

Combating unwanted calls and texts

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May 2013

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



Fewer calls

Own screening

No outlay

Handling gambits

Outlet for annoyance

Complain

Profitability Data Connectivity

Legal or not penalised Availability



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