



News Release

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In responding to Ofcom Annual Plan, Communications Consumer Panel calls for broader focus on what consumers expect from the internet

Commenting on the publication today of Ofcom's 2010/11 annual plan, Communications Consumer Panel member Colin Browne, said:

"We are pleased that Ofcom has responded to the Panel's calls to give priority to tackling mobile and broadband not-spots, removing switching barriers and encouraging digital participation. But we would like to see a broader focus on understanding and addressing consumers' expectations of the internet."

The Panel's research shows that soon it will be essential for everyone to have access to the internet at home, but there is not yet a clear picture of the content, freedoms and protections that consumers expect. There needs to be a wide debate about the role of regulation and self-regulation, and the information that would help consumers to protect themselves and their families.

"In line with the Panel's responsibility to promote the interests of small businesses, we welcome Ofcom's intention to conduct regular research with businesses, with a particular focus in 2010/11 on very small businesses. We look forward to discussing the implications of this research with Ofcom," Colin Browne concluded.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

The Panel response to Ofcom's consultation on its draft annual plan for 2010/11 setting out our views on what Ofcom should prioritise in 2010/11 is available on the Panel website at: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/ofcoms-work-priorities-and-plans/annual-plan>

The Panel's research report *Not online, not included: consumers say broadband essential for all* shows that soon it will be essential for everyone to have access to the internet at home, but we do not yet have a clear picture of what consumers expect of that access; what content, what freedoms and what protections they anticipate. The report is on the Panel's website: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/not-online-not-included/not-online-not-included>

A previous Panel research report *No one should miss out: consumers say what they want from a digital future*, shows that consumers recognise that they have responsibilities to, for example, protect themselves and their families, but need help in order to meet these responsibilities. Here is the link to the report: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future>

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information.

The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

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