

Verizon backs down on made-up fees and then adds them anyway

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I ranted a few years ago about rate hikes disguised as fees or taxes, but Verizon's unabashed deceptive practices still gets me all worked up. Last year, the FCC decided that Verizon didn't have to pay the Universal Service Fund fee any more, but that didn't stop them from charging for it anyway. What galls me is their explanation of the fee they invented to replace the USF: "... new costs that we've developed over the past year as we've been developing and delivering this standalone DSL service." Now, maybe I'm not hip to this whole "new economy" thing, but I always thought that the way to reflect increased costs in providing a product is by a complicated technique called "raising the price". They aren't even *pretending* that it's a pass-along of some government fee or tax. They're saying that it's a fee *to do their own job*. Imagine if you go to the grocery store and check out, and there's a line item at the bottom: *Building cost recovery fee*. You'd think these people were nuts. The way you recover building costs is by charging more for your products and services. Some time afterwards, Verizon reversed its position and announced that it would stop collecting this bogus fee.

And then they quietly announced that they would keep collecting it anyway in selected areas.

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