



Best cell-phone service

More than 50,000 readers rate their wireless carrier

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WITH MORE CAPABLE and “smarter” phones, bigger and faster wireless networks, and more varied and flexible plans, you might think consumers would be getting happier with their cell-phone service. Instead, a survey of CONSUMER REPORTS readers shows no such trend.

In our annual survey conducted this fall by the Consumer Reports National Research Center, only 54 percent of respondents were completely or very satisfied with their cell-phone service. That's a tepid showing compared with most other services we rate. Almost two-thirds of readers had at least one major complaint about service.

Here's what else our survey showed:

Verizon Wireless is tops overall. Ver-

izon, now the nation's largest wireless carrier after its acquisition of Alltel last year, had the top score in our overall summary Ratings and was a high scorer in a majority of the 26 cities we surveyed.

Price is the paramount problem. About one in five readers cited high cost as their top complaint about cellular. That's more than for any other annoyance.

Texting and other data uses boom. Almost 70 percent of readers said they sent and received text messages. That compares with 55 percent in 2007. About 20 percent of the 2009 group reported pecking out 10 or more messages per day. Roughly 40 percent said they accessed the Internet with their phone, up from 23 percent two years ago, and more than 35 percent sent and received e-mail on their phone. Some 19 percent used

Web-based cell-phone applications.

Data service gets ho-hum marks. This year, for the first time, we asked readers about their experiences with text messaging and surfing the Web. The verdict was mixed. Only 24 percent of data-service users rated their Web and e-mail experience as excellent. Among Web users, 37 percent said that Web access was slower than expected on at least one occasion in the week prior to the survey. Eighteen percent of e-mail users cited the inability to send or receive e-mail as a problem.

Prepaid expands and scores well. The fairly small percentage of our readers who used prepaid service were generally happy with it. In our first Ratings of the service, prepaid specialist TracFone received the highest score, followed by prepaid service from T-Mobile; Virgin Mobile, another prepaid specialist; and prepaid service from Verizon. AT&T's prepaid service rated better than its contract service, but it was the worst prepaid provider.

Phone exclusivity shapes choices. A separate new survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center on cell-phone buying provides interesting data as the Federal Communications Commission considers whether to regulate deals that make phones exclusively available from certain carriers. Thirty-eight percent of respondents who had switched carriers in the past two years did so because it was required to get the phone they wanted. And 27 percent of all respondents went shopping with a specific phone in mind.

Below are three scenarios for today's cell-phone users and our recommendations for them, based on our survey findings and reporting.

❑ You want the best

You should probably pick Verizon if it's available where you live. Aside from its high ranking overall, Verizon was above average on every attribute in our overall summary Ratings, including customer support, voice connectivity, and data services. Verizon also has one of the biggest networks in the industry. "When customers switch carriers to get better service quality, they predominantly go to Verizon," says Charles Golvin, an analyst at Forrester Research.

But the Cadillac of cellular is often costly, especially compared with T-Mobile, which is frequently low-priced. For example, Verizon's \$60 Nationwide Basic plan gives you 900 voice minutes. But T-Mobile's

8 ways to cut costs on your cell-phone bill

If you're among the 29 percent of our readers who are seriously considering changing carriers and want to cut costs in the process, switching to prepaid service is not your only option. Here's how to pare your bill if you're shopping among the big four contract carriers or if you simply want to cut costs with your current contract plan:

1 Don't overbuy minutes.

Review the voice minutes you've used and not used in the past six months. Among the readers who responded to an informal poll on our Electronics blog (blogs.ConsumerReports.org/electronics), almost two-thirds of those who had a contract plan reported using only about 200 of the average 600 minutes in their plan. Of the minutes they did use, only one in six were billable; the rest were free night and weekend, mobile-to-mobile, and calling-list minutes. Bottom line: Some cell-phone users could save money by switching to a plan with fewer included minutes, provided it offered the same free talk-time benefits.

2 Maximize family-plan calling.

If you have a multiline family plan, don't ring up your better half or kids by dialing their landline home or work phones because you get charged for those minutes. Use the family-plan cell phone instead because those in-network mobile-to-mobile minutes are usually free and unlimited.

3 Use freebies to the max.

BillShrink (www.billshrink.com), which collects and analyzes the calling needs of about 430,000 cell users per month, says consumers make 65 percent of their calls to the same five phone numbers. So if you're in a plan that offers unlimited free minutes to designated calling-list phone numbers, such as Verizon Friends & Family, register your five to 10 most-called numbers. Those carriers also offer free unlimited calling to other cell users within their networks, so limit your calling list to land lines and cell numbers outside your network.

4 Consider texting bundles.

Messaging on contract plans requires buying messages à la carte at 15 to 20 cents per message, a package of 200 to 1,500 messages per month for \$5 to \$15, or a higher-priced package or plan that includes unlimited messaging. About 54 percent of texters in our survey bought unlimited plans. Among the remaining survey respondents who bought a fixed number of messages or paid à la carte, 12 percent sent and received more texts than expected and were hit with high charges for texting.

5 Huge bill? Call the carrier.

Surprise: Your daughter exceeded your plan's texting limit by 2,000 messages. Before you fork over hundreds of dollars in extra fees, call customer service. Some consumers have found that carriers will retroactively change plans or forgive charges for an aberrant high monthly bill due to a change in usage or the like. By more than two to one, survey respondents chose the human touch of a phone call over contact via a Web site as a way to reach customer support.

6 Get data in a plan.

À la carte plans for data use charge by how many megabytes of data you use e-mailing, uploading, and downloading. Rates per megabyte range from \$1.99 (Verizon) to \$10.24 (AT&T) to Sprint's exorbitant \$30.72. Even with rules of thumb to help—Verizon estimates that you'll usually use 1MB by viewing about 80 Web pages—data estimates are a crapshoot, and it's little wonder that only 4 percent of Web/e-mail users in our survey risked a plan that bills data on a per-megabyte basis. With most smart phones, you have to get an unlimited Internet access package or an "everything included" plan with unlimited Web and messaging. Such plans cost \$10 to \$60 per month.

7 Shop around.

Services such as those at www.billshrink.com (free) and www.myvalidas.com (at least \$5) will sift through the major contract carrier plans for you, based on usage patterns and worthwhile added logic; their information includes the available phones with various plans and their cost. You can also even choose the plan by the phone, if you prefer. They're useful, obviously, when you're shopping for a carrier but are also worth periodically checking to make sure you're not overpaying with your current carrier. Those services don't include plans offered by leading prepaid carriers, whose prices we found are often cheaper.

8 Avoid big termination fees.

Seventeen percent of our readers with a contract wanted to switch carriers but didn't want to get hit with an early termination fee that can run as high as \$350 (Verizon), \$175 (AT&T) or \$200 (Sprint and T-Mobile) per phone line. But your termination fee, although still hefty, might be lower than those figures because carriers now reduce the fees over the life of the contract. If you switch to a new carrier, test out the phone and service during the carrier's 15- to 30-day trial period, when you can quit and port your number to another carrier without incurring a penalty.

similar plan, myFaves 1000, provides 100 more minutes for the same monthly fee. The price difference becomes more obvious as you add data services. With unlimited messaging and Web, you must buy Verizon's Nationwide Connect plan for \$90 per month; T-Mobile myFaves 1000 lets you add unlimited data for \$20, making a total price of \$80.

T-Mobile was the next-best competitor to Verizon in overall satisfaction, though it got lower marks on voice, messaging, and Web and e-mail services. Sprint, the clear worst carrier last year, is now locked in a fight for last place with AT&T. Though Sprint got marks similar to T-Mobile's for satisfaction with voice, messaging, and Web and e-mail services, it scored well below T-Mobile for customer service despite claims of improvement over the past year. AT&T's main weak spot was voice connectivity—the ease with which people could

place calls free of static and without being dropped. Yet the carrier, the nation's second-largest after Verizon, was also below average in every attribute in our overall Ratings except Web access and texting.

Bottom line. Verizon remains the best choice for top service in most cities, but keep an open mind. Its premium prices and your own needs (for a particular phone, for example) make other carriers, notably T-Mobile, worth considering, especially in cities where those carriers have fared particularly well.

■ You want an iPhone

For such a user, there's a dilemma: Apple's iPhones are the top smart phones in our Ratings—actually, among the best of all phones we tested, period—but their exclusive carrier, AT&T, was middling at best in satisfaction.

Fans crave Apple's smart phone.

Among respondents to our cell-phone-buying survey who had bought an iPhone 3G S, released in June 2009, 45 percent had preordered it, and 12 percent had waited in long lines in stores the day the phone went on sale. That's dedication, even more than was shown by buyers of the Palm Pre, another hot phone we asked about.

Prepaid service is a cost-saver for many, but it's best at the basics.

Trouble is, according to news reports, the iPhone's popularity is overtaking the AT&T network. The crush of all the e-mailing, Web surfing, and other data-heavy activity from the iPhone's dizzying 100,000 available software applications has heavily strained the network and may have contributed to AT&T's relatively low satisfaction scores.

Our Ratings and reporting lend credibility to reports that the problem is worse in some cities where iPhone owners are most prevalent. AT&T is working to add capacity in such tech-hip cities as San Francisco, New York, and Boston, in part by acquiring some of the wireless spectrum that became available after local TV stations ended analog broadcasts.

AT&T and Apple declined to be interviewed for this article.

Bottom line. If you're readying to buy Apple's phone, prepare for possible disappointment with its service and expect to love the phone anyway. Despite the network problems, a staggering 98 percent of iPhone users in our cell-phone-buying survey were satisfied enough to say they would definitely or probably buy the phone again. Only 79 percent of respondents who bought other cell phones said the same.

One work-around if you're having network trouble on the iPhone: Using the iPhone's Wi-Fi capability, switch your network connection to one of AT&T's 20,000 Wi-Fi hot spots, which you can use free with your iPhone plan, or to your home broadband connection via a wireless router.

If you're really dissatisfied, try complaining to AT&T about the poor service. Based on our Ratings, you might not get the help you need, but there are always exceptions. When one of our staffers

Faster networks are coming

Get used to the term 4G. You're going to hear it a lot in the coming year as wireless carriers begin upgrading their networks to fourth-generation technology. Promising faster connections than today's high-speed 3G networks, carriers say 4G will alleviate network congestion and allow the streaming and downloading of high-quality videos and other large files at blazing speeds. But you can't yet buy a 4G cell phone, and you needn't worry about your current phone becoming obsolete soon. For now, 4G technology is available for use only on laptops.

The only carrier to offer a 4G network so far is Sprint. Using a technology known as WiMax (for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access), it's offering 4G service in at least 25 U.S. markets, including Chicago, Philadelphia, Las Vegas, and Dallas-Fort Worth, and promises to serve up to 120 million people by the end of 2010. Verizon also promises a 2010 launch in 30 markets serving 100 million people, using a competing 4G technology known as LTE (for Long-Term Evolution). AT&T plans to begin LTE trials in 2010, with deployment beginning in 2011. At press time T-Mobile, a latecomer to 3G networks, had not yet announced 4G plans.

4G is limited to laptops in part



SPEED ZONE Sprint has the first fourth-generation network, though its geographic scope is limited.

because their bigger batteries can better meet the greater power demands of the new technology.

And it's a pricey laptop add-on. Sprint's 4G data plan for laptops is \$70 per month, \$10 more than its 3G plan, and requires purchase of an \$80 4G external network card (though it's sometimes offered free).

Also, although 4G technology should allow speeds that are several times faster than 3G networks, the speed gain may not be as great as some carrier specifications suggest because those figures use bit rates, which might not align with actual network speed in use.

gripped to AT&T about network problems, it quickly credited his two-iPhone account for three months of data service—a refund of more than \$200 in all.

On the fence about an iPhone? Our smart-phone Ratings recommend a number of fine alternatives.

■ You want bargain basics

Prepaid service is quickly becoming the leading low-price option in cellular. A sign of the times: Prepaid specialist Boost Mobile, the price-chopping champ most of last year, added 1.5 million new customers in the first half of 2009, while its parent company, Sprint, lost almost 2.2 million.

The main difference between prepaid and a traditional contract plan is that you pay before you get the service rather than after you get a monthly bill, and there's no contract commitment. Prepaid phones are sold at Walmart, Target, and other stores, as well as online; talk time is easily purchased online or over the phone itself with a credit card.

About three-quarters of our readers who chose prepaid said they did so because it cost them less than a monthly billing plan. Service usually costs \$25 or less per month, compared with \$50 to \$100 per month for contract customers. Last year we compared more than 150 contract and prepaid plans. We used 11 example customers representing a range of cell-usage patterns, and prepaid was hands down cheaper in most cases. Savings can run between \$100 and \$1,080 per year, depending on whether you're an individual or a couple and on your monthly voice-minutes and data-service usage. The prepaid cost advantage was less for multiphone families.

There are some drawbacks to prepaid service. Carriers tend to focus more on simpler phones for voice calls and basic messaging. "You won't get the latest, greatest devices with all the 'Star Wars' capabilities from us," says Matt Carter, CEO of Boost Mobile.

You can get Web access and e-mail from prepaid carriers, but only 47 percent of prepaid respondents gave high marks to it. That's significantly below the 62 percent who said the same thing about their experience with data services provided through contract plans.

Is it a hassle to prepay and reload minutes? The vast majority, 92 percent, said that it was not an issue. Slightly more than half of the prepaid subscribers in our survey buy bundles of minutes, between

Those pesky wireless surcharges

Tacked onto almost everyone's cellular bill are official-sounding fees: a Federal Universal Service Fund Fee, or a Wireless Tower Mandates Cost.

But those surcharges aren't set by any government, and each carrier comes up with its own. That obviously hinders consumers in accurately predicting what that "\$39.99 plan" might actually wind up costing every month.

Now the Federal Communications Commission is investigating the charges as part of its broad review of wireless service. In a recent petition to the FCC, a coalition of consumer groups, including Consumers Union, the publisher of CONSUMER REPORTS, says such charges mislead or even deceive because they can boost base rates by up to 30 percent with an unpredictable mishmash of fees.

In their defense, carriers say they disclose the charges in customers' wireless-plan agreements, on the back of their monthly bills, and on company Web sites. The disclosures make it clear that the charges are not mandated by law, the carriers say.

30 and 5,000 minutes costing \$10 to \$400. A third choose pay-as-you-go plans, which charge 5 to 25 cents per minute used, with or without a \$1 to \$2 daily access fee or per-day-used charge.

For as little as \$10, you can buy prepaid plans similar to traditional contract plans, with a set monthly number of minutes and fee. Or you can buy unlimited-minute prepaid plans, which charge a monthly fee as low as \$45 or a fee of up to \$4 for each day you use the service.

Bottom line. Our survey data and other analysis suggest that prepaid service will most satisfy those with single-phone plans who aren't looking for sophisticated phones or phone services.

For top service, go with TracFone, whose inexpensive and usually more basic handsets operate on a robust network with national coverage comparable to those of the biggest contract carriers. For dirt-cheap pricing, try newcomer StraightTalk, whose unlimited voice, message, and Web plan costs only \$45 per month, or 1,000 voice minutes and messages plus 30 megabytes of Web access cost only \$30 per month. Though we could not rate StraightTalk because it is too new, the service



The consumer advocates say mere disclosure isn't enough. They're calling on the FCC to prevent carriers from imposing line-item charges for expenses that are, essentially, part of the cost of doing business.

operates on the Verizon prepaid network. That network is only slightly less nationally comprehensive than Verizon's network for regular (contract) service.

If you want the comfort of a familiar brand and competitive pricing, consider T-Mobile's prepaid offerings. Think about Metro PCS if you mostly use your cell phone locally in its 11 areas, including Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, and multiple cities in California and Florida. It offers prepaid unlimited local calling plans for as little as \$30 per month.

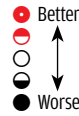
Whatever carrier you choose, check the coverage maps to see whether you'll get service at home, work, and other places you regularly travel, and watch the expiration dates on minute bundles.

One emerging option you might not know about: a text-only prepaid plan. If your teenager primarily wants a phone to exchange text messages with friends, you don't need to buy a voice plan with added texting. Check out Virgin Mobile's Texter's Delight plan, which charges \$15 per month for 1,000 messages, \$20 for unlimited, and 10 cents a minute for occasional talk. Add 20MB of Web access for only \$5, 50MB for \$10.



Ratings Cell-phone service overall

Summary Ratings, reflecting all cities surveyed, in order of reader score.



Order	Provider	Reader score*	Avg. monthly bill, 2-line plan		Service			Customer support			
			Without data	With data	Voice	Messaging	Web/e-mail	Phone	Web site	Staff knowledge	Issue resolved
		0 100									
1	Verizon	75	83	126	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
2	T-Mobile	70	80	114	○	○	○	+	○	+	+
3	Sprint	67	83	114	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4	AT&T	66	86	134	●	○	○	○	○	○	○

*Differences in reader score of less than three points are not meaningful.

Overview

Carriers vary in their scores in our overall Ratings, reflecting differences in satisfaction and in the monthly costs and experiences with voice, data, and customer support reported by our readers. Those differences hold for many, though not all, of the city-by-city Ratings. The Ratings of prepaid service reflect experiences with the prepaid offerings of the major carriers and with some prepaid specialists.

Recommended

These carriers stand out for the reasons cited below.

Best service for most people:

Verizon

The highest-scoring carrier in the overall Ratings, and a top performer in most cities we surveyed as well. Though we don't list city-by-city scores for text and Web/e-mail,

Ratings Cell-phone service by city

In order of reader score, within 26 metropolitan areas. Differences in reader score of less than seven points are not meaningful.



Provider	Reader score	Voice service			
		No service	Circuits full	Dropped calls	Static
	0 100				

Provider	Reader score	Voice service			
		No service	Circuits full	Dropped calls	Static
	0 100				

Provider	Reader score	Voice service			
		No service	Circuits full	Dropped calls	Static
	0 100				

ATLANTA

Verizon	76	+	○	-	-
T-Mobile	71	●	○	○	○
Sprint	68	○	○	○	○
AT&T	66	○	○	○	○

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Verizon	76	+	○	○	○
Sprint	69	○	○	○	○
AT&T	68	○	○	○	○

JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

Verizon	77	+	○	-	-
T-Mobile	73	○	○	+	-
Sprint	68	○	○	○	○
AT&T	68	○	○	○	○

BOSTON

Verizon	72	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	71	●	○	○	○
AT&T	66	○	○	○	○
Sprint	66	○	○	○	○

DALLAS-FORT WORTH

Verizon	76	+	○	+	-
AT&T	71	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	69	○	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○

LAS VEGAS

Verizon	77	+	○	-	○
T-Mobile	73	○	○	○	○
Sprint	68	○	○	○	○
AT&T	67	○	○	○	○

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Verizon	74	+	○	○	○
Sprint	66	○	○	○	○
AT&T	64	○	○	○	○

DENVER

Verizon	75	+	○	○	○
T-Mobile	69	○	○	○	○
AT&T	57	○	○	○	○

LOS ANGELES

Verizon	75	+	○	○	○
Sprint	69	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	65	○	○	○	○
AT&T	60	○	○	○	○

CHICAGO

Verizon	75	+	○	○	○
T-Mobile	69	○	○	○	○
Sprint	66	○	○	○	○
AT&T	64	○	○	○	○

DETROIT

Verizon	77	+	○	○	○
T-Mobile	72	○	○	○	○
AT&T	67	○	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○

MIAMI

Verizon	77	+	○	+	-
Sprint	69	+	○	○	○
T-Mobile	69	○	○	○	○
AT&T	66	○	○	○	○

CLEVELAND

Verizon	74	+	○	○	○
Sprint	69	○	○	○	○
AT&T	64	○	○	○	○

HOUSTON

Verizon	78	+	○	+	-
T-Mobile	73	○	○	○	○
AT&T	67	○	○	○	○

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

Verizon	74	+	○	-	○
T-Mobile	69	○	○	○	○
Sprint	65	○	○	○	○
AT&T	65	○	○	○	○

INDIANAPOLIS

Verizon	76	+	○	+	○
AT&T	68	○	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○

Verizon's standing in those is generally as high as for the voice scores. Its prepaid service is as highly rated as its traditional plans. But Verizon is among the pricier carriers.

A good value for many people:

T-Mobile

Worth considering for regular and prepaid service. Though a small step below Verizon in the overall Ratings, T-Mobile still stands out for its customer service. T-Mobile's prepaid service actually scored higher in satisfaction than its contract service reflected in our Ratings. For contract and prepaid service, T-Mobile is among the least expensive carriers for Web access and for text and multimedia messages.

Best prepaid carrier:

TracFone

The clear top-rated prepaid carrier, TracFone uses AT&T's network, and others, to create a national footprint comparable with those of

the biggest contract carriers. Its plans can be a bit pricier than those of some other prepaid carriers, though it might still be cheaper than regular service, in part because prepaid service allows you to buy many fewer minutes than the lowest-minute contract plans provide.

Also consider:

Two prepaid carriers for which we had insufficient data to rate but that might be worth a try for their very attractive pricing. Straight Talk, sold through Walmart, offers unlimited voice, message, and Web for only \$45 per month, and 1,000 voice minutes and messages and 30MB of Web access for \$30 per month. It uses the Verizon prepaid network, which is almost as nationally comprehensive as the regular, high-scoring Verizon network. If you mostly make local cell calls and live in New York, Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, or one of several cities in California or Florida, consider Metro PCS; its unlimited local plans start at \$30 per month.



Ratings Prepaid service

In order of reader score.

Order	Provider	Reader score*
		0 100
1	TracFone	82
2	T-Mobile	78
3	Virgin Mobile	78
4	Verizon	76
5	AT&T	69

*Differences in reader score of less than four points are not meaningful.

Provider	Reader score	Voice service			
	0 100	No service	Circuits full	Dropped calls	Static

NEW YORK

Verizon	72	●	○	○	○
Sprint	70	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	64	●	○	●	○
AT&T	63	●	○	●	●

PHILADELPHIA

Verizon	74	●	○	●	○
T-Mobile	69	●	○	○	○
AT&T	68	○	○	○	○

PHOENIX

Verizon	78	●	○	●	●
T-Mobile	71	○	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○
AT&T	64	●	○	●	○

SAN ANTONIO

Verizon	74	●	○	●	○
T-Mobile	73	○	○	○	○
AT&T	72	●	○	○	○
Sprint	67	●	○	○	○

SAN DIEGO

Verizon	76	●	○	○	○
T-Mobile	72	●	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○
AT&T	64	●	○	●	●

Provider	Reader score	Voice service			
	0 100	No service	Circuits full	Dropped calls	Static

SAN FRANCISCO

Verizon	74	●	○	○	○
T-Mobile	73	●	○	○	○
Sprint	69	○	○	○	○
AT&T	59	●	○	●	●

SEATTLE

Verizon	74	●	○	●	○
T-Mobile	72	○	○	○	○
Sprint	70	●	○	○	○
AT&T	63	●	○	●	○

ST. LOUIS

Verizon	77	●	○	●	●
T-Mobile	72	○	○	○	○
AT&T	69	○	○	○	○
Sprint	65	○	○	○	○

TAMPA, FLA.

Verizon	74	●	○	●	○
AT&T	73	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	73	●	○	○	○
Sprint	70	○	○	○	○

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Verizon	74	○	○	○	○
T-Mobile	68	●	○	○	○
Sprint	67	○	○	○	○
AT&T	66	●	○	●	○

Guide to the Ratings

Overall and city-by-city Ratings based on 54,332 responses about regular (contract) and prepaid service from ConsumerReports.org subscribers surveyed in September 2009. The prepaid Ratings are based on a separate analysis of the 3,257 respondents who had prepaid service.

Reader score reflects respondents' overall satisfaction with their cell-phone service and is not limited to factors listed in the Ratings charts. A score of 100 would mean all respondents were completely satisfied; 80 would mean very satisfied, on average; 60, fairly well satisfied. Reader scores are not directly comparable among the three Ratings charts. The **average monthly bill, 2-line plan** is the median total cost, including fees, from the previous month for a plan with 601 to 1,000 daytime/anytime minutes. **Voice service** reflects the percentage of respondents who said they experienced the listed problems when making calls in the previous seven days. For **data service, messaging** reflects difficulties, including text messages not being sent or received or being much delayed. **Voice** and **messaging** scores are based on the percentage who responded "none," statistically adjusted for cell-phone usage rates. Scores for **Web/e-mail** reflect the percentage of respondents who gave very good to excellent scores for the overall experience with Web access and e-mail from their phones. Customer-service scores are based on the quality of the carrier's Web site, ease and speed of reaching support staff through phone system, and knowledge and competence of support staff. **Issue resolved** reflects the percentage who said their issue was satisfactorily resolved in a timely manner. Ratings are relative, reflecting differences from the average of all providers in all areas. Respondents might not reflect the general U.S. population.