

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Peter

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Young

Representing:

Self

Additional comments:

There needs to be a review of how public bodies prioritise the relative use of phone lines, the Internet and face to face communication. The purpose should be to see if this results in exclusion of disadvantaged groups from access to services or imposes additional costs upon them.

An example is the Oyster card, where the apparent ultimate intention of TfL is that users will do all their transactions by internet. Despite having hundreds of staffed Underground stations all over London, this organisation insists on limiting and reducing the ability of station staff (such as myself) to assist those with Oyster problems, expecting customers to use internet or phone to solve such issues.

Consumer detriment is caused to those who cannot afford to phone even an 03 number and/or are unable to access the internet. Others simply don't have the money immediately to pay now until a costly problem has been solved later. As a result many are overcharged for their journeys through no fault of their own and with no access to redress or compensation.

This is an example of how one public body's choice of communication medium affects consumers. Other bodies may be causing detriment by slanting their service towards internet access and putting obstacles/expense in the way of those who only can communicate by phone eg by having long waiting times before the phone is answered or only staffing them at times when free phone calls are not available.

Question 1: Are there areas of Ofcom's overall strategic approaches and purposes, outlined in last years' annual plan that may need to change?:

There is a depressing repetitiveness reading monthly reports about the increasing complaints about nuisance marketing calls. The Fair Telecoms group has recommended an overarching regulator in this area to manage the overlapping responsibilities of ICO and Ofcom. Frankly, if this can't be made to work, a policy of presumed non-consent will have to be adopted with users having to make a positive declaration if they wish to receive marketing calls.

Question 2: What are the issues and areas that should form Ofcom's priorities or major work areas in 2014/15?:

Speed up reform of non-geographic numbers. I hope that 0845/0870 will die as a result.

Question 3: Are there any specific areas for deregulation or simplification in the coming year?:

Simplification is a loaded word. I am interested in the simplification of digital tv from a viewer's point of view. This means bringing to an end the repeated retunes that are required. Those without technical ability need help every time such events take place. When their favourite tv channel disappears without warning - as with Film 4 earlier this year - they are distressed as they don't understand what is going on, whether they, their tv, or the transmitter are at fault.

If a retune is really necessary, proper notice must be given - as did not happen with Film 4. However there must be a better way to run things so this is very rarely necessary if at all.