T-Mobile Breaks Mold with Unlimited International Roaming

Andrew Berg

John Legere, T-Mobile's outspoken CEO, describes international roaming fees as "completely crazy," and last night he resolved to do something about it.

At a flashy event in Manhattan's Bryant Park Wednesday, which featured a performance by Latin pop star Shakira, T-Mobile rolled out its Uncarrier 3.0 initiative, which included game-changing unlimited international roaming in over 100 countries.

Starting October 31, Simple Choice individual and business customers will automatically get unlimited data and texting in more than 100 Simple Global countries worldwide, and will only pay a global flat rate of .20 cents per minute for voice calls when roaming in the same countries. No activation or extra monthly fee necessary.

The change is significant and completely new in an industry that has historically justified exorbitant international roaming fees. Prior to the announcement, T-Mobile charged $10 per MB for data roaming in Canada and $15 per MB elsewhere outside the United States. AT&T, meanwhile, charges $30 for a 120 MB roaming package.

Simple Choice customers who do travel overseas will probably not be breaking any speed records. Recon Analytics founder Roger Entner says the roaming will happen on Edge or 2G networks, with T-Mobile offering speed upgrade packages for $10-$15 per day.

"You can't do videos in Viet Nam with Edge, but you can do your email in Estonia, and text in Turkey, but for basic usage, it's fine," Enter said, noting that the move makes T-Mobile a contender in the wireless business segment.

Enter added that the carrier did a good job of covering most of the significant countries that Americans travel to. "The cost savings of going overseas are substantial," Enter said. "The only country that is not part of the T-Mobile plan that remotely matters, is the Bahamas. Other than that, they have every industrial partner and every tourist destination."

Entner has in the past bemoaned that the U.S. value carriers-T-Mobile and Sprint-have fallen short of offering a better deal than the premium carriers, AT&T and

Verizon. But he says T-Mobile is now on the road to doing just that.

"They are absolutely committed to being the value leader in this country," Entner said, "and they're succeeding."

When asked whether he thought AT&T and Verizon would follow suit with international offerings of their own, Entner said it all depended on if and when AT&T decides to react.

"If AT&T reacts, Verizon will have to do something as well," Enter said, referencing the way things shook out when T-Mobile announced its Jump! device upgrade and financing plans.

T-Mobile head of B2B, Drew Kelton, said the latest move by T-Mobile isn't the end of its innovating.

"I'm not sure we'll be numbering things, but we're just going to keep rolling things out...there's so many things coming out," he said.

Below is a list of all of the countries where T-Mobile will offer unlimited international data roaming:

Aland Islands, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Bolivia, Bonaire, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, China, Christmas Island, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Easter Island, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, France, French Guiana, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Martinique, Mexico, Moldova, Montserrat, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sint Maarten, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, St. Barthelemy, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Martin, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Svalbard, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos Islands, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vatican City, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zambia.

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