



accan
MAGAZINE

THIS EDITION:

SMART PHONE NATION

HOW OUR DEMAND FOR *DATA* IS
CONGESTING THE *NETWORKS*

INTERVIEW: *WITH THE CEO OF TUSMA*

HOW TO: *RECYCLE YOUR MOBILE*

PLUS *SMALL BUSINESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS*

AUTUMN
2013

AUSTRALIA

OUR CEO: TERESA CORBIN



Australians are well known for being early adopters of new technologies so it's little surprise that more than half the population now own a smartphone. We've dedicated this issue to these increasingly sophisticated devices that help us stay in touch, offer mobile access to the internet, a camera, video recording and any number of interesting and useful applications – all safely tucked into our pocket.

With this rapid uptake of smartphones, we're also putting our existing mobile networks under pressure through our ever-increasing demand for data. Read our feature story on page 6 to find out why network congestion is an issue for mobile phone users and what the networks are doing about it.

This month, we're also launching an indispensable tool for telecommunications customers – the ACCAN Phone Rights smartphone app, featured on page 2. Phone Rights allows you to test and log poor mobile reception issues, record and track complaints, find answers to common problems, contact your service provider directly, view video guides and learn how to avoid bill shock, compare products, understand billing and usage alerts.

Phone Rights is now available to download for free from the iTunes App Store and Google Play, and we can't wait to hear what you think of it.

As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback, please email ceo@accan.org.au or call me on 02 9288 4000.

Warm regards,

Teresa Corbin
Chief Executive Officer
ACCAN

ACCAN OUR STORY

ACCAN is the peak organisation representing all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. Our mission is to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians.

CONTACT US:

Phone: 02 9288 4000

TTY: 02 9281 5322

Web: accan.org.au

twitter: @ACCAN_AU

Email: info@accan.org.au

MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR

Elise Davidson

DEPUTY EDITOR

Mark Callender

CONTRIBUTORS

Steven Robertson

Alan Howard

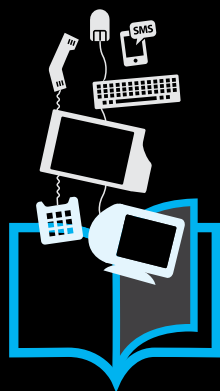
Katerina Pavlidis

Erin Turner

DESIGN

Creative Order

creative-order.com.au



6-8

DATA- HUNGRY DEVICES

CONTENTS



2 UP FRONT

What's making news across the telecommunications industry.

4 INDUSTRY IN FOCUS

New head of TUSMA Robert Lomdahl discusses exciting new National Relay Service initiatives.

5 THIS IS HOW I... RECYCLE

Rose Read from AMTA talks about the MobileMuster recycling scheme.

6 COVER STORY: DATA-HUNGRY DEVICES

Smartphones are changing our lives but our hunger for data is putting our mobile networks under strain.

9 CONSUMER TIPS

How to make your smartphone less data hungry.

10 POLICY IN FOCUS

When free doesn't really mean free... hidden traps in smartphone apps.

11 GRANTS IN FOCUS

New research from Market Clarity reveals a number of small businesses aren't prepared for the worst.

12 MEMBERS IN FOCUS

We chat to Blind Citizens Australia's Barry Chapman.

LATEST NEWS

ACCAN launches new Phone Rights app



ACCAN launches a new phone app – Phone Rights – for Apple and Android devices on 20th March at Parliament House in Canberra.

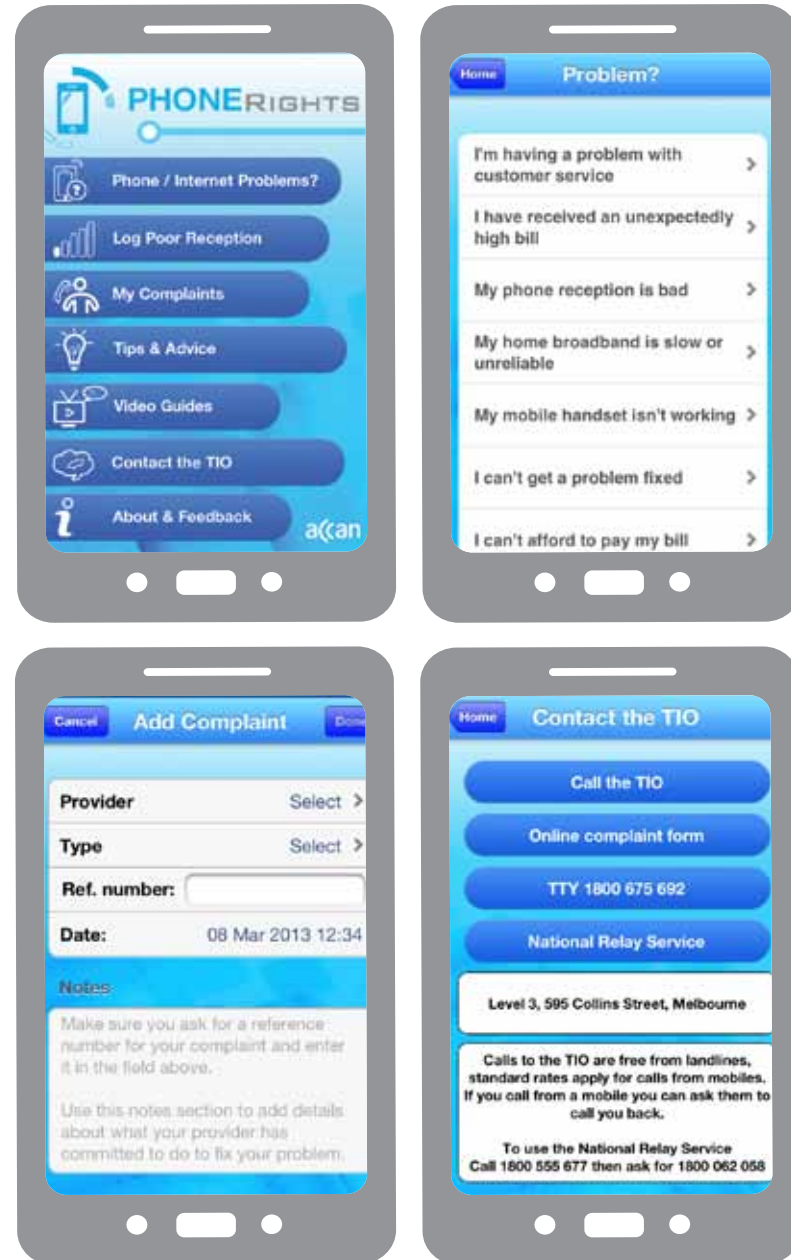
ACCAN's first-ever app is designed to enable consumers and small businesses to quickly resolve problems with phone or internet services. Key features include: the ability to make, record and track complaints; contact service providers; common issues and how to resolve them; contracts, billing, global roaming and data charges; and includes video guides.

Speaking prior to the Phone Rights launch at Parliament House, ACCAN chief executive officer Teresa Corbin said "I'm really thrilled to launch our new app – Phone Rights. All telecommunications customers have rights that apply to mobile phones, landlines and internet services. We were really focused on providing a convenient, easy-to-use app that would empower consumers and small businesses experiencing a wide range of telecommunications issues."

The information in the app is based on the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code, which outlines the rules and obligations of telecommunications providers in dealing with customers.

Phone Rights is a free app, available for download from the iTunes App Store and Google Play or visit accan.org.au/phonerights.

The Phone Rights smartphone application was made possible due to a bequest made by Maureen Le Blanc, who, over a period of 20 years, greatly contributed to consumer representation and research in the telecommunications industry in Australia. Maureen asked that her bequest be used for consumer education, and we think she would be thrilled that her generous contribution has led to this smartphone application – which literally puts the power of consumer rights into consumers' hands.



\$265,000 in funding available under ACCAN Grants Scheme

The 2013 Round of the ACCAN Grants Scheme has opened, with a total of \$265,000 available to organisations or individuals who apply for funding before 2nd April. Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding amounts appropriate to their project to a maximum of \$60,000 per project.

The ACCAN Grants Scheme was set up to fund projects that help to work toward the organisation's vision of available, accessible and affordable communications services for all Australians.

"We're encouraging everyone with a great idea for telecommunications consumer research, education or advocacy to talk to our grants team about making an application for funding," said ACCAN deputy chief executive Narelle Clark.

"The scope and diversity of ACCAN's grants projects to date is really impressive. In the last year, projects produced some truly outstanding results such as an understanding of small business telecommunications use as well as a community-based project that saw teenagers teaming up with seniors to teach them how to use their favourite gadget."

Projects will be assessed by an Independent Grants Panel which will make recommendations to the ACCAN Board. Projects successful in gaining funding will be announced in June 2013. Projects must comply with the ACCAN 2013 Grants Scheme Guidelines. For more information go to: accan.org.au/grants

Spectrum auction

The end of analog TV services in Australia will free up spectrum space. The government is also reallocating the spectrum used by digital TV services, a process known as "restacking". In April 2013 the government will be conducting an auction for the 700 Mhz band (703–748 and 758–803 MHz) and the 2.5 GHz band (2500–2570 and 2620–2690 MHz). Telstra, Optus and Vodafone are all expected to bid for spectrum to extend and improve their 3G and 4G networks.

The auction prices will be based on the number of MHz bid for and the number of people that will be covered. For the 700 MHz band, the government has set the reserve price for the auction at \$1.36/MHz/person. For the 2.5 GHz band, the reserve price will be \$0.03/MHz/person. The auction may end up generating close to \$3 billion in revenue. The licenses auctioned in April will be issued for 15-year periods.

Crunching the Numbers:

\$30 MILLION

The number of mobile services in Australia in June 2012 (ACMA)

2,000,000

The number of Australians using Wi-Fi hotspots from April to June 2012 (ACMA)

60%

The proportion of Gen Y who compulsively check their mobile phone for email, text or social media updates (Cisco)

6,600TB

The amount of data downloaded on smartphones from April to June 2012. This is equal to 12,500 years of listening to MP3s, or 376 years of watching HD movies. (ABS)

31,900TB

The amount of mobile data downloaded in Australia from April to June 2012 (via smartphones and mobile Wi-Fi) (ABS)

ROBERT LOMDAHL

**CEO, TELECOMMUNICATIONS
UNIVERSAL SERVICE
MANAGEMENT AGENCY (TUSMA)**



You are the head of the new government agency, TUSMA. Tell us how and when TUSMA was established.

TUSMA stands for the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency. It was established on 1 July 2012 as part of the government's reforms to the telecommunications universal service obligations (USO).

Basically, the reforms are a shift away from the previous regulatory model for the USO, to an open and competitive contractual model. TUSMA contracts with suppliers to deliver essential telecommunications services to the public.

What is TUSMA's primary role?

We enter into contracts and grants with telecommunications service providers and other companies on behalf of the government to deliver important telecommunications services.

These services include the delivery of the universal service obligation for standard telephone services and payphones, transferring calls from Triple Zero (000) to emergency service organisations, the National Relay Service for people with a speech or hearing impairment, and untimed local calls to people in extended zones (regional and remote areas of Australia).

We also look after some NBN safety net services. At around 12 months after the NBN is available in an area, we will be funding service providers to contact customers to make sure they move to the NBN before the copper network closes down. We also meet the costs of basic in-home cabling required to enable a connection to the NBN fibre network for customers who only require a voice service.

TUSMA has recently announced that ACE was awarded the contract to run the relay service component of the National Relay Service (NRS) until 2018. What new services can we expect from the NRS?

We conducted a competitive tender and for the first time since its inception the NRS will see a number of new and improved services delivered. These services include:

- a two-way internet relay service that will allow NRS users to make and receive telephone calls on internet-enabled devices

- access to a range of existing and future NRS service options through a smartphone application
- an SMS relay service that will allow NRS users to communicate via SMS and access emergency service organisations (police, fire, ambulance) via text
- a web-captioned telephony service that will allow hearing-impaired Australians to hear and read telephone conversations close to real time
- a video relay service available business days from 7 am to 6 pm EST that will allow deaf Australians who communicate through Auslan to make and receive calls.

A lot of Deaf and hearing-impaired people are looking forward to the new SMS relay service—how soon will it be available?

The new contract with ACE provides the opportunity to introduce an SMS relay service that allows people to communicate via SMS with organisations, including emergency service organisations. However this service requires some necessary regulatory updates before it can be implemented.

We are currently working with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy to make these changes quickly and deliver new services progressively from 1 July 2013.

About Robert Lomdahl

Robert Lomdahl is the CEO of the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency. He is looking forward to working with ACCAN and the groups it represents.

He has held executive roles in Telstra over a 17-year period, including in service and complaints management, operations, strategy and regulatory. Most of his time was in the regional division of Telstra.

His previous experience includes work in public policy, having worked as a public policy and corporate affairs management consultant for Allen Consulting Group and the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet.

THIS IS HOW I RECYCLE MOBILE PHONES

**ROSE READ
MANAGER OF RECYCLING, AUSTRALIAN
MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION (AMTA)**



Tell us about MobileMuster, its history and how the scheme works

MobileMuster is the official product stewardship program of the mobile phone industry. Its aim is to recycle mobiles in a safe, secure and ethical way. It is managed by AMTA on behalf of its members, which include: Nokia, Motorola, Samsung, LG, HTC, Huawei, ZTE, Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and Virgin Mobile.

The program is funded by the members who pay a levy on every new handset they import into Australia. A total of 42 cents is paid for each handset with the manufacturer paying 30 cents and the carrier paying 12 cents. This is the primary revenue stream for the program.

The recycling service is free to consumers and businesses. Consumers can either drop off their old mobiles and accessories at their nearest collection point including Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Virgin Mobile, Allphones, Fone Zone, Dick Smith, Officeworks, Battery World and Cartridge World stores or their nearest local council-hosted site. There is a simple online collection locator tool to help you find your nearest drop off point at mobilemuster.com.au.

Consumers can also post in their old mobiles and accessories for free using either the reply paid satchel available from Australia Post outlets all by downloading a mailing label from the MobileMuster website.

Businesses, schools and other organisations can also collect and recycle mobiles and accessories for free with MobileMuster. To take advantage of this service and educational resources just register your site details online at mobilemuster.com.au.

In 2013 MobileMuster will celebrate its 15th year of operation. Since the program started in 1999 it has diverted 987 tonnes of mobiles and accessories from landfill including recycling more than 7 million handsets and batteries.

How many mobiles are sold in Australia every year, and what happens to most of them?

Our members import just over seven million handsets a year for sale in Australia. Most people (about 60%) when they upgrade to a new mobile keep their old one as a spare or pass it on to a friend or family if it is still working. Amazingly, at least 17% who replace their old

mobile phone still keep it even when it no longer works. A few people choose to sell their old phone or donate it to charity. Only about 20% of the mobile phones replaced become available for recycling of which MobileMuster currently collects and recycles 50%.

Are there any other types of items I can recycle?

MobileMuster accepts all brands of mobile phone handsets, their batteries, chargers and accessories.

Do I need to delete personal data from my device (eg old messages and photos) before I recycle it?

We strongly recommend that you delete all data from your mobile phone and remove your SIM card. However, as all mobiles received by MobileMuster are dismantled here in Australia, any data left on the phone or the SIM card will be destroyed during the recycling process. None of the mobile or accessories received is sold for reuse, everything is dismantled for material recovery.

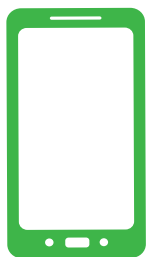
Over 90% of the materials received are recycled and diverted from landfill.

MobileMuster is run by the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) on behalf of its members, which has just launched a new website offering advice on everything related to smartphones. Check it out at www.mobiletips.org.au.

For more info on Mobile Muster, visit www.mobilemuster.com.au.

DATA - HUNGRY DEVICES

BY STEVEN ROBERTSON



IF YOU USE A SMARTPHONE OR TABLET FOR BROWSING THE INTERNET WHILE YOU ARE OUT AND ABOUT, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE USING SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS IS EVER-INCREASING. BUT WHILE SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS ARE A CONVENIENT WAY TO USE THE INTERNET ON THE ROAD, THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR INCREASING THIRST FOR MOBILE DATA.

UPTAKE OF SMARTPHONES

A recent study by the Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA) reports that in Australia from June 2011 to May 2012, the number of adults with a smartphone increased 104%, from 2.41 million to 4.45 million. A 2012 survey by ACCAN and Ipsos Social Research Institute revealed that 57% of people now have a smartphone.

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF DATA USAGE

The ACCAN and Ipsos survey included a snapshot of social attitudes toward smartphones and tablets. The survey revealed that 53% of smartphone or tablet users believe they pay less attention to the world around them when they are using their device, 58% never switch their device off, and 54% sleep next to their device.

The survey also revealed that 77% of people who do not use a smartphone or tablet think that others spend too much time on them, 65% do not like others using smartphones and tablets in public because it makes them less aware of their surroundings, and only 17% of non-smartphone and non-tablet users feel they are missing out by not having one.

COSTS OF DATA USAGE

One consequence of this increased use of mobile data is an increase in mobile data costs for consumers. A recent report by Macquarie University researchers revealed that around 40% of mobile phone users in Australia have experienced bill shock, typically caused by excess data usage. Recent developments such as improvement to the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code may help to reduce this problem by requiring providers to send text alerts to customers when they approach their data allowance.

NETWORK CONGESTION ISSUES

Our constant and increasing use of smartphones and mobile internet services is also having impacts on the quality of mobile internet services. One effect that will become increasingly important is "spectrum congestion". This refers to the clogging up of the radio frequencies that are used to transmit mobile internet data and other signals, and occurs when the data being transferred over a network approaches or exceeds the capacity of the network. Spectrum shortages can result in an increase in failures to connect, more dropped calls, slower downloads and slower web browsing.

Spectrum congestion is a global problem and telcos around the world are taking action to manage congestion. Some of the actions being taken in Australia and internationally include:

- Throttling (slowing down) users' connections to discourage heavy internet use
- Increasing network efficiency through data compression and investment in new infrastructure
- More efficient use of different bands of the spectrum
- Transferring some traffic from wireless to wired networks
- Spectrum sharing, where spectrum that is not needed by one service at particular times can be used by other services

One significant upcoming event in Australia is the government's auction of the spectrum bands that will be freed up once analog TV is switched off by the end of 2013. The auction promises to make those bands available for use by telcos to provide better mobile internet coverage with more capacity to respond to the growing use of mobile data.

NETWORK INVESTMENT

Consumers' insatiable appetite for smartphones has led to a significant jump in demand for data and this is putting increased pressure on networks. This means that networks are becoming congested at peak times, which means customers are experiencing more call drop outs, delayed text messages and slower internet.

We asked Australia's big three telecommunications networks how they are investing to ensure their infrastructure is able to cope with this demand.

Here's what they told us:

TELSTRA

We continue to see customer growth in key products and services, particularly mobiles. This is testament to our focus on improving customer service and maintaining network leadership. Our investment in the mobile network is attracting more customers. We have now sold 1.5 million 4G devices and we are on track to expand 4G coverage to 66% of the Australian population by June 2013. In the six months to 31 December 2012, Telstra invested \$1.9 billion in capital expenditure, including significant investments in Australia's largest and most reliable national mobile network.

OPTUS

Over the last three years Optus has invested more than \$1.8 billion in its mobile network, doubling network capacity in metro areas. We have upgraded more than 3,000 3G mobile sites, resulting in a stronger 3G performance for our customers. Optus recently launched its superfast 4G network in select areas of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Newcastle and the Gold Coast which proved so popular we accelerated the rollout of 4G to Adelaide, several months ahead of schedule. We will be launching 4G in Canberra – the first TD-LTE network – in the 1st half of 2013.

NETWORK INVESTMENT

VODAFONE

Vodafone is absolutely focussed on bringing our customers more coverage, faster speeds and greater reliability, with further improvements being built into the network every day.

Vodafone will invest more in its network in 2013 than any year previously. This year we will launch 4G services in selected metro areas and expand our mobile coverage footprint to regional areas to reach 96% of the Australian population through a new roaming agreement with Optus. These improvements follow the completion of our two-year network national program; including, a new 3G 850Mhz network, delivering better indoor coverage, call quality, and greater reliability; and, the deployment of the Vodafone 3G+ network in metropolitan areas, delivering speed improvements up to 8x faster than our 3G network.

WI-FI HOTSPOT SECURITY

Free Wi-Fi is a convenient way to access the internet while you're out and about. Hotels, cafes and fast food outlets often offer free Wi-Fi access to customers and hotspots are increasingly appearing on public transport, in airports and throughout cities.

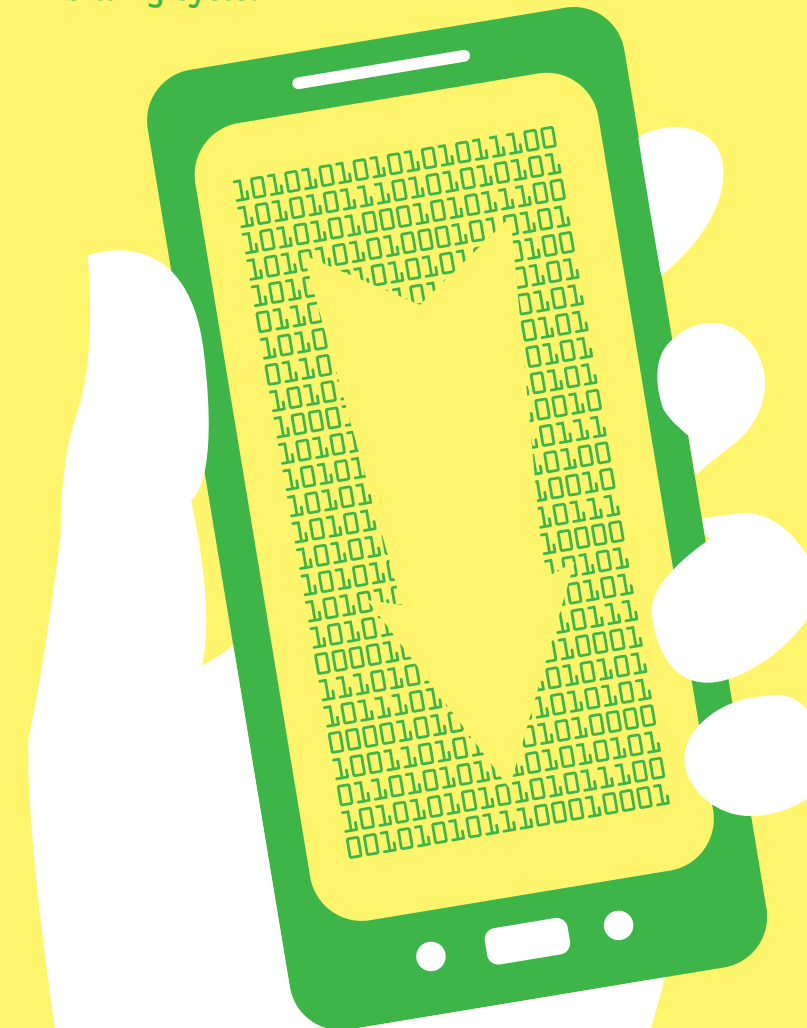
However, using a free Wi-Fi service brings some risks. Simple software tools are available online that can allow other people on the same Wi-Fi network to see what sites you're visiting, the searches you make, and your login details, including your passwords. The best known of these tools is Firesheep <http://codebutler.com/firesheep>.

It's therefore important when using a free Wi-Fi service to take some simple security precautions. The easiest option is to type the letters HTTPS before any URLs to encrypt communication between your computer and a website. Some services, such as Gmail, Facebook, Twitter and most online payment services, have this activated by default, and many other services provide an option to turn on HTTPS.

Most web browsers will show that HTTPS is on by placing a small padlock icon in the address bar.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SMARTPHONE LESS DATA HUNGRY

Smartphones can be using data without you even realising it. This can simply be due to default settings on your phone that you may not realise you can change. Exceeding your monthly data limit can be very expensive, so it's really important you track how much data you've used throughout your monthly billing cycle.



Here's how you can adjust your settings so your phone uses less data:

IOS (APPLE)

- 1. Turn off "push notifications"**
Especially for your emails, social media and GPS apps. Go to Settings > Notifications > Select the app e.g. Facebook app > Turn "Notification Centre" OFF.
- 2. Manually close certain apps**
Make sure apps that use GPS (maps), video or audio streaming (Youtube, Rdio, Spotify) or Skype are not actively running in the background after you exit out of them. Do this by tapping the home button twice > apps that are open should be running along the bottom of the screen > tap and hold any app icon > press the red button to close the app.
- 3. Change your Wi-Fi settings**
Make sure certain services run only over Wi-Fi, rather than 3G or 4G. You can do this by going to Settings > General > Mobile Data > Scroll down to where it says "Use Mobile Data for:" > choose OFF for those services that you don't want to run over 3G or 4G.

ANDROID

- 1. Turn off "push notifications"**
Especially for your emails, social media and GPS apps. Go to Settings > In the "device" section, tap "Apps" > Uncheck the box for each app that says "Show Notifications".
- 2. Manually close certain apps**
Pressing the back button when exiting out of apps, instead of the home button, will close down your apps. However, for certain apps such as GPS (maps), video or audio streaming (Youtube, Rdio, Spotify) or Skype go to Settings > Application > Manage Applications > Running, then open the app you wish to close and force close.
- 3. Change your Wi-Fi settings**
Make sure certain services run only over Wi-Fi, rather than 3G or 4G. You can do this by going to Menu > Settings > Wireless and Networks > Mobile Networks/Packed Data > Disable "Use Packet Data".
- 4. Track your data usage**
Monitor your monthly data. Go to Settings > Wireless and Networks > Data Usage. In this same section you can select "Set Mobile Data Limit" to be sure you don't exceed your monthly limit.

DATA - HUNGRY - TRANSMISSION ENDS

WHEN IS A FREE APP NOT FREE?

By Erin Turner

Freemium games and misleading claims

Many apps improve our lives – we can get directions in a strange city, play Scrabble with friends on another continent or access exclusive content for our favourite magazine. But some apps are causing problems for consumers.

Freemium-style gaming apps are free to download but encourage or even require in-app purchases to play. At present, consumers looking to purchase an app without in-app purchase options or to play a genuinely free game could be misled by the way these games are described at the point-of-sale.

The Paradise Cove game is free to download and claims that players can “Play for free, yes FREE forever.” In order to complete tasks and progress up a level in the game, a player must spend rubies, coins or pearls (all available for purchase with real Australian dollars) to achieve tasks.

These in-app currencies are earned very slowly in the game. For example, at each new level a player is awarded one ruby. However, the player is asked to obtain items worth dozens or hundreds of rubies in order to complete tasks required to progress through the game. If a player does not have enough currency to complete a task they are prompted to buy more. Paradise Cove is structured in such a way that players can only realistically progress through the game by making an in-app purchase.

Paradise Cove also uses a “pay or wait” method to encourage further in-app purchases. Players complete tasks by requesting an action like exploring new land or building a house. To finalise the task a player must either wait, sometimes up to 24 hours, or spend rubies (available for real-world dollars) to immediately progress through the game. Players cannot “play free forever” as claimed in the Paradise Cove app description. They can play for a few minutes then have to wait for up to 24 hours for tasks to complete.

To address the confusion caused by freemium games, ACCAN wants the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to look at apps which claim to be free-to-play but require significant purchases to actually play. Consumers need accurate information about all products and rightfully expect that free games will be free to download and play.

SMALL BUSINESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE USE AND EXPERIENCE

The Project

Today, some five million Australians are employed by small businesses and contribute approximately 20% to GDP, so it's not surprising that ACCAN has a strong focus supporting that community. Along with other small business initiatives, ACCAN recently provided a grant to prominent research organisation Market Clarity to study small business experiences with telecommunications services.

Market Clarity designed a robust survey which they used to interview 260 small businesses (with less than 20 staff) across 14 industries. The survey questionnaire was designed to gain a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the needs, requirements, decision making processes and service issues faced by small businesses. It covered fixed voice, VoIP, fixed broadband, mobile voice, mobile broadband and EFTPOS services.

The Results

The results were quite surprising. The survey found nearly one in three small businesses have experienced significant customer service problems such as difficulty in contacting their provider, being put on hold, having to call multiple times to have a problem resolved and billing issues. The survey also found that 22% of fixed broadband and 14% of mobile broadband users report faults once a month or more.

Some 32% of small businesses said that even a one-hour fixed broadband outage would have a serious or “catastrophic” impact on their business. Considering that 50% of small businesses have no back-up plan, this is clearly an area where education regarding alternative access options could reduce small businesses’ risk exposure.

This study indicates that while the majority of small businesses are satisfied with their telecommunications services, they are experiencing high levels of faults and that they are not adequately prepared to mitigate these risks to their business. There is also a clear productivity issue since it is frequently the owner or a senior employee who is forced to spend time resolving these issues.

The Way Forward

This study will provide valuable input into ACCAN policy formation. ACCAN recently appointed a small business project officer to focus on the needs of small business and the results of this study by Market Clarity will provide a strong basis for ACCAN's advocacy. It will also help ACCAN develop new approaches for advising small businesses on their dealings with carriers and service providers. ACCAN will continue to work with small business organisations to help them to find ways to minimise the impact of outages and customer service and complaint-handling issues for their members.

About ACCAN Grants:

The 2013 Round of the \$265,000 ACCAN Grants Scheme is now open. Apply by 2nd April for funding of up to \$60,000 per project. For more information please visit accan.org.au/grants.

BLIND CITIZENS AUSTRALIA



BARRY CHAPMAN
BOARD DIRECTOR

What is the role of Blind Citizens Australia?

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the peak national consumer body of and for people who are blind or vision impaired. We represent the views and experiences of people who are blind or vision impaired to government through direct consultation and submissions on a wide range of issues including access to telecommunications. BCA also provides information, peer support and resources to enable people who are blind or vision impaired to self advocate for their needs.

What are the key issues for BCA members?

Access to information and equitable access to goods, services and facilities continue to be significant barriers for people who are blind or vision impaired. People who are blind or vision impaired continue to receive contracts, terms and conditions and bills in a format which is inaccessible. The introduction of touch screens often means that services such as Medicare and supermarket checkouts are inaccessible. Due to the high cost of adaptive equipment, such as screen reading software, being able to use a computer remains out of reach for many blind or vision impaired people who are on low incomes.

How important are telecommunications for people who are blind or vision impaired?

Telecommunications are critically important. People who are blind or vision impaired rely on telecommunications for everyday life including obtaining timetable information, telephone banking, calling taxis, researching information on the internet and keeping in touch with

friends and colleagues. Telecommunications can greatly improve access to information which may otherwise be inaccessible.

Are people who are blind or vision impaired able to benefit from new technologies like smartphones?

There are many benefits of smartphone technology for people who are blind or vision impaired. These include iPhone apps for navigation using GPS, public transport trip planning, as well as apps for optical character recognition to read printed documents, colour detection, money note identification, news, weather and streaming audio, to mention just a few. Smartphones have opened up a world of access for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Why is BCA an ACCAN member?

ACCAN offers an independent consumer voice which is critical in the telecommunications space. BCA was actively involved in the development of TEDICORE (Telecommunications and Disability Representation) which led to the creation of ACCAN as a broader consumer body representing the needs of consumers with and without disability. Our unique perspective, coupled with ACCAN's influence with government, ensures that disability-specific issues in telecommunications are kept on the radar.

AND MEET A NEW MEMBER



Helplines Australia is an association that actively supports and promotes ethical and professional standards for counselling and support services via the telephone and internet whilst allowing each service to remain autonomous.

Helplines Australia is a voluntary, non-government, not-for-profit association. Helplines Australia is primarily supported by its membership base, however seeks support through by state and federal government grants and commercial sponsorship.



ACCAN'S NEW APP: PHONE RIGHTS



Download Phone Rights
for free from the iTunes
App Store or Google Play
or visit
accan.org.au/phonerights

AUSTRALIA

AUTUMN
2013

ACCAN.ORG.AU
ACCAN
MAGAZINE
ISSUE: 08