

*Australian Seniors
Computer Clubs Association* **ASCCA**



**This project sought to
enable seniors to express
their telecommunications
interests and concerns so
that they could say in a
loud voice,**

**"Seniors WANT
Seniors NEED....."**

**ASCCA received funding
for this consumer issues
project from the Telstra
Consumer Consultative
Council**

Thank you!

✓ A survey form was created and distributed through ASCCA Seniors Computer Clubs

✓ More than 500 completed surveys were received, with responses from every state of Australia

vThe statistical information from the survey follows:

vPlease note that some respondents did not answer all questions.

Responses came from the following locations:

Metropolitan	–	338	or	67%
Regional	-	150	or	29%
Rural	-	21	or	4%

**v 257 males &
252 females responded!**

v 220 were aged 50 – 69 years

v 221 were aged 70 – 79 years

v 58 were aged 80 – 89 years

v 2 respondents were over 90



When seniors were asked if they used a mobile phone,

✓ 409, or 82% said yes,

✓ 88, or 18% said no.

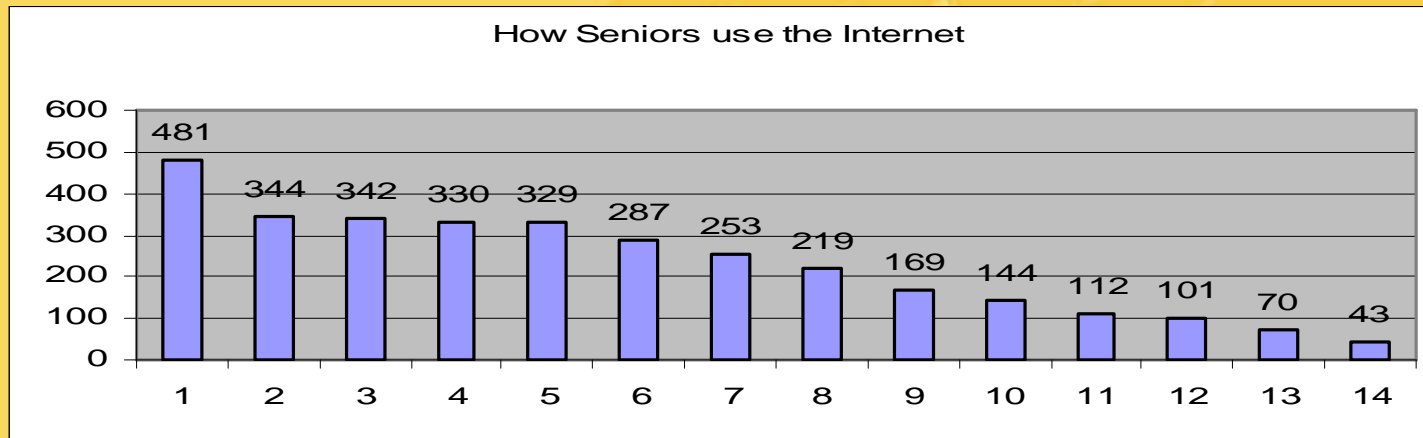
When asked where they accessed the Internet it was revealed that some seniors accessed it from more than one place.

- v474, or 84% used it at home**
- v81, or 15% relied on club, library or work for access**

v288, or 62% had a broadband connection

v178, or 38% had dial up

vMany using dial up protested that this was all they could get!



The top 5 uses for the Internet were:

1. email

2. Searching for product information

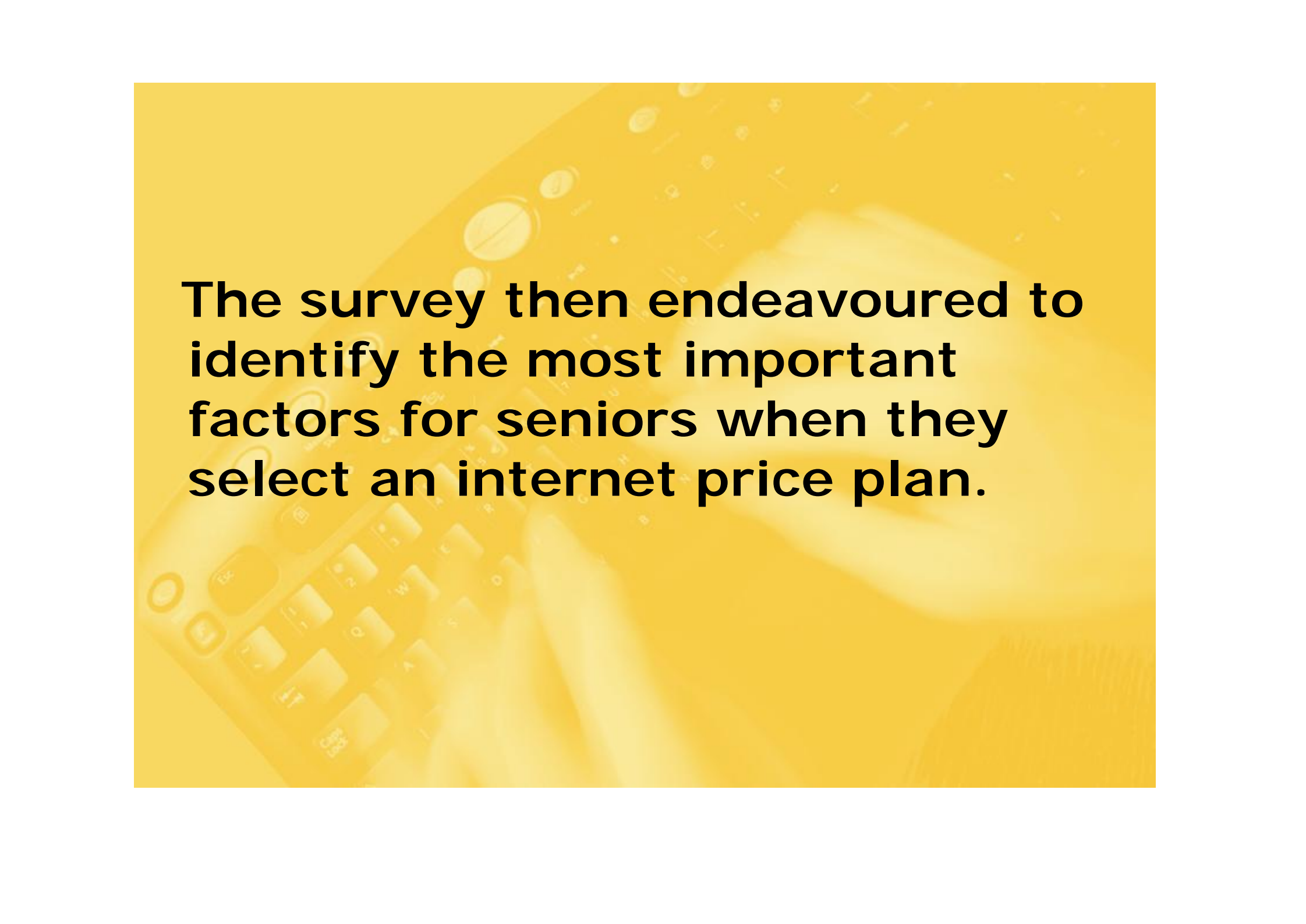
3. Sending photos by email

4. Looking up timetables

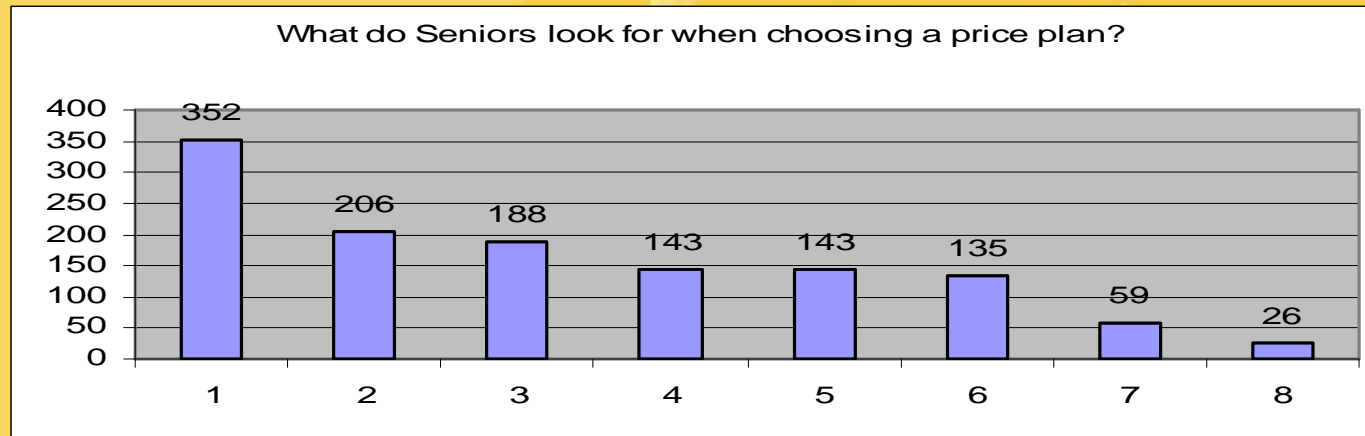
5. Research/study

followed by:

- 6. General surfing**
- 7. Internet Banking**
- 8. Paying bills on-line**
- 9. Reading newspapers on-line**
- 10. Purchasing on-line**
- 11. Playing games**
- 12. On-line trading**
- 13. Downloading streaming video or audio**
- 14. Publishing your own web page**



The survey then endeavoured to identify the most important factors for seniors when they select an internet price plan.



- 1. Best deal for the amount I want to pay**
- 2. Speed of connection and downloads**
- 3. Amount of download included**

Followed by:

4. Free installation

4. No excess usage fees

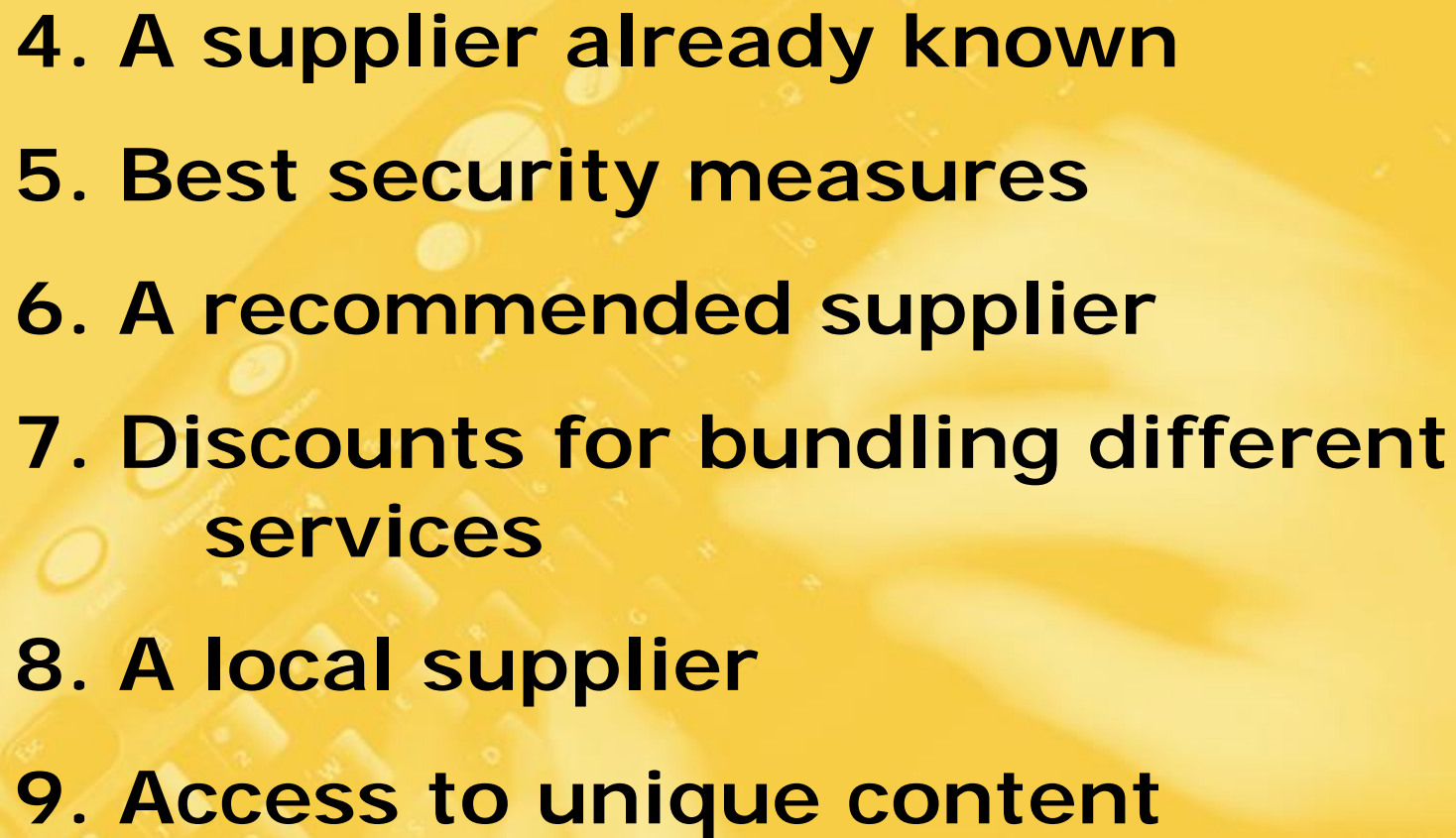
6. Monthly allowance of hours

7. Special introductory offer

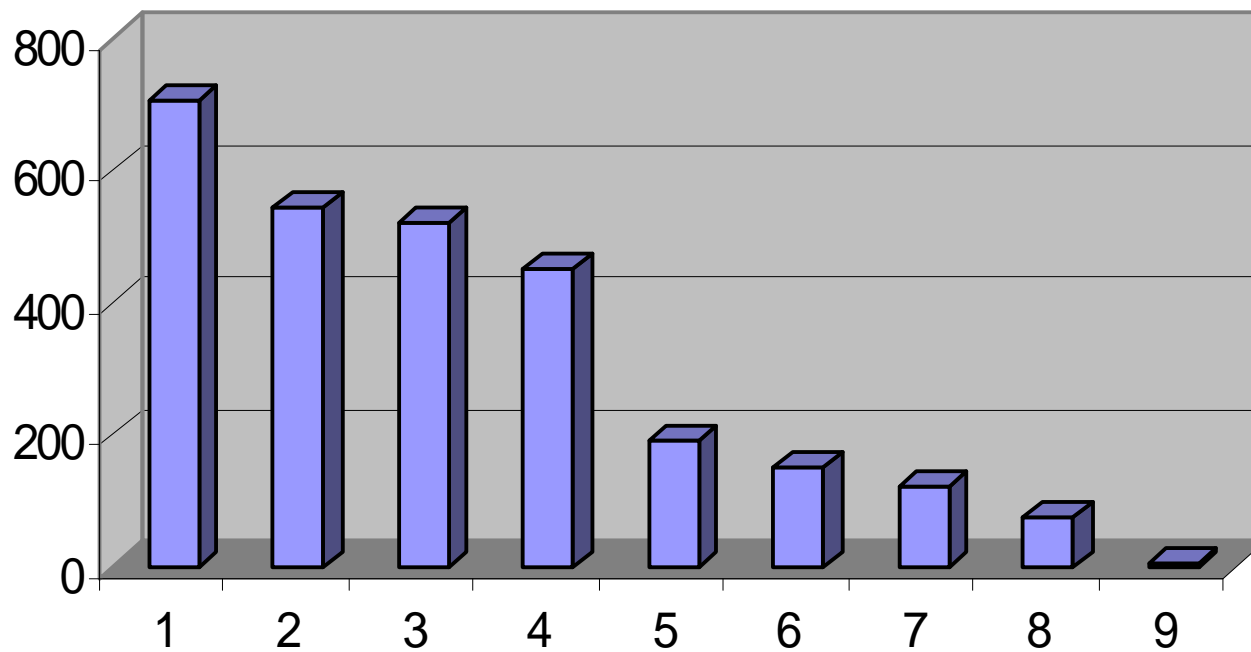
Respondents were then asked to prioritise the 3 most important factors for them to consider when choosing an ISP.

Quite clearly Seniors Want

- ✓ Reliability & good reputation**
- ✓ The best overall deal**
- ✓ Good Service back-up**

- 
- 4. A supplier already known**
 - 5. Best security measures**
 - 6. A recommended supplier**
 - 7. Discounts for bundling different services**
 - 8. A local supplier**
 - 9. Access to unique content**

How Seniors select their ISP



Respondents prioritised issues of concern.

✓ Issues ranked 1 and 2 were addressed at an ASCCA Members' Meeting

✓ All issues are covered in the published report

The issues were :

- 1. Security issues relating to spam, phishing, viruses etc.**
- 2. Access and affordability of telecommunications for all Australians**
- 3. Protection from pornographic material on the internet for our grandchildren**
- 4. Consumer rights**



The survey then moved on to open ended questions:

[Where possible the actual words of respondents have been used]

119 commented about the use of emerging technologies such as VoIP Respondents concerns were:

- v "What protections are in place to protect users?"**
- v "Use of emergency contact for police, fire, and ambulance."**
- v "Privacy & security issues"**

Respondents wanted:

- ✓ "Simplification; Ease of use; Ease of installation; Assurance of quality."**
- ✓ "Make it simple to understand and operate, and inexpensive, with access to reliable assistance"**



Do you use VoIP?

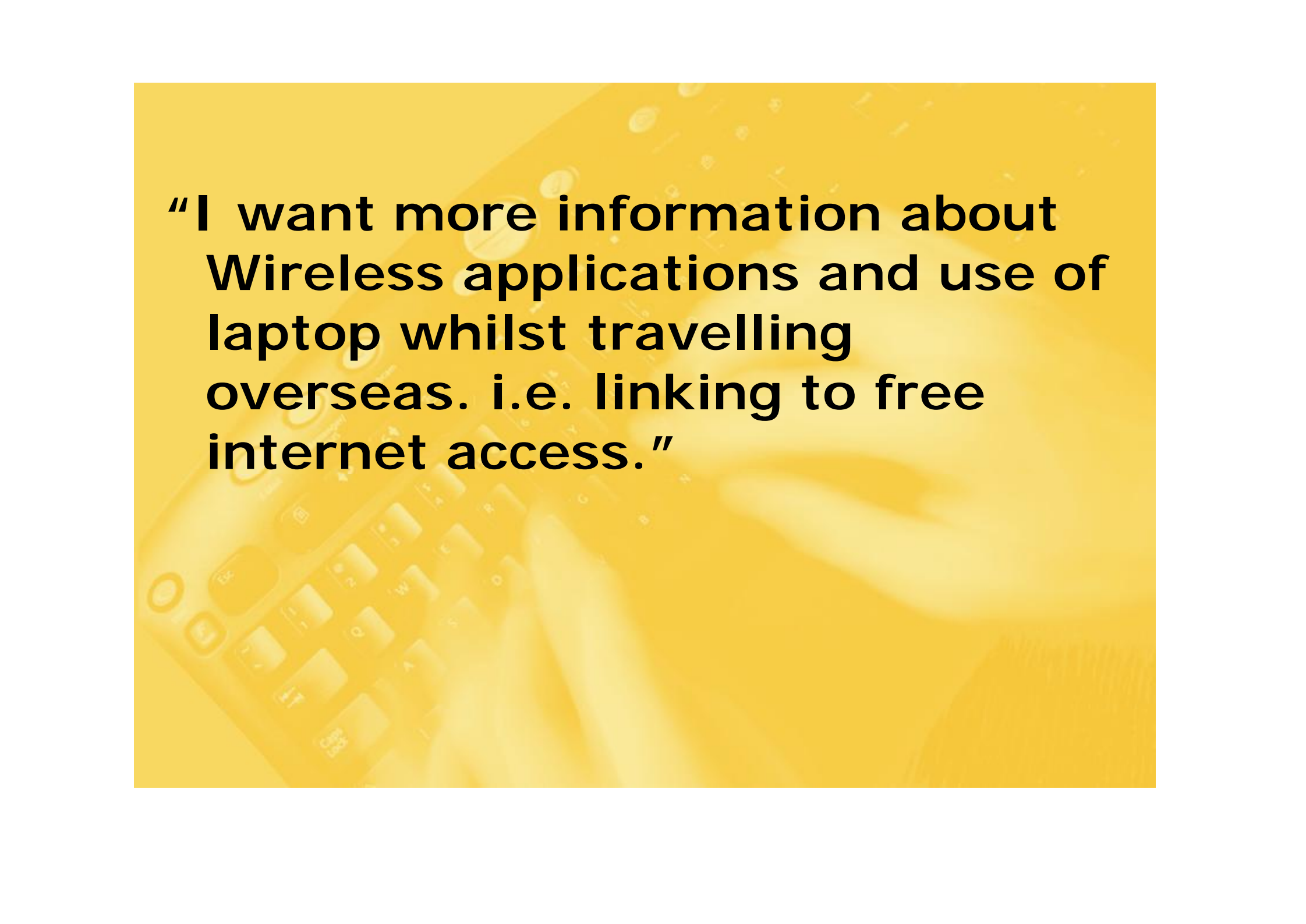
**197 responded to this question
about actual usage**

v "Have been using VoIP almost exclusively for several months with no problems and significant savings. Landline on Home Budget Plan for Internet and emergency use."

v "Not in the foreseeable future as it is not available at the homes I would like to contact."

Comments on other emerging technologies included:

“I use Messenger and a webcam to speak with my daughter and grandchildren in Scotland. The application is wonderful, inexpensive, powerful and adaptable – but when can we expect better quality?”



“I want more information about Wireless applications and use of laptop whilst travelling overseas. i.e. linking to free internet access.”



Respondents were asked to list any telecommunications issues that they wanted Telstra to address.

Some 203 issues fell into 5 main categories

Category 1: The greatest number of issues were about

✓ **Cost**

✓ **Billing**

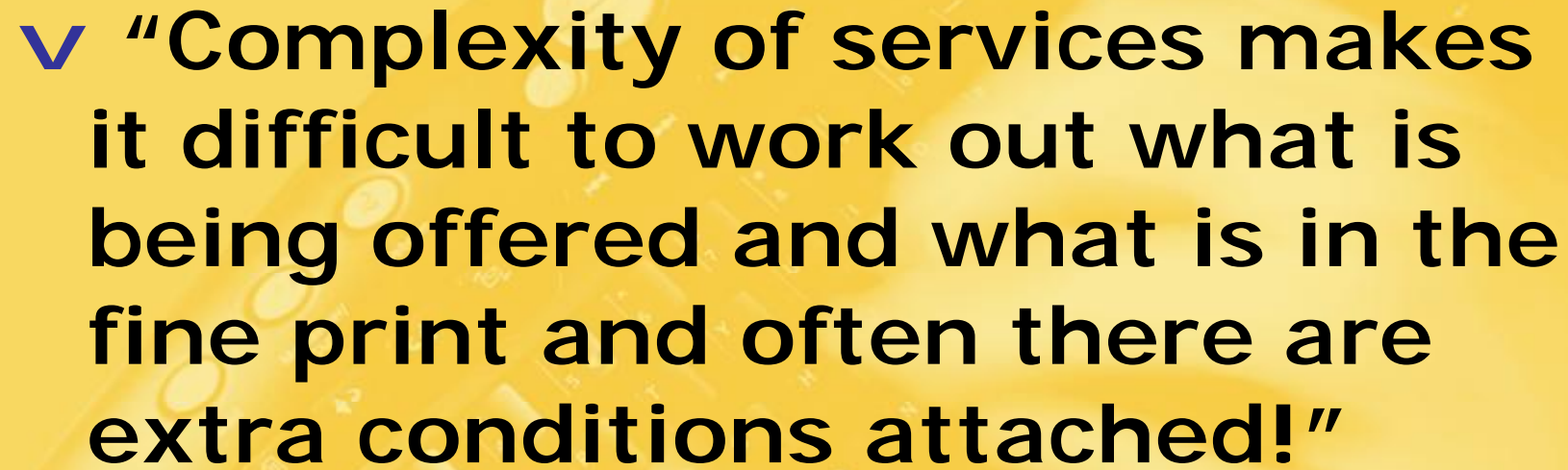
✓ **plans**

v “We need Pensioner and senior discounts for internet access costs.”

v “Why can't the amount of downloads that I don't use in one month be carried over to the next month?”

v "How do they justify the high charges for services. Other countries seem to be able to provide services at much lower rates."

v "One bill for phones and broadband!!"



v “Complexity of services makes it difficult to work out what is being offered and what is in the fine print and often there are extra conditions attached!”



v "There are so many ISP plans and deals on offer that it is confusing."

v "We need simple straight forward plans"



**The second highest range of
issues covered**

v availability and

v speed

- v "Why is Australia's broadband much slower than in other countries, are we in the horse and cart age?"**
- v "Despite living in centre of large regional area (Sunshine Coast Q) broadband is still not available in our street!"**

v “When is city-quality service going to be available to all Australians?”

v “When do they expect faster broadband to be available in the regions?”



v "There should be better telecommunications in the bush."

v "Faster broadband access, like many other OECD countries enjoy"



**The next category of issues
relates to customer service and
advertising**

v "A little less technical jargon when addressing users needing support please."

v "Technical help assumes that I have a high level of technical skill. I find it difficult to follow their advice!"

✓ "Every time I seek technical assistance **ALWAYS** the recorded message says '*we are experiencing heavier than normal traffic and we are investigating the cause*'."

✓ Obviously the cause is insufficient staff???"

✓ "More staff needed in shops"


v “Advertising too small and complicated to work out, often resulting in unhappy customers who feel they have been diddled.”

v “Unrealistic offer of 100 free phone calls a month!”

The next category of issues related to technology

**v "When is the copper network
going to be changed over to
co-ax or glass fibre
networking?"**

v "extension of cable"



v "Wireless access at home and when travelling."

v "Some actual facts about future plans and timing of same."

Inevitably there were issues about spam and telemarketing

v "Find ways to eliminate nuisance and uninvited phone marketing."

v "More control of spam."

v "Please address the issue of harassment by telemarketers, as I own my phone and pay rental where are my legal rights?"

v "Indian call centre voices who speak too fast and are extremely difficult to understand, Really this is so insulting!"

v "I am charged a small monthly fee for a spam filter and I still get emails that are obviously 1. spam and 2. not even addressed to me, only have a similarity to my email address!"

When asked if they had any problems with mobile phones, 173 had something to say!

There were three main issues,

- √ Cost, billing & Plans**
- √ Poor coverage & dropouts**
- √ Simpler phones**

v "The variety of plans is too confusing."

v I have pre-paid but am appalled when I have to pay for unsolicited information."

v "Cost!"

v "Reception in our rural area is still very patchy and the prices are too high"

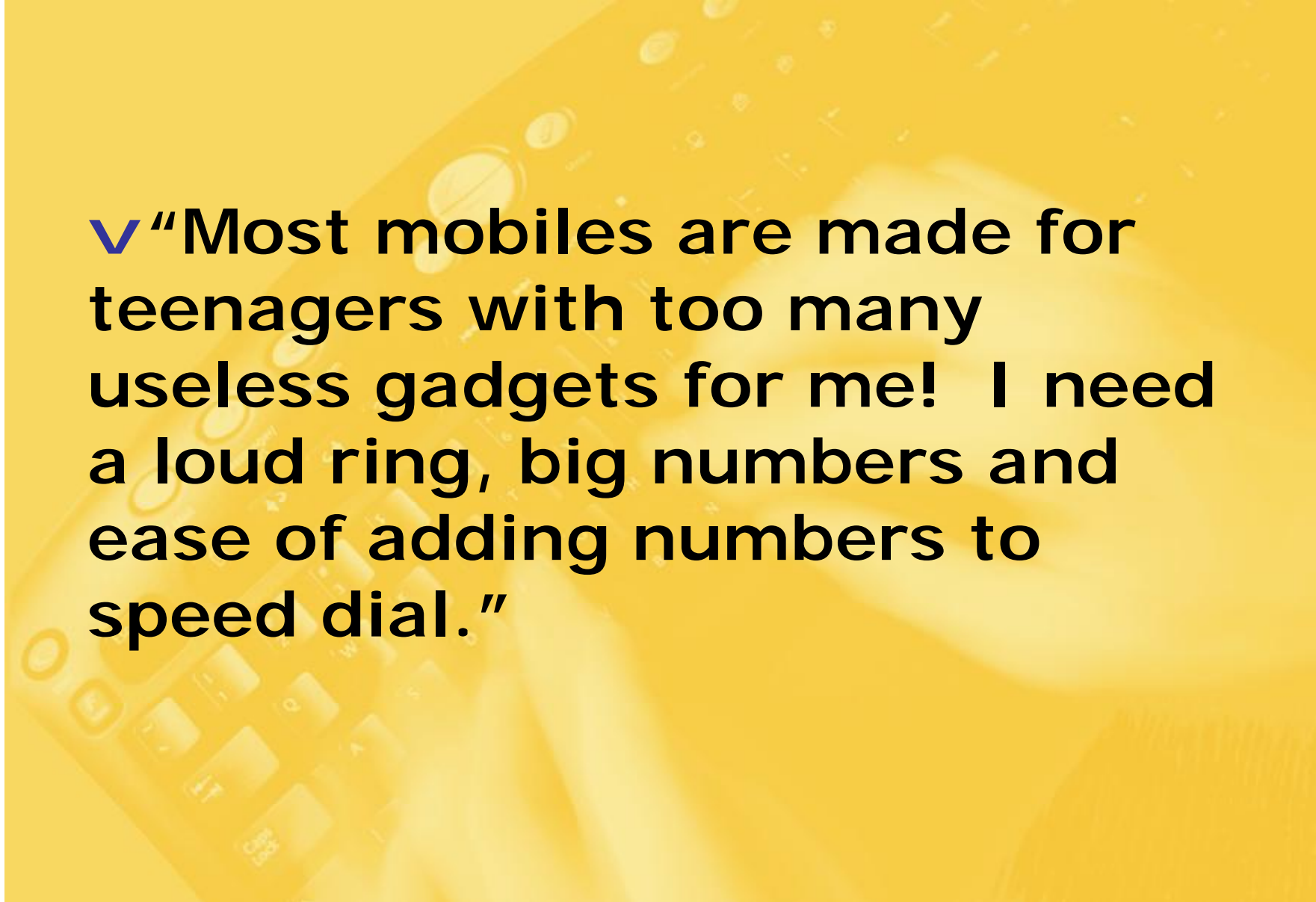
v "I would like to have greater coverage with fewer drop-outs"

v "The cost of usage and lack of service in my favourite fishing areas!"

**The highest single issue was
the suitability of phones!**

v "The numbers are too small"

**v Being vision impaired I am
looking for a phone with large
buttons and a large screen"**



v "Most mobiles are made for teenagers with too many useless gadgets for me! I need a loud ring, big numbers and ease of adding numbers to speed dial."



v One person in the 80 – 89 age group answered that he didn't use a mobile phone – yet!

It just shows that we are never too old to learn!!

**"Seniors WANT
Seniors NEED....."**

- v A simple phone & internet plan**
- v Cheaper and faster Internet connections**
- v Discounts and better service for seniors & those with a disability**

**"Seniors WANT
Seniors NEED....."**

**✓ Phones that are basic and
easy to use**

**✓ Low cost for low usage
[many seniors use mobiles just
for emergencies]**

**"Seniors WANT
Seniors NEED....."**

✓ Seniors want a training session to help them understand how to make better use of their phones

**"Seniors WANT
Seniors NEED....."**

**vA Seniors Consultant would
be a useful addition to
Telstra staff**

Conclusions:

Seniors would be more likely to choose a service provider that had simple and clear phone and Internet plans that didn't contain any surprises.

38% of respondents have a dial-up connection and many expressed a strong desire for broadband. However, they were not able to access either ADSL, cable or wireless and assumed that satellite was too inconvenient or too expensive.

Conclusions:

Seniors prefer phones that are basic and easy to use.

Many respondents indicated they use their mobiles only for emergencies, which was valued as a service, but they would prefer a plan that addressed their low usage.

Seniors greatly value reliable service.

Conclusions:

Seniors want a training session to help them understand how to make better use of their phones.

Seniors want to know more about VoIP before they start using it. There are concerns about cost, privacy and reliability but most of all they want more information, including demonstrations, before actually choosing and using VoIP.

Conclusions:

Many Seniors are travelling and want to know how to use emerging technology when away from home.

And finally,

A Seniors Consultant would be a useful addition to Telstra staff.



**Thank you to
TCCC for funding the project
and to the
Members of ASCCA Clubs who took
the time to complete the survey**



**This Survey and its interpretation has
been completed by**

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