

Combating unwanted calls and texts

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The challenges of unsolicited calls and texts: a complex picture

Bodies involved	Roles	Current costs and benefits	Cost/benefit balance
Companies behind campaigns; call centres.	<i>Originating</i> unsolicited calls and messages.	Low cost to call, benefit from sales .	Strongly positive.
Network operators and service providers.	<i>Carrying and delivering</i> unsolicited calls and messages	Benefit from traffic revenues, costs from preventive measures and user disaffection.	Unknown but reducing?
Consumers and businesses.	<i>Receiving</i> unsolicited calls and messages.	High cost of wasted time, low benefit from calls of interest. Extra cost for self-protection.	Strongly negative.
Regulators and legislators.	<i>Controlling</i> behaviours.	Costs of complaints, criticism and bad publicity.	Negative.

Actions to help reduce detriment



Block at source

Block at destination

Network: caller ID?



- Fewer calls
- Own screening
- No outlay
- Handling gambits
- Outlet for annoyance
- Complain

Profitability Data Connectivity

Legal or not penalised Availability

Enforcement



Complaint



CFC members' involvement (1)

- **CCP**: private dialogue with Ofcom, stresses need for monitored targets and co-operation among regulators
- **Which?**: has spoken for itself
- **CitA**: report *The Claims Pests* stresses need to clamp down on claims management sector, including PPI
- **Fair Telecoms**: campaigns for unified entity to receive and act on consumer complaints
- **Age UK**: calls for general ban on cold calling
- **NCF** and others also support shared initiative
- Letters to regulators of June 2012 and February 2013, latter with list of actions for consideration (now revised)

CFC members' involvement (2)

- Since CFC letter to regulators of June 2012, members have been attending:
 - industry WG meetings, July and December 2012
 - ICO strategy meeting on data cycle, March 2013
 - Ministerial Round Table, April 2013
- Work continues on assessing value and priority of different proposed actions, with inputs from a.o.:
 - trueCall cumulative call logs
 - Which? surveys
 - Ofcom research: CE omnibus and diarist (eagerly awaited)

Evidence to help frame actions (1)

- Which? survey (consistent with Ofcom Consumer Experience) has just been presented.
- Its findings point to:
 - Growing disaffection with telephone use – **this is serious**
 - **Need for better public information and education**

Evidence to help frame actions (2)

- Analysis of trueCall statistics (representing “most affected” users) suggests:
 - Nearly half of nuisance calls lack caller ID – **suggesting that action to improve its provision is urgently needed.**
 - A small proportion of nuisance calls with caller ID comes from the most-used numbers (eg 13% from the top 100) – **strongly supporting view that enforcement is unlikely to reach “the long tail”.**
- A significant proportion of calls experienced as “nuisance” (blocked by users) are legal - **supporting view that even much improved enforcement will not crack the problem.**

Some potential priorities

- Transparency of actions being taken and planned
- Suitable measures for assessing progress (not just complaints)
- Rapid progress on meaningful caller ID
- Better information for consumers and business users
- Balanced assessment of possible new measures, taking account of cost and likely side-effects:
 - In networks, eg complaints shortcode, more filtering/blocking options
 - In legislation and organisation for enforcement