

I understand that the maximum charge (on a BT line) for calls to an 0871 number is £0.10/min and that the maximum charge that the number holder can take from that £0.10 is £0.06, which doesn't seem to be a lot. However, many companies and utilities operate a queuing system, without telling you the expected delay in answering, without telling you how much the call is costing and without telling you how much of the per minute charge they are taking as profit. I have had several occasions recently when I have had to wait for around 20 minutes - in other words, the call receiver may well have made a profit of £1.20 out of my call. I have no doubt whatsoever that many companies/utilities will deliberately delay answering calls so that they can make a secret profit from such calls.

Why should there be more telephone numbers which cost more than the basic? We know that 09XX numbers are premium rate numbers, which are used widely by the TV quiz programmes and the sex industry, so why do we need 0871 numbers at all? These 09XX numbers are well known to be rip offs, but it is not widely known that the 0871 numbers can also be rip offs. Many 0871 and 0870 numbers give normal telephone numbers for the use of overseas callers, but have a blocking system for calls coming from the UK, refusing to accept the UK callers and referring them to their premium rate numbers. Why is this allowed?

Many telephone service providers have tariffs which include free calls to national and local numbers, but exclude all these additional numbers such as 0845, 0870 and 0871 numbers. The more companies switch over to 0871 numbers, the less valuable are such tariffs.

I suggest that owners of 0871 numbers should be made to give out their standard 01XX or 02XX number also and then the caller can choose which number to use.

Best regards

Tim Bright