

Dear Consumer Advisor:

In April of 2007, we launched our current Survey of User Needs (SUN). We've received about 1600 responses so far, and about 900 of you have joined our **Consumer Advisory Network**. Many thanks! This letter describes some of the ways **Consumer Advisors** are shaping the wireless industry. Our survey continues through 2011, so please encourage others to take our survey online, on paper, or by phone - check the contact information at the end of this letter.

Evaluating wireless emergency communications

Consumers and government alike understand the importance of access to emergency information for everyone. During 2008, **Consumer Advisors** participated in a series of tests of weather alerts sent via text messaging service. These tests help to develop recommendations to the Federal Communication Commission.

Additionally, the Wireless RERC will host a State of the Technology Conference on September 21-23 in Atlanta, GA on this very important topic. This FREE event will bring together wireless industry staff, emergency management and public safety officials, the broadcast and cable industry, individuals with disabilities, disability organizations, and researchers working on issues of emergency communications. We welcome suggestions from our **Consumer Advisors** on topics and speakers for plenary sessions and workshops. Please contact:

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Exploring touchscreen usability

Beginning with the iPhone, touchscreens have quickly become popular. For some users, these new devices present accessibility challenges. During 2008, **Consumer Advisors** in the Atlanta area with visual or manual limitations helped us explore the usability of touchscreen products like the iPod Touch. We're sharing our findings directly with our industry partners, so that products like this can be more usable for wireless customers with and without disabilities.

Surveying iPhone applications



Consumer Advisor exploring the touchscreen of an iPod Touch

Users of the iPhone and other touchscreen smartphones now have the opportunity to customize their devices with highly specialized, downloadable software applications. To

help identify applications that can increase usability for customers with disabilities, we invite iPhone users to participate in an online survey about these new applications at: <http://cansurvey.wirelessrerc.org/iphonesurvey/iphonesurvey.htm>. Identities of survey participants will remain anonymous.

We also invite users to post comments on their experience with the iPhone and its applications on our consumer forum, MyWirelessReview, at: <http://www.mywirelessreview.com>.

Surveying hearing aid compatibility (HAC) of mobile phones

Manufacturers of mobile phones are building more hearing aid compatible (HAC) models. Service providers are increasing HAC training for their sales staff. Still, most hearing aid users report difficulty finding a compatible mobile phone, according to our annual study.

More than 400 hearing aid users responded to our 2008 online survey about finding compatible wireless phones. Our findings show marked improvements in customer satisfaction with phone compatibility since we began this survey in 2006. The findings also show room for improvement in the search process:

- Satisfaction with mobile phone compatibility by hearing aid users increased dramatically between 2007 and 2008.
- The percentage of respondents who had difficulty finding a compatible phone dropped significantly, but the majority still find the search challenging.

Video series on hearing aid compatibility now available

The Wireless RERC has completed its five-part video series, "Hearing Aid Compatibility: Choosing a Cell Phone That Works for You". This series helps clear up some of the mystery surrounding hearing aid compatibility by demonstrating the process of choosing a HAC phone:

- A certified audiologist presents the background issues of hearing aid compatibility.
- A sales person and a customer demonstrate a typical "try and buy" process at an actual wireless store.
- A consumer demonstrates how to test the compatibility of a wireless product in common places and situations.

The video series includes both captioning and audio description. It is hosted on CTIA's Access Wireless website, www.accesswireless.org. One major wireless carrier is already using the series as a training tool for sales and customer support staff. Please post your questions or comments about this video or hearing aid compatibility in general on our consumer forum, MyWirelessReview.com.



Time for a new guide to choosing a mobile phone?

In 2004, *Consumer Advisors* helped us develop this popular online and pocket guide. In 2009, we'll extend the invitation again to

our members nationwide to decide whether it's time to revise this guide, and how to go about it.

Thanks, again – and invite your friends!

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. It is also now available in Spanish.

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

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MyWirelessReview.com gathers momentum

In the spring of 2008, we launched our online consumer forum on wireless technology, MyWirelessReview.com. Traffic since then has grown fourfold, featuring consumer input on issues like costs of text messaging, "simple" vs. "smart" phones, shopping tips for wireless devices, and new products and services like "WebCapTel on the Go". MyWirelessReview also offers audiocasts by consumers on products like Windows Mobile Speak PocketPC and Windows Mobile Geo. We encourage our Consumer Advisors to make MyWirelessReview their forum for sharing thoughts, ideas, praise, and gripes about wireless technologies with each other, and with industry.



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