

Consumer Reports 2008 Telecom Survey Highlights: Cable TV and Bundles

- Respondents in the survey had cable, fiber, or satellite TV service. The median monthly cost for cable TV service (including taxes and fees) was \$73. This was comparable with the overall median cost among all respondents (also \$73).
- Only 35% of cable subscribers were highly satisfied with their service, significantly less than those of fiber (70%) and satellite (54%).
- Forty-three percent of cable subscribers said they had wanted to switch providers. This includes 28% of cable subscribers who said they could not switch for some reason. The top reasons preventing them from switching were a lack of other providers in their area (50%) and that the cost of other services bundled with their TV would increase if they switched (29%).
- Respondents reporting on their bundling experiences had “triple-play” telecom bundles from cable or phone companies (using fiber technology) or “hybrid” bundles combining landline phone and DSL Internet service from a phone company and TV service from a satellite provider. The median cost for all bundles (including taxes and fees) was \$144 and did not vary appreciably by type of bundle.
- Just above a quarter of bundle customers complained that additional taxes and fees made their bills much higher than expected.

Sample characteristics

Consumer Reports subscribers who completed the Consumer Reports National Research Center Annual Questionnaire in Spring 2008 told us about their experiences with their telecommunications services. The survey was designed to provide satisfaction ratings for different service providers and only data from customer of providers with sufficient numbers to provide reliable ratings were included in the sample. Separate samples were drawn for different services: 42,494 reported on digital TV service from 12 cable companies, 2 phone companies offering fiber service, and 2 satellite companies; 9,701 told us about their experiences with their “triple-play” bundles of Internet, TV, and phone services from 6 cable companies, 1 phone company offering fiber service, and 2 phone and satellite company partnerships. These findings report the experiences of Consumer Reports subscribers, who may not be representative of the general US population.