

Dear Consumer Advisor:

In April of 2007 we launched our new and improved Survey of User Needs (SUN). Many thanks to those of you who have taken the survey either online, by mail, or by phone.

In just the first 10 months, more than 1200 people have completed the SUN. This is almost as many survey responses as we received from 2001-2006. This is great news! More than 800 have also joined the Consumer Advisory Network (CAN) to take part in product testing, focus groups, and other research in wireless technology. Consumers like you are helping to make wireless devices more useful and usable for everyone.



CAN members participating in user testing of cell phones

What we've learned so far

Wireless technologies are more important than ever to customers with disabilities. Sixty-five percent of SUN respondents told us that they use their wireless device every day; 77% told us that they consider their wireless device to be "very important". In our 2001-2006 survey, only 40% of people who took the SUN told us they used their device every day, and only 60% found it to be very important.

As you know, we also asked why your wireless device is important to you. Here are the reasons you gave:

- because it allows me to reach anyone anytime (68%)
- because I can get emergency help (65%)
- because it makes me feel more secure (59%)
- because it allows me to get directions wherever I am (25%)
- because it reminds me of appointments (19%)

About 68% of you told us you are "satisfied", "very satisfied", or "extremely satisfied" with your present wireless devices, and 76% find them "easy" or "very easy" to use. By contrast, only about 1/2 of those who responded to our previous survey said their wireless devices were "easy to use".

A complete report of SUN findings to date is available through the RERC website (www.wirelessrerc.org).

What do we do with what we've learned?

The mission of the Wireless RERC is "To promote equitable access to and use of wireless technologies by people with disabilities and encourage the adoption of Universal Design in future generations of wireless devices and applications". In striving to achieve our mission, it is our responsibility to make sure that what our Consumer Advisors tell us reaches the appropriate people.

Promoting industry awareness

One way we share what you tell us about your use of wireless devices is through our Industry Newsletter. The Industry Newsletter is very similar to this Consumer Advisory Newsletter, except the recipients are our Industry Partners. Industry partners include wireless service carriers, wireless device manufacturers, as well as wireless device designers.

We also offer training in universal design to industry. In June and October of 2007 we presented training seminars for three of our industry partners. These seminars include hands-on exercises to increase understanding of how design of wireless products affects usability for customers with disabilities. The exercises include simulations of limitations due to disabilities, with comments by people with disabilities who experience these limitations.



Seminar participants exploring visual and manual limitations

Influencing Public Policy

We use the findings from the SUN as well as our Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) survey to influence policy change. In December of 2007 we filed comments with the FCC regarding hearing aid compatibility and making cell phones more compatible with hearing aids. Using the SUN and HAC data we were able to demonstrate a need to expand rules on hearing aid compatible phones to include some models with M4/T4 compatibility.

New forum for wireless customers

Over the years we have heard from Consumer Advisors that choosing a wireless product can be complicated and confusing. There are so many variables to consider and compare - features and functions, service plans, prices, accessories, and the "hot" new product on the market. Choosing one to fit your specific needs can be overwhelming. Through our Survey of User Needs, hundreds of Consumer Advisors have told us they are interested in evaluating a website designed to help consumers make these choices.



On **February 25th**, the Wireless RERC is launching this new website: www.MyWirelessReview.com. MyWirelessReview.com goes beyond simply providing information on product features by creating a forum for customers of all ages and abilities to share their experiences using wireless products.

MyWirelessReview.com connects you with fellow CAN members and others with abilities similar to your own. On MyWirelessReview.com, you will be able to learn about which wireless products people use, how they use them, and what they like or dislike about them.

Beginning February 25th, we invite you to visit MyWirelessReview.com and discover from other consumers what it is like to use a wireless product in real-life. We also encourage you to join in and post your own experiences so that others can learn from you. We look forward to your visit!

Thanks, again – and invite your friends!

We're glad to have Advisors like you to help us with product testing, focus groups, and other projects we have planned for the coming year. Your input really can help improve wireless products and services for customers of all ages and abilities. Please contact us any time with comments, questions or suggestions. We welcome all feedback from our Consumer Advisors!

Every week we welcome new members to our Consumer Advisory Network. Please invite your friends to join by completing the survey on our website (www.wirelessrerc.org) or ask for a printed copy. The survey can also be completed over the phone - just call the number below to set up a convenient time.

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