



For immediate release: Wednesday 7th September, 2011

APPLE AND HTC USERS MOST LIKELY TO BE HIT BY EXCESSIVE MONTHLY BILLS

- **Six in ten (61%)^[1] mobile phone owners using popular HTC or Apple handsets are overspending on their monthly contracts**
- **Smartphone users are significantly more likely to overspend than those with other mobile phones^[2]**
- **Over a fifth of smartphone (22%) users pay at least £10 more than their tariff price each month^[3]**
- **Heavy users worried about overspending should consider an “all-you-can-eat” plan, such as Three’s one plan where consumers can get their hands on a new smartphone, unlimited texts and data for just £35 a month^[4].**

Smartphone users are more likely to overspend on their monthly tariffs than other phone users, according to the latest research from independent price comparison and switching service, uSwitch.com. And for those with handsets from some of the most popular smartphone manufacturers – HTC and Apple – the situation is even worse with six in ten (60%) overspending on their monthly tariffs compared to just a quarter (26%) of other mobile users^[1].

The survey of over 6,000 mobile phone owners also revealed that 22% of smartphone users are shelling out at least an extra £120 a year on top of their contract by going over their allowances each month^[3], while 6% admit to paying at least £20 extra each month - a substantial £240 annual overspend^[4].

With the almost limitless additional services on offer to users of smartphones, such as the millions of apps available for download, it’s easy to see how app-happy users are struggling to keep a lid on their spending, but many mobile phone users are blindly running up bills as they’re finding it difficult to track their mobile phone usage.

Just 15%^[5] of mobile phone users say their providers alert them when they are approaching their tariff limits, while consumers are also failing to look out for themselves as more than two

thirds of users (69%)^[6] admit that they do not regularly monitor how many texts and calls they make.

Percentage overspend by mobile phone users across the main handset manufacturers:

Handset	% users monthly overspend on tariff
HTC	61
Apple	61
Blackberry	53
Sony Ericsson	46
Nokia	42
Samsung	40
LG	31
Motorola	18

Source: uSwitch.com

Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com, comments: “The vast array of features available for smartphones today is breath-taking, and with one of these handsets mobile phone users have access to a whole world of mobile technology. However, with this great choice comes the risk of losing control of your mobile spending. With the ‘must have’ app or download changing on a daily basis it’s all too easy to get carried away. Users need to keep a close eye on what they are purchasing, or face being hit with a hefty bill at the end of the month.

“But it’s not just smartphone users that are affected by high monthly bills. Thousands of people in the UK are finding themselves faced with bills that are higher than the tariff they signed up to by exceeding their monthly allowance of texts or minutes as well as calling or texting numbers, or visiting websites that are not included in the package.

“If you are significantly over or under your allocated minutes and texts try speaking to your provider about adjusting the deal you’re on and if your contract is ready for renewal, shop around for a new one. The most important thing to do to make sure you work out what you need from your mobile, and then find a deal to suit. If you’re on a budget you can search for a contract by monthly cost, or by minutes, texts or data. With a huge range of mobile phone contracts available to suit almost every need there’s no excuse for regularly exceeding your call and text allowances.”

uSwitch.com's top tips for selecting a mobile tariff

Choosing the right mobile phone tariff is all about making sure that you don't pay more than you need to for your using your mobile. Your tariff determines how you pay for your mobile calls and text messages, as well as what free calls or texts you get. Points to consider are:

- **Pay as you go Vs Pay monthly (contract):** Pay as you go is flexible and it is entirely up to you how much or little you spend on mobile calls and texts. However, call and text charges are generally higher than with contract mobile phones and the initial cost of the mobile phone handset is generally higher than a contract. However, with a contract you have to commit to a 12 month or 18 month period with that network and it could be easy to lose track of how much you are spending.
- **The best bundle:** Do you like to text rather than call? Do you want to be able to use multimedia applications like picture or video messaging and accessing the internet from your mobile? Many tariffs with offer unlimited texts and calls, but you could get a cheaper deal if you know you will only need a limited amount. And if you want to make the most of the available technology on your phone, you should make sure your mobile phone tariff includes a data bundle.
- **Suits you:** Check your most recent phone bill and work out what exactly you use your phone for then find a deal which will fulfill your needs using uSwitch.com's [deal finder](#). The handy tool allows you to set how many minutes, texts and data you want, and a maximum monthly cost.
- **Use abroad:** calls from mobiles when you're abroad can be very expensive. However, if you plan to use your mobile abroad a lot, you can sign-up to a mobile phone tariff that gives you a good rate on international roaming.
- **Contract Lengths:** If you like to upgrade your phone regularly, it might be a good idea to choose a 12-month contract. However, typically most contracts are for 18 months or 24 months, where usually you will pay a lower monthly premium.

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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Notes to editors:

Research conducted online by uSwitch.com in February 2011 amongst 6619 mobile users. The research assumes that there are 48 million phone customers in the UK.

1. When asked if they received phone bills of greater value than their tariffs, 61% of Apple and HTC mobile users said 'Yes, occasionally' or 'Yes, regularly'. Of all other users 26% said 'Yes, occasionally' or 'Yes, regularly'.

2. Users were asked if their bill was higher than their monthly tariff. Of those with a smartphone, 57% said 'Yes, occasionally' or 'Yes, regularly'. 34% of those without a smartphone answered the same.
3. Users were asked how much above their tariff they normally pay each month. 22% of respondents with a smartphone said £10-£20 or greater. Over a year this equates to $12 \times £10 = £120$.
4. Source:
http://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/compare/contract_phones/#products=more%3D1%26minutes%3D0%26texts%3D0%26data%3D3000%26merchant%3D12372%26advanced%3D1
5. Users were asked by uSwitch how much above their tariff they normally pay each month, with 9% of respondents saying £20-30 or greater. Over a year this equates to a minimum spend of $12 \times £20 = £240$.
6. When asked if your network warns you when you are approaching your limit, 13% said 'Yes, they send me a text'; 1% said 'Yes, they call me'; 1% said 'Yes, they email me'.
7. When asked if they monitor how many calls or texts they make, 69% said no

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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