



Catch me on my mobile!

Have you got a mobile phone? How much money does it cost every week? On voice calls? On texts? Sending pictures to your friends? Large phone companies are very interested in the answers to these sorts of questions. They plan call charges to get as much money as possible. But if they are too expensive their customers stop using the phone or change to another company.

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Design and carry out a survey for a mobile phone company to find out how your family and friends use their mobiles. When you plan your survey you need to think about these issues.

- What the mobile phone company would like to know.
- What data will help the companies make their decisions.
- How to collect reliable and relevant data.

What makes good data?

Good data	Not so good data
Numerical - but remember to include the units, e.g. '23 minutes per day' is good but '23' by itself means nothing.	Just impressions - words like 'a lot', 'not very much'. Sometimes this is all you can gather so don't throw it away just because it has no numbers.
Lots of results, asking 30 people is usually better than asking 6 people.	A small sample size - or a sample that is special in some way, e.g. only asking girls will not give you any data about how boys use mobile phones.
Reliable - which means that the way you collect data must be the same every time. The person you ask must understand the question or they may give you the wrong answer.	Data collected without being careful sometimes contains weird results or fails to show a pattern. Be as careful with surveys as you are with chemicals and equipment in the lab! Be very careful that you do not lead people to answer in particular ways by how you ask the question.