

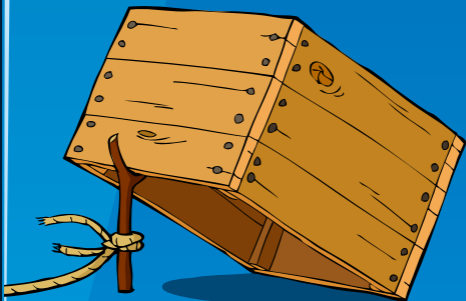


02:10



COST TRAPS

HOW TO AVOID THEM



SMARTPHONES



Smartphones are just great. They allow us to keep in touch with our friends and families, to surf the internet all over the world and to download the most awesome games. These **small computers** for the trouser pocket or the handbag facilitate our life in many respects. Unfortunately they are not only useful aids in everyday life, but sometimes they also turn out to be **nasty cost traps**. **Roaming, Premium SMS and In-App Purchases** are the main causes of a frightening amount on the mobile bill.

ROAMING

Your mobile is automatically registered with a network in your country. Once you leave this country, for instance if you are on vacation, your phone will switch to a **foreign network**. If you want to continue calling your friends or browsing the Internet (i.e. if you want to send and to receive data), you have to make use of roaming. The term “roaming” designates the **cross-border** cooperation of network operators.

RISK:

The exchange of information can quickly become expensive, as it takes place outside the home network. You will have to pay even if someone calls you. **Another risk:** many apps **automatically** access data whenever there is a network connection. Even if you do not surf actively, they connect with the Internet. And abroad, this will soon add up.

ANTIDOTE:

- Check out your network provider’s tariffs and possible **options for abroad**. Special offers for the holiday season or the study period abroad are often available.
- Set yourself a limit, a maximum amount that you do not want to exceed. Your mobile operator may send you a warning when this **limit** has almost been reached. Prepaid cards will allow you a better cost control as well.

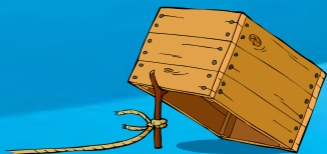
- Disable your smartphone's "roaming" function. If you can log on to a **safe WiFi network**, there is an alternative: you can either use Skype or start a chat.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

An EU directive came into force in June 2012 and it sets an upper limit of 70 cents for the download of one megabyte. Another new feature is that mobile network operators have to send a **warning** as soon as a limit of 50 EUR is reached at 80%. If the warned customer does not raise this limit, the connection will be interrupted as soon as a cost level of 50 EUR is reached.

Roaming tariffs within the European Union also underwent regulations. The limit for outgoing calls may not exceed 29 cents/minute, the limit for incoming calls is set at 8 cents/minute and it amounts to 9 cents for an SMS.

But watch out: these limits are only applicable in EU countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.



PREMIUM SMS

Many services (such as providers of logos or ringtones for mobiles) ask you to send them an SMS if you want to order something. But your SMS is not to be sent to a normal mobile number, you have to dial a **five-digit abbreviated number** and this can be very expensive. The fees of this so-called “Premium SMS” will be charged on the next bill. Your participation in competitions mostly requires Premium SMS, as well. You will be asked to “rapidly send an SMS with the correct answer to number 676XY for 1 EUR per SMS”. Premium SMS prices can vary considerably. And the cost of a normal SMS is always added.

RISK:

With a price per SMS that may even exceed 5 EUR, this little treat can soon add up and make you lose track of the costs. And there is still another risk: the sender of a Premium SMS often takes out a **subscription**, even unintentionally, which will weigh all the heavier on his budget.

ANTIDOTE:

- Even if it's boring, ALWAYS read the **contract** of such a service in order to know the exact cost that will be charged and to see to what extent you commit yourself.
- If you want to stop a Premium SMS subscription, just send the word “**STOP**” by SMS to the number that sends the messages.

- To prevent the risk of succumbing to any temptation, you (or your parents) can ask your operator for the complete **blocking** of abbreviated numbers. Forewarned is forearmed!

IN-APP PURCHASES

Smartphones are particularly popular because of the countless apps that you can download.

But beware: not all applications are as cheap as they seem at first glance. Many supposedly free apps are financed by in-app sales. This means that the installation and the primary use of the application are indeed free, but you cannot really enjoy it if you don't buy additional content. It appears that this trick is especially used by games: the game is progressing very slowly, unless you buy **additional** virtual currency or items for real money.

RISK:

In the heat of the moment, you can be **strongly tempted** to reach a given level within a few seconds, whereas others take days to get there. These fees can quickly get out of control, but the player may even be unaware of the fact that he fell into a trap.

ANTIDOTE:

As always, the motto is: Read before clicking.

- **Check** your purchases.
- Be careful when passing on the smartphone to children!
- The **password** used for purchases must be frequently changed.
- The complete **blocking** of the function of in-app purchases provides the best security. To this aim, just select “Applications” listed under “Settings” (for standard smartphones).

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE:



ULC (Union Luxembourgeoise des Consommateurs)
55, rue des Bruyères · L-1274 Howald
www.ulc.lu · Tél.: 49 60 22 1



BEE SECURE HELPLINE
SUPPORT & HELP
26 64 05 44



www.bee-secure.lu



MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCONOMIE
ET DU COMMERCE EXTÉRIEUR



MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE
ET DE LA FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE



MINISTÈRE DE LA FAMILLE
ET DE L'INTÉGRATION



Co-funded by the
European Union

Unmodified commercial reproduction and
distribution is expressly authorized. See:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

