



Wireless Code Public Opinion Research

Quantitative Research Report

Prepared for the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sur demande.

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Executive Summary

Harris/Decima is pleased to present this report to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) highlighting the findings from the “Wireless Code” research study.

The Commission established the Wireless Code, a mandatory code of conduct for wireless service providers, in *The Wireless Code*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2013-271, June 3, 2013 (the Wireless Code Decision). The Wireless Code applies to all retail mobile wireless voice and data services (wireless services) provided to individual and small business consumers in Canada.

In the Wireless Code Decision, the Commission indicated that it will develop an evaluation plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Wireless Code; the results of this evaluation will form part of a formal review of the Wireless Code following its implementation; and it intends to initiate a formal review of the Wireless Code within three years of its implementation.

The review of the Wireless Code will assess whether it is meeting its objectives, which include ensuring that consumers are empowered to make informed decisions about wireless services. To ensure the effectiveness of the review, the Commission needed reliable data on how consumers’ understanding of their wireless service contracts and related rights change between the implementation of the Wireless Code and the review.

In order to track opinions of the CRTC over time, the Commission also wanted to ask Canadians a number of questions that were used in a 2008 survey on perceptions of the CRTC.

To contribute to these objectives, a telephone survey was conducted with the Canadian population. The sample included both landline interviews and cell phone interviews. We aimed to complete at least 25% of the interviews by calling cell phone numbers in order to ensure that those people who primarily use their cell-phone (or live in a cell phone only household) were included in the sample pool. The final sample of 1,289 Canadian adults is made up of 27% cell phone interviews and 73% landline interviews.

Surveys were conducted between February 5 and March 4, 2014 (in English and French) and took an average of 7 minutes to complete. The sample was a probability sample and as such can be extrapolated to the Canadian population with a margin of error of +/-2.7%, 19 times out of 20.

The key findings based on the survey results are presented below.

Wireless Services - Complaints

- A quarter of Canadian cell phone owners (26%) have made a complaint about their wireless service in the past year.
 - For most wireless customers (95%), this meant calling their service provider.
- Complaints made in the past year were not resolved to everyone’s satisfaction.
 - Almost half of those who complained (47%) feel dissatisfied with how their complaint was resolved.
- The Commissioner for Complaints and Telecommunications Services (CCTS) is not highly recognized by Canadian cell phone owners as an avenue to launch complaints related to wireless services, with only 13% saying that they received information with their cell phone contract or agreement about how they could complain to the CCTS.

- Quite a few cell phone owners (28%) have experienced some form of bill shock in the past year, related to everything from high data usage and roaming charges to their child using their account without parents knowing about it.

Wireless Contracts

- Most Canadian cell phone owners (66%) find their contract or service agreement clear and easy to understand.
 - Moreover, half of Canadian cell phone owners (50%) say that their service provider gave a clear explanation of fees that would apply if they canceled their agreement early.
- One in five Canadian cell phone owners (19%) have become aware that their service provider changed their plans without informing them.
- Almost one in five Canadian cell phone owners (18%) have changed providers in the past two years.
 - Price was often a factor in this decision.
 - For the most part, it was easy to switch providers. Almost half (46%) say it was extremely easy, while another 28% say it was somewhat easy.

The Wireless Code

- One in five (22%) cell phone owners say they clearly recall hearing or seeing something about the Wireless Code coming into effect.
 - Another 30% vaguely recall it, while the remaining 46% did not hear about the Code.
 - Almost all awareness (83%) came from media announcements, while hearing from friends/family accounted for 11% of recall.

About the CRTC

- In general, Canadians do not feel well informed about the mandate and role of the CRTC. Only 6% of Canadians say they are very well informed, while another third (32%) are well informed.
 - That leaves more than half who are either not very well (40%) or not at all informed (19%).
- Most Canadians either support the CRTC (34%) or are neutral (38%) towards the Commission, while it has few detractors.
 - Three quarters of Canadians (75%) indicate that their impression of the CRTC has remained the same in the past year.

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Stephanie Constable, Senior Vice President

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