

NOVEMBER BULLETIN

University of Hertfordshire honours Panel Chair

The Panel is delighted to announce that the University of Hertfordshire has awarded Jo Connell OBE DL, an honorary doctor of letters in recognition of her outstanding record of public service in Hertfordshire, in particular for her contribution to charity and longstanding relationship with the University.

'Future of Subtitling' Conference

Panel members Mairi Macleod and Bob Twitchin attended this event, organised by Action on Hearing Loss (AoHL), the UK Council on Deafness (UKCoD) and Sense, where a broad range of participants represented subtitle users, organisations for the deaf, access service providers and broadcasters.

The two main topics of debate were subjects that the Communications Consumer Panel has been following closely in recent months - the quality of live broadcast subtitles and subtitling on video on demand services (and specifically how to increase the amount of VoD subtitles). More details can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

New research reveals children hanging up on the phone

New research published by Ofcom reveals children's engagement with communication activities is markedly different to that of adults.

Ofcom's [Children's Digital Day research](#) shows that children are using social media and instant messaging to communicate with friends rather than using the phone - in sharp contrast to adults.

Adults are more than three times more likely than 11-15 year olds to talk on the phone each week (83% versus 25%) and spend six times longer talking on the phone (29 minutes a day versus 5 minutes).

Communications via a social media network are twice as popular amongst 11-15 year olds than making a phone call (47% versus 25%) and five times more use instant messaging than email each week (40% versus 8%).

A [press release](#) providing an overview can be found on Ofcom's website.

Government consults on poor mobile coverage

As part of its long-term economic plan, the government has set out plans to eliminate the poor mobile coverage that affects a fifth of the UK.

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid said that mobile users in many parts of the UK regularly suffer from a poor signal leaving them unable to make calls or send texts.

These areas - so called 'partial not-spots' - have coverage from some but not all of the 4 mobile networks (EE, O2, Three and Vodafone). Depending on the network consumers are on, they therefore may have no coverage.

The Culture Secretary says he is determined to improve coverage from all 4 networks in these areas and therefore launched a consultation which ran until 26 November on the various proposals that could help achieve this.

Talks have been held with the mobile companies in recent months in an attempt to find a voluntary solution and this work by the industry was expected to continue while the consultation ran.

Ofcom issues statement on its decision to make the 700 MHz band available for mobile data

Ofcom has announced its decision to make the 700 MHz transmission band currently used for the digital terrestrial television (DTT) platform available for mobile broadband services. The regulator says that demand for mobile data could be 45 times higher by 2030 than it is today.

Read further details here.

Ofcom publishes 4G and 3G mobile broadband speeds research

Ofcom has published its first research into consumers' experience of mobile broadband speeds in the UK since the 4G auction in 2013.

A summary of the findings can be found here.

Get Online @ home

Get Online @ Home is a new initiative from Microsoft and its partners to provide low cost refurbished desktop and laptop computers to support the Go ON UK digital inclusion programme.

Through the website <http://www.getonlineathome.org/about-us.aspx>, which Microsoft built and hosts, allows charities and individuals on certain benefits access to low cost refurbished desktop and laptop computers.

The site also provides access to useful websites, software and guides to help people get the most out of being online.

New online advice and support for small businesses

Ofcom has launched a dedicated online portal to provide small businesses with access to information and advice to help them make the most of communications services.

The site includes advice specifically tailored for businesses on choosing or switching to a new provider, as well as information on navigating and negotiating contracts, and resolving complaints with a provider. Further details on the portal can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Get Online for free

BT now has a [webpage](#) dedicated to helping people discover free or low cost computer and internet courses in their area.

Working with [UK Online Centres](#), the webpage allows an individual to type in their postcode and click 'find' to view centres in their area.

There are a variety of venues, from libraries to community centres, and the courses available may vary. However, most places have staff and volunteers to help people of all ages take their first steps online.

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