



Are you overpaying for your cell phone?

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By John Dempsey

CHICAGO (WLS) - A new study says you may be wasting a lot of money on your cell phone.

Our John Dempsey has more.

The study from the Illinois Citizens Utility Board (CUB) found that cell customers were overpaying by an average of about \$360 a year, according to CUB executive director David Kolata.

"The bottom line is, people are paying basically for minutes that they're not using, and also for services that they probably don't want, or even need," Kolata said.

CUB got this data from people who have used the organization's cell phone saver software program on the [CUB website](#).

CUB is releasing its study after Verizon admitted recently it made up to \$90 million worth of billing mistakes.

CUB study says cell phone users paying for what they don't use

CHICAGO (STMW) - Even as more people go wireless for their telephone needs, a Chicago utility watchdog agency said Monday that cell phone users continue to pay for calling time they don't use.

The year-long analysis of 11,921 lines showed that Illinois callers, on average, overpaid on 66 percent of the 4,404 bills studied, and paid \$359.64 per year unnecessarily, according to the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) report, issued Monday. The 4,404 bills averaged 2.7 lines per month.

The analysis covered one year of statistics, from August 2009 through July 2010.

Illinois callers were often poorly matched with their cell phone plans, CUB said, resulting in nine out of 10 callers on individual plans paying for 450 minutes or more even though most never used more than 300 minutes a month. Thirty percent used less than 100 minutes, the study showed.

The analysis was made possible because of CUB's Web tool, CUBCellphoneSaver.com, analyzes cell phone users' bills and spits out items where they could save money.

CUB also found that its online Cellphone Saver users paid \$23,066.48 per month, on average, on potentially useless extras such as insurance and directory assistance.

CUB suggests cell phone customers:

- ** Check for billing errors;
- ** Figure out whether insurance coverage is worth it;
- ** Use toll-free services rather than paying for directory assistance.

CUB also recommends that cell-phone companies give customers an alternative to rollover minutes, since most people don't come close to using their minutes anyway, and send customers text alerts when they are at risk of exceeding their allotted minutes in a given month.

The news comes at the same time that the adoption of smart phones and wireless-enabled technologies jumped 50 percent in June from a year ago, with data use growing by 49.8 percent, according to a report by CTIA, the wireless association.



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