



PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 3rd NOVEMBER

ANDROID DEVICE RETURNS COST OPERATORS USD\$2 BILLION PER YEAR

WDS study finds operators struggling to keep pace with rapidly growing Android ecosystem

Poole, UK – 3rd November 2011: The return and repair of Android smartphone devices is costing mobile operators as much as USD\$2 billion per year as they try to evolve their customer service strategies to keep pace with the rapidly growing ecosystem.

These are the key findings of a study – “Controlling the Android” – by wireless experience management experts [WDS](#). The study analyzes over 600,000 technical support calls that the WDS teams around the world have handled in the last 12 months.

Taking a comprehensive view of the four leading mobile operating systems, the study finds that fragmentation has led to a higher than average propensity for hardware failure on Android-based devices: 14% of technical support calls on Android relate to hardware, versus 11% for Windows Phone, 7% for iOS and 6% for BlackBerry OS.

“One thing we must be absolutely clear on,” says Tim Deluca-Smith, Vice President of Marketing at WDS, “is that our analysis does not find any inherent fault with the Android platform. Its openness has enabled the ecosystem to grow to a phenomenal size, at a phenomenal rate, and it’s this success that is proving challenging.”

The report found that the introduction of low-cost hardware, a variety of software customizations and the process for delivering OS updates to consumers were all resulting in operators’ retail operations and their return and repairs processes being stretched.

“Many operators are treating Android as a standard implementation with a consistent customer experience. Given its nature, this of course isn’t the case. The Android customer experience differs enormously between devices and this means that the way in which Android devices are retailed and supported must consider factors such as the hardware build and quality of components,” adds Deluca-Smith.

Impact of returns on device profitability

Hardware faults are of particular concern to carriers because they are very expensive to fix. Software or configuration faults can typically be rectified by the customer service representative remotely, either through manual configuration or an over-the-air update. However, hardware faults often result in the

device being returned and entered into an expensive reverse logistics process for repair or replacement.

“Android features heavily in almost all operators’ smartphone strategies. It’s clear from the evidence in this study that if they are to maximize their investment they must better manage how they bring Android products into their network, retail them and support them,” concludes Deluca-Smith.

In the short term, operator profitability can be improved by implementing the following changes:

- Improving device testing and the on-boarding processes when ranging Android products to minimize risk of hardware failure and assess the Total Cost of Ownership
- Analyzing and understanding the propensity for a hardware failure pre-launch to ensure customer support channels are populated with accurate support documentation and returns procedure
- Educating customers from the beginning of the sales process to better manage expectation of experience, minimizing technical support calls

The “Controlling the Android” study is available to download [here](#). The study took place using the WDS [GlobalMine™](#) knowledge platform between July 2010 and August 2011 and covered 600,000 technical support calls taken by WDS across Europe, North America, South Africa and Australia.

WDS provides managed services dedicated to optimizing the mobile customer experience. The company works with more than 100 of the industry’s best known brands, helping them to develop, launch and manage mobile products and services.

Download the full whitepaper in [pdf format](#).

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About WDS

WDS is the wireless industry's only provider of specialist managed services dedicated to improving the user experience across the entire consumer lifecycle. The company's portfolio of platform-enabled tools and services stretches across the wireless value chain to connect and optimize each stage of the consumer lifecycle. With more than 15 years of experience and a global footprint, WDS is the partner of choice for wireless carriers, handset manufacturers and service providers looking to transform their relationships with consumers. The company currently counts over 100 customers, including most of the world's largest handset manufacturer and mobile operator brands, and is headquartered in Poole, UK.

Report methodology:

Analysis was drawn from data comprising 600,000 technical support calls, running July 2010-August 2011. Data is global but weighted towards US and Europe (together accounting for 70% of all calls). Calls relate to both carrier and OEM support lines. Technical support calls are a sub-set of all customer service / care calls serviced by a carrier or OEM and typically represent -20% of all customer interactions. The report was not been commissioned nor funded by a commercial party.

To find out more, please visit www.wds.co

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