

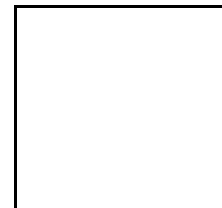
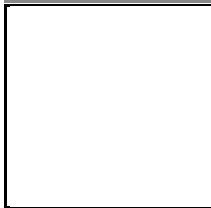
**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2011 3:41 PM  
**To:** Kathleen Smith; Info Information  
**Subject:** Would you pay .35 cents to dial 916?

Hi Kathleen,

Here is my post on my blog regarding the latest URCA Press release. Hopefully my regular readers participate and provide some feedback that you can use as apart of your community response. Thanks.

ra  
<http://tech.fromtheisles.com>

## Tech from the isles



---

### [Would you pay .35 cents to dial 916?](#)

Posted: 23 Sep 2011 05:25 AM PDT



Based on a couple of followers I asked on twitter last night, the answer is “hell to the NO.” But, things are changing, and according [to this press release by The Utilities Regulation & Competitions Authority \(URCA\)](#) it appears that you may be paying something in the future to access 916 whether you like it or not. URCA is requesting public consultation on the matter.

916 is the nationwide number in the Bahamas for Directory Assistance...our very own 4-1-1 if you will.

According to Wikipedia “in the US, you can pay anywhere from \$1.25 up to \$3.49 for a 4-1-1 call, depending on if the call is local, national or within a particular state, plus taxes”

[\[source\]](#)

The Press Release simply states that URCA requires BTC to propose a fee for directory services (916) and

informational services (915). The Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) has responded back stating that they would like to charge each customer a .35 cents fee for using 916 Directory Assistance from a landline or cellphone. The charge would appear in your regular monthly billing, or deducted from your prepaid minutes.

According to URCA, paying for directory assistance calls is a common practice in the region, it helps to produce fairness and competition. The directory service is viewed as an added service or convenience feature. This is because customers can use either the free yellow pages book, or the multiple online yellow page 'e-directories' such as my favorite [www.bahamasypmobile.com](http://www.bahamasypmobile.com) to obtain directory assistance by themselves.

**URCA's response to BTC's .35¢ per call are:**

-BTC should allow the public to have three free 916 calls per month on their landlines – charging for the fourth call.

-BTC can charge their suggested .35 cents if the customer calls from a mobile phone

-Calls from Pay Phones should be free because yellow pages are often unavailable at those locations.

-Customers at times require more up-to-date contact information that may have missed yellow page publication (or might not have been updated online yet).

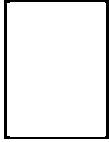
**BTC would rather charge .35¢ across the board.**

I like URCA's suggestions, but I also do not take issue with BTC's proposal to charge across the board for the service. In my mind, this will foster the creation of new ways to access yellow page information across the nation, as intended by URCA. In other words, competition...new tech startups...more jobs, three possibilities I enjoy thinking about!

The biggest losers here will be businesses whose employees will continue to use the service willy-nilly. It may seem insignificant for residential landlines, but the cost of owning a business landline will more than likely increase significantly. This makes business customers the perfect target for tech startups that can deliver a similar 9-1-6 directory service for a fraction of the cost...A fraction of .35 cents however, doesn't seem very attractive. Innovation will be key.

If you have a view on the matter (and you should), please vote in my poll and leave a message in the comments which I will get to the appropriate URCA officials. October 24th is the deadline for responses. You can learn more about the change [here \(short story\)](#) or [here \(long story\)](#)

Note: There is a poll embedded within this post, please visit the site to participate in this post's poll.



**Hi, I'm Ryan Austin.** Change is inevitable with anything, I believe that you can affect change if you only take part. Participate in change here on my blog, [or on twitter](#). You can also subscribe to this blog using the provided textbox below.

[     ] [Subscribe]

▣