

REVEALED: BRITAIN'S £5 BILLION MOBILE PROBLEM

- **Cost of mobile phone repairs in Britain in the last two years approaches a staggering £5 billion (the equivalent of £78 per head).**
- **More than a third (37%) of British smartphone users have damaged their smartphone in the last two years.**
- **'Not 'appy': a third of owners of damaged phones find they can't use some or all apps.**
- **'Less-than-smartphone': approaching half of all owners of damaged phones find that their functions are impaired.**

As Apple™ releases its latest iPhones™, an international study has found that repairs to hand-held devices have cost British owners a staggering £4.6 billion in the last two years. The eye-watering sum puts Britain top of the European league table for repair costs to mobile devices.

According to the study by SquareTrade™, the global protection plan providers, a third of British iPhone™ users have cracked the screens on their devices. Currently around 7% of iPhone screens in the UK are cracked or damaged.

Europe-wide losses over the last seven years according to SquareTrade™ data amount to an astonishing €34 billion.

Despite this tendency to drop or damage their most prized possession, around 27% of British smartphone users do not use a protective case, with 56% of those without cases saying they are too style conscious to use one, and another 28% saying they intend to get a case but simply not getting round to it. Just over 70% of smartphone users do not have any kind of protection or insurance for their phone.

Kevin Gillan, European managing director for SquareTrade™ said: "These figures make the term 'hand held' look like a bit of an exaggeration. They suggest that for many of us, holding on to our mobile phone is as straightforward as holding on to a slippery eel."

Many smartphone owners have also caused damage that hasn't quite stopped them from using their devices, finding makeshift ways of getting their smartphones to do something. Some have persevered with their phones, despite the damage. Of those that haven't paid for a repair, 47% have found that they can't use some keys on the keyboard, 24% have found that they can't use their camera, 32% can't use some or any apps and 21% can't get beyond the locked screen.

Despite not being able to use their phones properly, fear of either being completely disconnected while the phone is being repaired or concerns about the cost of the repairs means that 76% of British smartphone users wait more than a week before arranging a repair.

Kevin Gillan added: "Not only do more and more people have smartphones, but we use them more than ever – whether it's for checking emails, taking photos, using

social media or even occasionally to make a phone call. Because many people on phone contracts don't pay the upfront cost of their device, we sometimes forget how expensive they are, until, that is, we drop them. A replacement cost of several hundred pounds is an eye-watering prospect."

He added: "If you look at any group of people – on public transport, in the park or on the street - you'll see that many or most are using mobile devices. Losing the use of our mobile phones is bit like losing a sixth sense. We feel disconnected and disorientated. We are utterly reliant on mobile devices for work and play these days and finding ourselves out of the social and professional loop feels very uncomfortable indeed."

A selection of accidents reported to SquareTrade™:

- "Double whammy": A customer got scared by a bee that flew into the house and tried to get away. She dropped her phone onto the iPad™ and the screens cracked.
- "Fight of the bumblebee": A customer was in garden, was attacked by a bumblebee, dropped her tablet onto concrete and it shattered.
- "iStone": Phone was accidentally dropped into water. Son was fishing and dad was filming the event when it slipped from his hand into the stream
- The 'dog and bone': The customer's dog spied the phone on worktop, took it away and chewed it.
- "Cat-astrophe": The cat knocked a cup of water over the tablet - then licked it. An insoluble tablet, but damaged nonetheless.
- "Plunge treatment": The customer was relaxing on a spa day and walking towards the treatment room when a kid ran into her and knocked her - and her tablet - into the pool.
- "Chairfully does it": The customer's husband tripped over a chair while taking photos and fell into the pool with the phone.
- "Road Kill": The customer had a flat tyre. He made a call and then left the phone on the roof of the car. After fixing the car, he forgot that the phone was on the roof, reversed, then drove the car forward, running over his phone in the process.

About SquareTrade™

SquareTrade™ is the top-rated protection plan trusted by millions of happy customers for its fast and exceptional service. SquareTrade™ protects mobile devices, laptops and tablets, and other consumer electronics and appliances from malfunctions, accidental damage and life's frequent mishaps. Unlike old-fashioned warranties, SquareTrade™ is designed for today's consumer and uses innovative technology to deliver a zero hassle claims process. SquareTrade™ has more than 200,000 fans on Facebook™, consistently wins industry awards and receives thousands of 5-star reviews for its legendary customer service. Top retailers around



the world offer SquareTrade™, achieving significant sales growth and happier customers. Privately held, SquareTrade's™ investors include Bain Capital™ and Bain Capital Ventures™. SquareTrade™ is headquartered in San Francisco and London. For more information, go to www.squaretrade.co.uk.

Data Sources:

1) UK data from SquareTrade's European Smartphone Accidents Study conducted in August 2014 using online panel providers ResearchNow™ and Qualtrics™. Feedback was collected from over 13,000 smartphone owners across Europe. 2) Other sources cited include: Euro exchange rates collected from Bloomberg.com™ on 8/14/2014, Deloitte™ Global Mobile Consumer Survey, July 2013, The World Factbook accessed through CIA.gov, Google's 2013 Our Mobile Planet Smartphone Research, and GSMA Intelligence. 3) SquareTrade's 2014 UK iPhone™ survey conducted in June 2014 using Research Now, with feedback collected from 1,200 smartphone owners in the UK.