

INVOLUNTARY ACTIVATION OF VALUE ADDED SERVICES (VAS)

Research carried out among urban low income micro-entrepreneurs (MEs) in selected Bangladeshi, Indian, and Sri Lankan cities showed that involuntary activation of value added services (VAS) was an issue faced by micro-entrepreneurs¹. Involuntary activation of VAS was reported as a problem by micro-entrepreneurs during both the qualitative and quantitative studies. The respondents reported that VAS are often unknowingly activated and they become aware of such subscriptions only when their balance reduces drastically. According to interviews carried out among telecom service providers in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, issues related to VAS activation and deactivation was among the top five most common complaints made to contact centers.

Another issue in Sri Lanka is that unlike in Bangladesh the script used for SMS is English. LIRNEasia’s qualitative study revealed that most ME owners were unable to read English script and therefore could not understand most descriptive text messages.

“I am not educated, so it is difficult for me to understand the messages I receive and the messages are not in Sinhala. I tend to press the wrong button which activates the VAS without my knowledge. I realize this only when my balance is cut”

- Supun Fernando, Shoe Shop Owner, Colombo

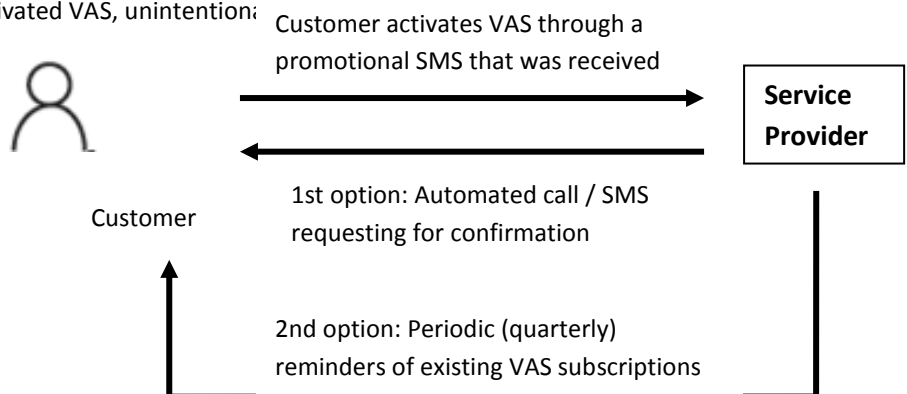
RE-CONFIRMATION OF VAS ACTIVATION

When the VAS is activated, the customer receives an automated call or a SMS requesting reconfirmation. If the reconfirmation is through SMS, ideally different keys (than the norm) should be used to denote ‘Yes’ and ‘No’.

OR

Alternatively periodic reconfirmations can be sent on a quarterly basis for example, informing customers of their current VAS activations. In both cases, if the customer does not confirm the subscription (e.g., with a ‘Yes’), the default is to not sign up the customer for the specific service or to de-active the service.

These suggestions can be carried out selectively, using data analytics to identify customers likely to have activated VAS, unintentionally:



For further information please see <http://lirneasia.net/projects/2012-2014-research-program/improving-service-delivery-for-e-inclusion>

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