

THE DIARY

HECKLER

Still hung up over Telstra

TELSTRA is like an old boyfriend. The relationship where you had great sex (with plenty of speed and coverage) but at too high a cost.

You left him and got on with your life, accepting less satisfying but cheaper sex. However, every now and then you found yourself reminiscing. Maybe he'd changed?

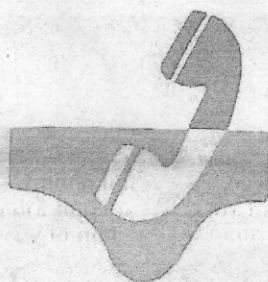
So it was when the phone rang recently and a friendly Telstra guy suggested we reconnect our old relationship. His offers were tempting: great speed and coverage for a new low price.

I was interested. Perhaps Telstra and I could make a fresh start?

I needed some time to think. He said it was a limited offer. I asked if I could call him back. He said no, because he didn't have a phone number.

I backed off. It was too big a decision to make on the spot. He told me it was easy to cancel if I changed my mind; I just had to call customer service within 10 days. I wouldn't even have to dump my old company - Telstra would do it for me. I was weakening. All those memories about speed and coverage...

But I had some relationship baggage of my own, in the form of three phone numbers, a VoIP system, a redirection, a broadband connection and a USB wireless service. Could a new relationship with Telstra handle all that? No problem, he assured me. Telstra would love my new numbers and my broadband as if they were its own.



LETC H

Oh, except there was a slight problem with the USB thing. And the VoIP. And was I sure I didn't need a fax line? And about that redirection...

Why oh why didn't I hang up then? Unable to extricate myself from his spell, I decided to go through the motions and cancel the next day. I made false vows, witnessed by a voice recording system, and at last the call ended. I needed a stiff drink to recover.

When I went to cancel I got the usual run of non-answering calls, on-holds and disconnections. Eventually I got through and did the deed. I even got a reference number in case of a problem.

Reader, there was one. A Telstra love letter arrived today. Without any reference to the fact I'd broken off our reconciliation, Telstra sent a bill. My current beau has been given the arse and Telstra has shouldered in to take his place as my provider.

I can't go through it all again. It's straight to that Family Court of telephones, the Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman.

And I'll now have to work out how to explain to my jilted company that I want him back again. Desperately.

Jesse Blackadder