

As Industry Canada has recognized that the monopolization of Cell Phone has resulted in the gouging of the public and the slowness of Canadian adaptation to Cell Phone Services.

Clearly, this monopolization is not in the interests of Canadians benefiting from the best technologies and services which they could otherwise have.

In addition to promoting the benefits of competition, I believe that those issuing licences must ensure the protection of consumer interests other than availability, choice and price. I specifically refer to the right of Canadian consumers to have their privacy respected. Those obtaining licenses must protect Canadian consumers, a matter that should not be just left to the Federal Privacy Commissioner to attend to. I draw upon two analogous examples of how monopolies, without constraint by Industry Canada and despite expressed concern of the Privacy Commissioner, are violating the interests of Canadian consumers.

In the area of internet services there is a similar domination by major players and if consumers want to have a broad range of services, and some measure of portability as they move around Canada, they pretty much have to draw on one of their services.

Rogers Cable recently sent me a Terms of Service document which included a statement that consumer information could be stored outside of Canada and subject to foreign laws. Consumers are advised that if they did not agree they could cancel their Rogers services. Where does one go when there is such limited choice? I have no doubt Rogers would also charge disconnection fees to anyone who do not accept this coercive scenario.

Canada.com , owned by CanWest, attracted me as truly Canadian and a safe service where I could receive e-mail and store important messages such as confirmation of online payments and service registrations. Very recently and without notice, my access to my long used e-mail account was blocked by an "Important Message". This message informed me that they had transferred the service to servers in the USA and would be subject to USA laws. Click Agree to proceed. Click Disagree to end the service. The choice for me was to agree to lose my privacy or lose access to all the information that I had stored.

Canadians should not be bullied into accepting the loss of Privacy and the exposure of their personal information to the USA Patriot Act. I bring to your attention recent admissions by the FBI that they have overstepped the Patriot Act in accessing the personal information of individuals in USA databanks.

My point is that the government of Canada must not allow similar abuse of consumers in the cell phone or any other industry, noting that the players in the cell phone industry and the internet business are often the same, with this trend likely to increase.

Your attention to this matter will be appreciated.  
Sincerely,  
Hugh Andrew

Wednesday, March 14, 2007 10:16 AM