Some still faced with non-existent mobile broadband coverage

The Consumer Panel welcomed the publication of Ofcom’s report *Measuring mobile broadband in the UK* as a useful guide for consumers and small businesses considering buying mobile broadband. However, Panel Chair Bob Warner warned that people still needed mobile coverage to access a mobile broadband connection, adding: “Too many people still have poor or non-existent mobile coverage for voice calls and text.”

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/Mob%20bb%20comment%20final.pdf>

May Panel meeting

This month’s Panel meeting included:

- The Panel invited Ofcom to update Panel members on mobile coverage.
- The Panel plans to respond to the spectrum auction consultation.
- There were also discussions about the Panel’s work on consumer advocacy, the future workplan, and the launch of the Panel’s latest research into online personal data.