

Global Symposium
for Regulators

Quality of Service and Consumer Protection in an NGN World

Rosalind Stevens-Strohmann
Consumer Policy Manager
Ofcom, United Kingdom



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Consumer Policy – Balancing consumer protection with consumer empowerment

- Deployment of NGN provides new opportunities to increase consumer choice but raises new challenges for QoS and consumer protection
- Challenge for regulators is to:-
 - **Empower consumers** by equipping them with the skills and information they need to get the best deal they can.
 - **Protect consumers** against various kinds of harm eg SPIT, fraud and identity theft, mis-use of personal information, etc.

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Regulatory approaches to QoS

Enforcement approach

NRA defines QoS parameters, sets standards, actively monitors and enforces

For example:

- Waiting list for main lines
- % of faults cleared by next working day
- % of failed calls
- Number of main line faults
- % of operator service calls answered in 15 seconds
- Number of complaints per 1000 bills
- Customer satisfaction rate

(ITU indicators)

Encouragement approach -

NRA relies on competition and publicity to help consumers make informed choices and switch providers.

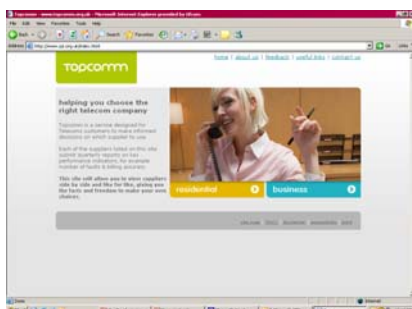
www.topcomm.org.uk

www.topnetuk.org

In reality most regulators use a mixture of both

Industry provision of comparable QoS for consumers

www.topcomm.org.uk



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QoS aspects to be addressed as NGN is deployed

- Service disruption during migration from PSTN to NGN
- Management of end to end voice quality of service
- Access to emergency services and emergency call location
- Number portability
- Feasibility of alternative text relay services
- Differentiation of QoS
- Network integrity
- Network security

Consumer dimension to net neutrality and QoS

- Potential shift from “best efforts” approach to prioritisation of traffic.
- How willing is the consumer to pay differential amounts for different levels of QoS
 - For higher bandwidth services?
 - QoS guarantees?
 - Higher caps to usage?
 - Tailored made, managed services?,
- Differentiation may be more efficient – consumers only pay for QoS levels that are relevant to them
- Does ability to differentiate promote the innovation of new products and services?
- How do you protect consumers against potential for providers to downgrade some services (eg “free” broadband) to unacceptably low levels?

Reducing barriers to switching

- **Consumers need information that is:**
 - Accurate, comparable, easy to understand
 - About nature, price and quality of service
 - Complete and accurate about transfer process
 - Clear about the impact of switching on current services



There must be no artificial barriers to consumer empowerment

- Migration process must not discourage consumers from switching eg unpredictable, unreliable
- Consumers must be protected against dishonest sales and marketing activity

Consumer protection and cyber security

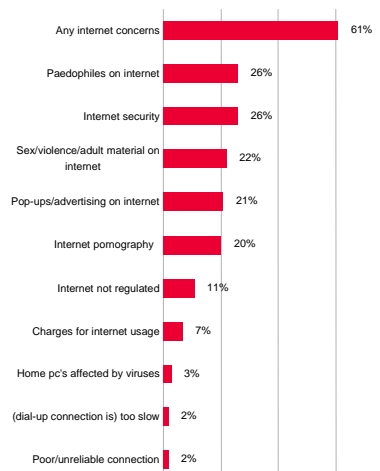
NGN increases potential for higher speeds of connectivity to Internet

Internet likely to play a greater role in citizens/consumers' lives

New opportunities and new potential for harm

Traditional regulatory structures unlikely to be effective

Industry led approach likely to be more successful



Source: Ad hoc survey of consumer concerns re Internet services, BMRB for Ofcom, August 2006

International initiatives to combat cyber crime

Privacy

- EU Directives for the protection of personal data
- 1981 Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data –
- OECD guidelines and Working Party on Information Security and Privacy
- APEC Privacy Framework

Inappropriate content and consumer protection

- UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- 2001 European Convention on Cybercrime

Online advertising

- EU Television without Frontiers Directive/ European Advertising Standards Alliance