


City of Alexandria, Virginia

11
12-14-10

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: 2010 COMCAST CABLE COMMUNICATIONS, INC. ANNUAL SUBSCRIBER SURVEY REPORT

ISSUE: Receipt of the 2010 Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. (Comcast) Annual Subscriber Survey Report.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the 2010 Annual Subscriber Survey Report from Comcast.

DISCUSSION: Section 9-3-1532(b) of the City Code requires the cable television franchisee to conduct an annual cable subscriber survey for the purpose of evaluating the degree of subscriber satisfaction with Comcast's cable television service and identifying whether the cable-related needs and interests of the community are being met. The 2010 cable subscriber survey was administered via telephone to 801 Alexandria City cable subscribers, compared to 800 in 2009. The survey was conducted by Q7 Broadband Market Research, a provider of marketing and teleservices based in Manassas, Virginia.

Highlights of the 2010 survey findings follow:

Survey Sampling Procedure

Q7 Broadband Market Research's staff interviewed a sample of 801 active cable television subscribers between August 11 and August 17, 2010. The respondents were randomly selected by computer from the Comcast billing database of Alexandria cable subscribers. The sample size carries a 95 percent confidence level with a margin of error of +/- 3.44 percent. Calls were placed during day and evening hours, as well as during the daytimes on Saturdays. All surveys were fully supervised and all surveyors were trained specifically on each survey question and response set.

Cable Subscriber Survey Results

Overall subscriber awareness of the availability of the public access (PEG) channels which are Community Channel 69, Government Channel 70, and Educational Channels 71, 72 and 73 increased from 53% (425 of 800) in 2009 to 63% (504 of 801). Eighty-seven percent of the respondents (702 of 801) indicated they would be interested in specific programming that highlighted City services, programs or projects, up from 17% (142 of 800).

Respondents indicated that the biggest obstacles to watching more programs on the PEG channels were (a) lack of interest in topics—56 percent, (b) lack of program listing info—28 percent, (c) technical quality of programs—four percent, and (d) other reasons—12 percent. Staff will work with Comcast officials and Communications staff to identify ways to better publicize the availability (content and scheduling) of PEG programming.

With respect to Channel 70 Government Access Programming, 31 percent (160 of the 504 respondents who indicated they were aware of the public access channels) said that they watched Channel 70 programming, down from 39 percent in 2009. Of those who watched government programming:

- 79 percent (126 of 160) had watched a City Council meeting, up from 59 percent (100 of 167) in 2009;
- 37.5 percent (60 of 160) watched a Saturday City Council public hearing, up from 31 percent (53 of 167) in 2009;
- 56 percent (90 of 160) watched a Planning Commission meeting, up from 35 percent (61 of 167) in 2009;
- 46 percent (74 of 160) watched a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, up from 34 percent (58 of 167) in 2009;
- 37 percent (59 of 160) watched a Board of Architectural Review – Old & Historic District meeting, up from 28 percent (47 of 167) in 2009;
- 32 percent (51 of 160) watched a Board of Architectural Review – Parker-Gray District meeting, up from 19 percent (32 of 167) in 2009;
- 57 percent (92 of 160) watched an Alexandria School Board meeting. Please note that eight percent of the total survey respondents reported having children enrolled in the Alexandria public school system (64 of 801). Last year 38 percent (64 of 167) watched a School Board meeting with 12 percent of the total survey respondents having children enrolled in the Alexandria public school system.

Fifteen percent (124 of 801) of the total respondents reported watching Channel 69/Comcast Cable TV (Alexandria Community Channel), up slightly from last year's 14 percent. Respondents who indicated that they watched Channel 69 programming expressed interest in the following:

- Local High School Sports – 40 percent (50 of 124); down from 41 percent in 2009;
- Civic Informational Shows – 62 percent (77 of 124); up from 44 percent in 2009;
- Entertainment Shows – 70 percent (87 of 124), up from 49 percent in 2009;
- Local Current Events – 84 percent (104 of 124) up from 51 percent in 2009.

Of the 66 percent (529 of 801) of subscribers who indicated that they handled their cable TV problems via telephone, 79 percent (421 of 529) reported that Comcast's customer service personnel response was timely, which is up from 75 percent in 2009, and 94 percent (499 of 529) felt the service was courteous, up from 91 percent in 2009. Subscriber problems were resolved and/or questions answered by Comcast staff in 78 percent of the cases (417 of 529), which is up from 74 percent in 2009.

More respondents visited Comcast's Van Dorn Street office in 2010, 62 percent (499 of 801) compared to 60 percent (485 of 800) in 2009. Of the 499 respondents who visited the local Comcast office, 75 percent were satisfied with the quality of service they received.

Council will recall that in October Comcast notified the City of the move of its offices from South Van Dorn Street in Alexandria to Shirlington Road in Arlington (near the Village at Shirlington). The move occurred this month. Since many customers seek service at the Alexandria offices, Comcast will have a small office for subscriber service at The Trade Center (370 South Pickett Street) and that office opened on December 4.

Subscriber satisfaction with the cable system increased slightly from 2009 levels in 2010. Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "extremely dissatisfied" and 5 meaning "extremely satisfied," the metrics indicate that the majority of the respondents were moderately satisfied with all of the following:

- Installation of cable in their home – 3.98, up from 3.61 in 2009
- Picture quality – 4.18, up from 3.79 in 2009
- Sound quality – 4.11, up from 3.83 in 2009
- Response to inquiries – 3.62, up slightly from 3.34 in 2009
- Number of channels – 4.08, up from 3.86 in 2009
- Overall customer satisfaction – 3.85, up slightly from 3.54 in 2009

To determine the accessibility of Comcast and its equipment for subscribers with disabilities, eight questions were posed to survey respondents. Approximately 5.86 percent (47 of 801) reported a person in the household having a hearing or vision disability, which is slightly down from six percent (58 of 801) over last year. Of those 47 respondents, 21 percent (10 of 47) reported a mobile, manual or dexterity impairment that would interfere with their ability to use cable TV controls. Of the 10 respondents with mobile or manual dexterity impairments, five indicated problems in their ability to access and/or change channels; five of the 10 reported problems in their ability to discuss bills with Comcast, and four of the 10 respondents indicated a problem in finding a listing of cable programming. Nine of the respondents in this group reported difficulty with understanding the dialog/audio and seven of the 10 had trouble following programs on cable television. It should be noted that Comcast is equipped with a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY), and has channel and program guides in Braille and large print for the visually impaired. Staff continually works with Comcast to address other issues affecting the accessibility of Comcast and its equipment for persons with disabilities.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1: Comcast Cable Communications 2010 Annual Cable Television
Subscriber Survey Questionnaire, Report and Survey Results

STAFF:

Rose Williams Boyd, Special Assistant to the City Manager

Darryl Edwards, Consumer Affairs Investigator



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

Total
801 Surveys

SECTION ONE - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1). What is the major reason you subscribe to cable television at this time?

29.213%	234	1 MORE CHANNELS
4.994%	40	2 MOVIES
16.355%	131	3 BETTER RECEPTION
7.990%	64	4 PREMIUM SERVICES
7.116%	57	5 SPORTS
34.332%	275	6 OTHER
100.000%	801	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

1). Were you previously aware of these channels?

62.921%	504	1 YES
37.079%	297	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Channel 70 is the local government access channel which provides brief announcements about upcoming government meetings and events, and broadcasts live City Council meetings, Planning Commission meetings, Board of Zoning Appeals meetings, and Board of Architectural Review meetings. Do you watch Channel 70 programming?

2).

31.746%	160	1 YES
68.254%	344	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	504	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

2a). Have you ever watched an Alexandria City Council meeting?

78.750%	126	1 YES
21.250%	34	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

160 Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

2b). Have you ever watched a Saturday public hearing?

37.500%	60	1 YES
62.500%	100	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	160	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

2c). Have you ever watched a Planning Commission meeting?

56.250%	90	1 YES
43.750%	70	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	160	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

2d). Have you ever watched a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting?

45.625%	73	1 YES
54.375%	87	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	160	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Have you ever watched a Board of Architectural Review - Old and
2e). Historic District meeting?

36.875%	59	1 YES
63.125%	101	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	160	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Have you ever watched a Board of Architectural Review - Parker-Gray
2f). District meeting?

31.875%	51	1 YES
68.125%	109	2 NO



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

0.000% 0 0 DK/NA/OA
160 Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

2g). Have you ever watched a School Board meeting?

57.500% 92 1 YES
 42.500% 68 2 NO
 0.000% 0 0 DK/NA/OA
160 Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Would you be interested in specific programming which highlights City services, programs and/or projects?
 3).

87.640% 702 1 YES
 12.360% 99 2 NO
 0.000% 0 0 DK/NA/OA
801 Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Channels 71, 72, and 73 are the educational access channels. Channel 72 broadcasts telecourses from Northern Virginia Community College. Channel 73 broadcasts telecourses from George Mason University and Channel 71 for cable ready TVs is used by the Alexandria City Public School system.
 4).

Have you ever watched the telecourses sponsored by Northern Virginia Community College?
 4a).

17.353% 139 1 YES
 82.647% 662 2 NO
 0.000% 0 0 DK/NA/OA
801 Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Have you ever watched the telecourses sponsored by George Mason University?
 4b).

15.980% 128 1 YES
 84.020% 673 2 NO
 0.000% 0 0 DK/NA/OA
801 Total Responses



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Have you ever watched any of the programming sponsored by the
4c). Alexandria City Public Schools?

19.476%	156	1 YES
80.524%	645	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Do you presently have children enrolled in the Alexandria Public School
4d). System?

7.990%	64	1 YES
92.010%	737	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION TWO - ACCESS CHANNELS

Instructional programming can also be seen on MHZ2/channels 192 through 197.
Have you ever watched instructional programming sponsored by MHZ2/channels
4e). 192 through 197?

5.993%	48	1 YES
94.007%	753	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

Comcast produces local programming as a public service to Alexandrians. These
programs are shown on Channel 69 in the evenings during the week and on the
weekends.

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

1). Have you ever watched the programming on Channel 69?

15.481%	124	1 YES
84.519%	677	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

2). Have you ever watched the Community Bulletin Board on Channel 69 from 10:00 am to 5:30 am daily?

45.161%	56	1 YES
54.839%	68	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	124	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

3). Are you interested in any of the following categories of programming that are currently shown on Channel 69?

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69 - INTEREST

3a). Local high school sports?

40.323%	50	1 YES
59.677%	74	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	124	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69 - INTEREST

3b). Civic/Informational Shows?

62.097%	77	1 YES
37.903%	47	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	124	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69 - INTEREST

3c). Entertainment Shows?

70.161%	87	1 YES
29.839%	37	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	124	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69 - INTEREST

3d). Current Local Events?

83.871%	104	1 YES
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2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

16.129%	20	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	124	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

What are the biggest obstacles to your watching more programs on the 3aa). PEG channels?

3.745%	30	1 TECHNICAL QUALITY OF PROGRAMS
55.556%	445	2 LACK OF INTEREST IN TOPICS
28.464%	228	3 LACK OF PROGRAM LISTING INFO
12.235%	98	4 OTHER
	801	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

Have you ever considered producing a show on the Community 3bb). Channel?

5.243%	42	1 YES
94.757%	759	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

Are you aware that Comcast conducts Community Programming Volunteer Operations classes in television production for a nominal 3cc). fee?

12.734%	102	1 YES
87.266%	699	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION THREE - COMCAST COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL 69

3dd). Would you be interested in taking such a class?

13.483%	108	1 YES
86.517%	693	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Have you ever called the cable company for any reason other than initiating

1). service?

66.042%	529	1 YES
33.958%	272	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1a). Was your call answered within a reasonable period of time?

79.584%	421	1 YES
20.416%	108	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	529	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1b). Was the person with whom you spoke courteous?

94.329%	499	1 YES
5.671%	30	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	529	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1c). Was your question or problem resolved?

78.828%	417	1 YES
21.172%	112	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	529	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1d). Have you ever visited the local Comcast Office?

62.297%	499	1 YES
37.703%	302	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1e). Were you satisfied with the quality of service you received?

75.031%	601	1 YES
24.969%	200	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "extremely dissatisfied" and 5 meaning "extremely satisfied," please select the number that best represents your satisfaction with the following customer service aspects of the system.

2). aspects of the system.

Raw points

3.984	3191	a). INSTALLATION OF CABLE IN YOUR HOME
4.179	3347	b). PICTURE QUALITY
4.112	3294	c). SOUND QUALITY
3.615	2896	d). RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES OR PROBLEMS
4.075	3264	e). NUMBER OF CHANNELS PROVIDED
3.845	3080	f). OVERALL CUSTOMER SERVICE
3.968		average score

SECTION FIVE - PROGRAMMING SURVEY

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Are there any channels that are not presently offered that you or others in your household would like to see added to our system?

1a). in your household would like to see added to our system?

21.973%	176	1 YES
78.027%	625	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION FIVE - PROGRAMMING SURVEY

1b). If yes, which channel(s) would you like to see added to the system?

PLEASE SEE DATA SHEET

SECTION FIVE - PROGRAMMING SURVEY

If Comcast added the new channels that you would like to see, would you be willing to pay more for the service?

26.705%	47	1 YES
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2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

73.295%	129	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	176	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY
SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

Are there any persons in your household with hearing or vision disabilities which interferes with their enjoyment of cable TV?

1).

5.868%	47	1 YES
94.132%	754	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	801	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

Are there any persons in your household with mobile, manual or dexterity impairments that would interfere with their ability to use cable TV controls?

2).

21.277%	10	1 YES
78.723%	37	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	47	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3). Have any of these disabilities or impairments affected this person's ability to:

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3a). Access/change channels on cable?

50.000%	5	1 YES
50.000%	5	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	10	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3b). Discuss a bill with Comcast?

50.000%	5	1 YES
50.000%	5	2 NO



2010 Comcast Alexandria Survey

0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	10	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3c). Find out what programming is on cable?

40.000%	4	1 YES
60.000%	6	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	10	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3d). Understand the dialog on programs?

90.000%	9	1 YES
10.000%	1	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	10	Total Responses

SECTION SIX - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

3e). Follow the program on cable?

70.000%	7	1 YES
30.000%	3	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	10	Total Responses

SECTION FOUR - SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

1e). Were you satisfied with the quality of service you received?

****PARSED TO THE 499 ACTUAL VISITORS IN Sec 4 1D.

83.367%	416	1 YES
16.633%	83	2 NO
0.000%	0	0 DK/NA/OA
	499	Total Responses