

A list of inept businesses and organisations and why. A warning for those who are not aware of their failings.

This is just my provable experiences.

Yahoo.

This company is now so in league with the American security agencies that they have revised their sign-in process to force you to give them your mobile phone number. They are clearly not interested in anyone using their service that they cannot monitor. You cannot even give a landline number which of course is more difficult to geo monitor via satellite spying. I have been forced to dump the herbal newsgroup as I do not have or want a mobile phone. **This company needs to feel their customers displeasure by people ceasing to use them, and the companies that pay for their adverts.**

Virgin Media. Marketing division. These people constantly send marketing emails to elderly residents living in apartment complexes that they know are wired for cable. I know people who have had to walk over mountains of their letters when trying to view empty apartments. They continue sending their letters even when people are registered with the mail and phone preference services. When you eventually send a letter of complaint to the HQ, all they do is remove the individuals name and carry on sending letters to the apartment number. This company are without question **guilty of the harassment of vulnerable elderly**. I would never use the services of such a disreputable business. The address for complaints is: PO Box 333, Virgin Media, Matrix Court, Swansea, SA7 9BB, UK

British Telecom (BT).

This company is the main company responsible for the phone/broadband network in the UK. It has only recently been discovered that they passed my email address to a data processing company in London with an HQ in Australia. Since that time I have been inundated with spam including many from UK based companies which breaches data protection laws. What makes matters worse is I have not been a BT customer for years. They must have retained an email communication from the time when I was making complaints about my line years ago. Despite telling me my email had been removed from their spam marketing lists, **it was not**. This situation probably affects thousands of other ex BT customers and to date the Information Commissioners Office has taken no effective action against this company.

I had my phone number changed via my supplier who in turn must do this via BT. That number was ex directory and was only given to a handful of close family - *businesses got my last dead number*. Soon after this, once again, I started getting marketing calls from a variety of sources including India. That makes me wonder about how seriously BT take confidentiality and monitor if staff are selling data to outside sources.

This company have service call centres located in India. Some of their staff are difficult to understand - particularly for our older population; their communications with the UK are diabolical and ineffective. **Despite all this, BT are constantly spending Millions on expensive advertising schemes rather than fixing their major administration and infrastructure problems and taking customer confidentiality seriously.**

comcast.com

If you are a customer and do not get a reply from me, it is because that useless mob are constantly blacklisting and blocking overseas servers without good reason. I reckon roughly every 3 months my UK based servers will be blocked supposedly for spam, yet upon checking it is not so. Then you cannot contact comcast via email unless you are an existing customer. They also make it difficult to contact them about blocked servers. Anyone who subscribes to such a lousy server should consider dumping them and going elsewhere.

earthlink.net

Another American server that uses software which wrongly identifies peoples IP address as a source of spam and then blocks that address from sending emails. As above, they make unblocking the IP a ridiculously complex business if it works at all which in my case it has not.

[Santander Bank.](#)

This bank seem completely unable to run effective and efficient systems. They lost many customers because of their hopeless systems. I will not bore you with the details, but both myself and my mother have had endless problems and have now moved to another bank. In addition, we have heard of many others with similar problems. Just one example was they sent a letter admitting they made an error on my credit card payments and saying they would fix it. Around 3 months of statements came with no fix to their error. It took numerous complaints to get a resolution to THEIR ADMITTED ERROR!!!

[Hewlett Packard scanners.](#)

I purchased a very good scanner a few years ago which works perfectly with my old Windows ME system. It will not work with Windows XP and the company do not give a damn. On the Internet are many people who castigate the companies customer services. From my experience with them I have to agree. Who wants to pay a lot of money for hardware to find only a few years later it can no longer be used. Many other makers give software support for those with older systems. HP just can't be bothered it seems.

<http://www.salesbattery.co.uk>. **This site is now dead** but they may be operating via another one so the below still applies. This is NOT a UK based company as the title suggests. They sent me an incorrect battery for my laptop and I was alarmed to see it came from China. When I told them of their error they insisted I had to send the battery back to this address at my cost: Room 802, Building 44, Minle Garden, Minzhi Street, Baoan District, Shenzhen, Guangdong, 518000, China. **They promised to refund the costs but that has not happened.** It seems a lot of these computer battery suppliers operate out of China, so check before you buy.

Beware of websites masquerading as being in the UK and if you do not know, check them out via the 'Who is' websites. There are several companies who run UK based web sites where you think your order is being despatched from. However, later you find that the goods are despatched from China and you have to pay additional import duties to the price advertised.

[The Post Office \(UK\) broadband and phone.](#)

An absolutely diabolical service which I dumped within a couple of months, yet they still kept sending me bills that I did not owe. Please go to this site to check reports on UK Internet service providers:<http://www.ispreview.co.uk>

Now privatised but I doubt that will improve their lousy service.

[Argos.](#)

They are great with delivery, but when you have problems with a large bulky item they are a nightmare. The staff seem to assume everyone in the country has a car and can take an item back to the store. Very poor if you have an item of self assembly furniture such as a set of wardrobes, and something is wrong that might need a part replacing. In my case after a two day struggle assembling a set of wardrobes with my Son who came to help me, and having one fixing bracket tear the weak chipboard shelf holding it all together, they expected me to take the whole lot apart, and they would replace the whole lot. Yeah and after my Son leaves are they going to send me a helper to put it all together again?

Continued:

The Red Cross (UK) marketing division.

Keep sending begging letters to elderly people for up to 3 months after they have said they will stop. Probably need the cash to support a top heavy administration and overpaid directors, rather than worthy projects around the world.

Many UK charities are similar to the above. I have come across several well known charities who badger people into signing direct debits. Recently a **St John's Ambulance** collector visited my elderly mother. Fortunately I was there and listening in while he talked to her. This is an organisation my mother would happily have given a £10 note to, but no he could not accept that, his only course of action was to get her to sign a direct debit. She refused and so they got nothing.

Many of these Charities are now **using the services of commercial mailout businesses**. These organisations are mailing out to anyone they can think of in order to make themselves more money. **They ignore the mail preference opt out system** and are a heck of a struggle to get names off their databases.

Since writing the above, most large UK charities have at long last come under fire from the media for their disreputable marketing. They are subcontracting marketing services with disreputable companies who care nothing about peoples private information and use scare tactics on elderly people. If you contribute to one of these charities try asking how much their directors get paid.

Another charity scam: Plastic bags for old clothes etc. In my mothers area she got one of these bags every few days from a variety of organisations. Some of them are highly suspect and it is very doubtful that more than a tiny percentage of the cash they raise is actually ending up at the destinations they claim.

Electricity suppliers:

My elderly mother was constantly getting estimated readings which are always grossly exaggerated. This seems so common among energy suppliers that I am convinced it is a tactic used by these companies to raise interest free loans. **What is the energy regulator doing about it - nothing!!**

The UK telecoms regulators: Oftel - Ofcom - Otelo, etc.:

A bunch of overpaid useless bureaucrats. They are not interested in consumers problems with service providers. They do nothing to inhibit any criminal from setting up as an Internet service provider, thus gaining all their customers banking details. When they are warned about the dangers they do nothing. Let us hope their overpaid directors are on the chopping block of the cuts this new Government is assembling. I am all for having organisations to monitor and enforce standards on utilities, but when they do not work, get rid of them.

Related to the above is ICANN the Internet domain name regulators. A private (not for profit) company based in America and sanctioned by the US Congress. Who gave the American congress the authority to establish authority over every countries Internet names? To me that task should be part of the UN. When you get problems with a service provider operating under ICANN regulations they do not want to know. Seems to me they are only interested in making fees from licensing names. I notice their staff seem to organise a lot of International conferences at great cost to the organisations funds. Of course if you are set up as a not for profit company you have to spend your income somehow!

Freeview TV systems:

In four months I tried 4 freeview digi boxes including the latest being a Phillips box. All four boxes

have the same fault. They have not been tested out properly on older analogue TVs. They all have a setting to adjust the screen image size to fit the older sets of which in the UK there are still millions. With all channels except the channel 4 channels they work fine. However, as soon as you hit a channel 4 station the picture flips back to the widescreen image. My older freeview boxes do not do that and the image stays as you set it. This means all these boxes are being made using the same faulty components, possibly in the same factory but with different makers names.

Widescreen TVs were **imposed** on the public around the world. I hate them as I detest having pictures of people with half their head missing, or below shoulder height missing on closeups. To get an image of a size similar to the old analogue TVs you need a widescreen TV that takes up far greater width than many rooms can accept.

The freeview system IMPOSED on the public in the UK is **bad technology**. The slightest atmospheric changes make the picture break up even in good signal area. I have now seen this effect in five widely spaced locations in the UK. The story is that signals cannot be boosted until the old system is turned off. Therefore, in many parts of the country we have been expected to live with a weak signal for years. The company that was given the contract to deal with freeview has caused hundreds of thousands of older boxes to malfunction. They have also produced menu systems that are far inferior to the older ones. No one seems to care and the TV industry as a whole seem not to care. Perhaps the long term objective is to drive everyone to Internet TV?

Update 2012 on the above. The freeview box suppliers have forced people to constantly need new boxes to keep up to date with changing TV technology. If you buy a new TV with HD incorporated then your old freeview box which may be feeding a separate video recorder will not work with HD channels. I even bought a new box that was supposed to support the HD channels but the software would not. Even installing the downloadable update it would still not work correctly. That problem was caused by the incompetent UK company tasked with handling the digital TV signals.

It is clear that manufacturers are going crazy over changing models and "upgrading" things making your earlier model obsolete. I am old enough to remember when if you bought a TV set it could last for 30 years or more. Even computers and software are fast becoming obsolete within a couple of years. **This is the sinister face of the disposable society and there is little the public can do about it.**

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