



News Release

27 February 2009

No one should miss out on the digital future consumers tell us, the Consumer Panel says

Consumers and citizens must be at the heart of the Government's digital plans and their needs must drive policy-making, the Communications Consumer Panel says in a new research report published today.

Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley, said: "Up until now no one has been able to agree on what it is that consumers and citizens want and how this should shape the future of the communications sector. Our research is moving the debate forward and helping the Consumer Panel to develop evidence-based recommendations to Government."

In this latest research report, *No one should miss out*, people told the Communications Consumer Panel how they want digital communications services to contribute to their lives in the future.

Anna Bradley said that people have some clear requirements from communications networks and services. "They have told us that they want future development focussed on their needs, and that everyone should benefit fully from the huge potential of broadband."

What people want from communications services:

- future developments focussed on their needs and wants, not technological possibilities
- services and equipment that are easy to use, efficient and reliable and streamlined information that is current and relevant
- commitments from government and industry about privacy and security
- everyone should be able to benefit from digital communications.

However, consumers also told the Panel that they would have fears for the future if the right checks and balances were not in place. They revealed concerns about the consequences for society of less face-to-face communication, social exclusion for people who don't have access to communications technologies, and people's security and privacy.

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The Consumer Panel, which is committed to the provision of a universal broadband service for all consumers, has been feeding this research into the Digital Britain Steering group – providing the evidence to focus future debates firmly on the consumer and citizen interest. Further work by the Panel is underway to understand why consumers think communications services are essential. This work will be fed into the final Digital Britain report.

“The Consumer Panel sees a great future for digital communications, but only if the interests of consumers and citizens are placed at the very heart of the current debates. We are using this research to influence the development of Government policy and ensure the consumer voice is heard,” Anna Bradley concluded.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

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 (Chairman)
- 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

For further information about Communications Consumer Panel members go to

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/about/>

- For a copy of *No one should miss out: What consumers need to get the most out of digital communications* go to our website www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

CONTACT

Communications Consumer Panel Media Adviser Siân Evans 020 8674 8921 / 07713997510
media@communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

Sian Evans

Media Adviser Communications Consumer Panel

020 8674 8921

07713997510

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