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Vodafone’s vending machine mobile phones

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31 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Vodafone's vending machine mobile phones

Communication giant Vodafone has just unveiled a vending machine that dispenses mobile phones. The company is exploring a sales channel that has long proven successful with other goods, such as cigarettes, chocolate and soft drinks. The first of the company's QuickPhone kiosks will be installed in one of its flagship stores in Manchester, in the UK. The company hopes they will soon be more ubiquitous and become a commonly sighted facility at railway stations, airports, music festivals and shopping malls. People in need of an emergency telephone can choose from models that are priced at \$53 and \$106. The kiosks will accept cash, and people who buy them do not need to divulge any personal information about their credit cards or place of abode.

The fact that the purchaser is not required to submit his/her name and proof of address has raised concerns that the phones could be used in criminal or terrorist activities. People can buy them anonymously and use them without leaving any paper trail. A Vodafone spokesman claimed the vending phones are for people "who don't want to go through the rigmarole of talking to a sales assistant." Security experts are worried this may prompt terrorist attacks similar to those in Madrid, where mobile phones were used to detonate bombs. Phone pests are also probably rubbing their hands with glee at the thought of undetectable perversions. However, the likeliest manifestation of criminal activity may well come from vandals who will wreck the machines and loot the phones.

WARM-UPS

1. TELEPHONES: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with telephones. What did they look like when you first started using them? Could you live without telephones? What do you think telephones will be able to do in the future?

2. KIOSKS: How often do you use kiosks or vending machines? What do you buy? Are they ubiquitous in your country? With your partner(s), talk about the pros and cons of vending machines selling the following things:

- Mobile phones
- Passports
- Medicine
- Pornography
- Guns
- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Pets

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Communication / Vodafone / vending machines / mobile phones / kiosks / music festivals / personal information / proof of address / phone pests / vandals / looting

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. VENDING MACHINES: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with vending machines. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. PERSONAL INFORMATION: Are you reluctant to divulge your personal information? Talk with your partner(s) about the possible dangers of giving out the following info. Who do you give this information to?

- Name
- Age
- Date of birth
- Address
- E-mail address
- Weight
- Credit card number
- Telephone number
- Salary
- TOEIC score

6. MOBILE OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, discuss how far you agree with these opinions:

- a. I can't live without my mobile.
- b. Mobile phones give us greater freedom and independence.
- c. Mobile phones are an essential criminal tool and need stricter regulation.
- d. Mobile phone companies totally rip everyone off with their exorbitant charges.
- e. Mobile phones will soon be replaced with watch phones.
- f. Vending machine mobile phones will lead to an increase in crime and terrorism.
- g. Kiosk mobile phones are a great idea. I hate the long sales process in stores.
- h. The mobile phone is the most useful device of the century (so far).

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A company will start selling mobile phones from vending machines. | T / F |
| b. Customers who successfully buy a phone will get free chocolates. | T / F |
| c. The vending machines will soon be a common sight across the UK. | T / F |
| d. People must type their name when using the vending machine. | T / F |
| e. People are worried that terrorists will buy the mobile phones. | T / F |
| f. Vodafone said people are tired of the usual lengthy sales process. | T / F |
| g. Mobile phones were used to detonate bombs in Madrid, Spain. | T / F |
| h. The likeliest manifestation of criminal activity will come from hackers. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| a. unveiled | delight |
| b. dispenses | disclose |
| c. ubiquitous | malarkey |
| d. divulge | gives out |
| e. abode | unidentified |
| f. anonymously | form |
| g. rigmarole | made public |
| h. glee | residence |
| i. manifestation | plunder |
| j. loot | everywhere |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Vodafone has just | of talking to a sales assistant |
| b. a sales channel that has long | any personal information |
| c. The company hopes they will soon | of abode |
| d. do not need to divulge | trail |
| e. place | the machines and loot the phones |
| f. name and proof of | unveiled a vending machine |
| g. paper | with glee |
| h. go through the rigmarole | be more ubiquitous |
| i. rubbing their hands | proven successful |
| j. vandals who will wreck | address |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group below in the correct gap in the text. It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap.

Vodafone's vending machine mobile phones

Communication giant Vodafone has just ____ a vending machine that dispenses mobile phones. The company is exploring a sales channel that has long proven successful with other goods, such as cigarettes, chocolate and soft drinks. The first of the company's QuickPhone kiosks will be installed in one of its flagship stores in Manchester, in the UK. The company hopes they will soon be more ____ and become a commonly sighted facility at railway stations, airports, music festivals and shopping malls. People in need of an emergency telephone can ____ from models that are priced at \$53 and \$106. The kiosks will accept cash, and people who buy them do not need to divulge any personal information about their credit cards or place of ____.

The fact that the purchaser is not required to submit his/her name and proof of address has raised concerns that the phones could be used in criminal or terrorist activities. People can buy them ____ and use them without leaving any paper trail. A Vodafone spokesman claimed the vending phones are for people "who don't want to go through the rigmarole of talking to a sales assistant." Security ____ are worried this may prompt terrorist attacks similar to those in Madrid, where mobile phones were used to detonate bombs. Phone ____ are also probably rubbing their hands with glee at the thought of undetectable perversions. However, the likeliest manifestation of criminal activity may well come from vandals who will wreck the machines and ____ the phones.

1

loot
plunder
ransack
steal

2

unveiled
made public
disclosed
revealed

3

experts
specialists
authorities
gurus

4

ubiquitous
everywhere
all-over
wall-to-wall

5

choose
opt for
decide on
select

6

pests
nuisances
creeps
tormentors

7

abode
residence
domicile
dwelling

8

anonymously
unidentified
unnamed
incognito

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Vodafone's vending machine mobile phones

Communication giant Vodafone has just _____ a vending machine that dispenses mobile phones. The company is exploring a sales channel that has _____ successful with other goods, such as cigarettes, chocolate and soft drinks. The first of the company's QuickPhone kiosks will be _____ in one of its flagship stores in Manchester, in the UK. The company hopes they will soon be more _____ and become a commonly sighted facility at railway stations, airports, music festivals and shopping malls. People _____ an emergency telephone can choose from models that are priced at \$53 and \$106. The kiosks will accept cash, and people who buy them do not need to _____ any personal information about their credit cards or place of _____.

The fact that the purchaser is not required to _____ his/her name and proof of address has _____ concerns that the phones could be used in criminal or terrorist activities. People can buy them anonymously and use them without leaving any paper _____. A Vodafone spokesman claimed the vending phones are for people "who don't want to go through the _____ of talking to a sales assistant." Security experts are worried this may prompt terrorist attacks similar to those in Madrid, where mobile phones were used to _____ bombs. Phone pests are also probably rubbing their hands _____ at the thought of undetectable perversions. However, the likeliest manifestation of criminal activity may well come from vandals who will _____ the machines and _____ the phones.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'mobile' and 'phone'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MOBILE PHONE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about mobile phones and the need for security and regulation.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- unveiled
- channel
- flagship
- ubiquitous
- models
- abode
- proof
- trail
- rigmarole
- detonate
- rubbing
- wreck

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of the new vending machine phones?
- c. How important are mobile phones to you?
- d. What would happen if you were without your mobile (or any) phone for a month?
- e. What kinds of problems would you have if you lost your mobile phone?
- f. What are the dangers of mobile phones?
- g. Do you think there is a need for people to go through the rigmarole of divulging so much personal information?
- h. Do you think governments should place stricter controls on mobile phone ownership?
- i. Do you worry about giving personal information to companies?
- j. What can governments do to stop phone pests?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Would you buy a phone from a vending machine?
- d. What kinds of criminal activities are mobile phones used for?
- e. Do you often use vending machines?
- f. What kinds of goods would you like to be made available in vending machines?
- g. Do you think people would spend \$50 for an "emergency" phone when they could make a call from a public pay phone for 50 cents?
- h. What functions do you think mobile phones will have in the future?
- i. Would / Do vandals loot vending machines in your country?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MOBILE PHONE ROLE PLAY: Should mobile phones be sold from vending machines with no need to submit personal information?

Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – VODAFONE CEO

You believe the age where people must register to have a phone is over. It's an invasion of privacy. A mobile phone is as essential part of daily life. People should be able to buy one quickly, any time, anywhere. It's not fair to place strict regulations on your industry.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY VENDING PHONES ARE GOOD.

Role B – SECURITY EXPERT

You believe international terrorism will get a major boost from the new vending phones. You think the government should ban them. You also believe privacy issues should give way to national security concerns. You think all mobile phones need greater regulation.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY VENDING PHONES ARE BAD.

Role C – JO PUBLIC (FOR)

You think there is nothing wrong with vending phones. You are tired of your government requiring you to hand over so much personal information. A phone is no different from a camera – it's something that's very useful. The government should trust people more.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY VENDING PHONES ARE GOOD.

Role D – JO PUBLIC (AGAINST)

You think the government needs to place stricter controls on mobile phones. The mobile phone is a valuable criminal tool. They help terrorists. You are worried that more phone scams will take place if people can buy them anonymously. Registration is necessary for public protection.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY VENDING PHONES ARE BAD.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Decide what should be done about requiring people to register their personal information to have a mobile phone.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Vodafone's new vending machine idea. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. PROS AND CONS: Make a poster outlining the pros and cons of mobile phones that do not need buyers to register their personal information. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find similar things? Discuss the pros and cons together.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the government about the dangers of mobile phones. Express your worries at people buying the phones without needing to divulge basic information like a name or address. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. F e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. unveiled	made public
b. dispenses	gives out
c. ubiquitous	everywhere
d. divulge	disclose
e. abode	residence
f. anonymously	unidentified
g. rigmarole	malarkey
h. glee	delight
i. manifestation	form
j. loot	plunder

PHRASE MATCH:

a. Vodafone has just	unveiled a vending machine
b. a sales channel that has long	proven successful
c. The company hopes they will soon	be more ubiquitous
d. do not need to divulge	any personal information
e. place	of abode
f. name and proof of	address
g. paper	trail
h. go through the rigmarole	of talking to a sales assistant
i. rubbing their hands	with glee
j. vandals who will wreck	the machines and loot the phones

SYNONYM FILL:

Vodafone's vending machine mobile phones

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