

AT&T relents on 'unlimited data' plan limits

March 1 2012, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- AT&T Inc. caved to complaints that it's placing unreasonable limits on the "unlimited data" plans it offers smartphone subscribers.

The cellphone [company](#) said on Thursday that from now on, it will only slow down service for its "unlimited data" subscribers when they hit 3 gigabytes of usage within a billing cycle.

Previously, the company had been slowing down service when subscribers entered the heaviest 5 percent of data users for that month and that area.

There was no way for subscribers to find out ahead of time what the limit was. AT&T would send a warning by text message to people who approached the limit. The data throttling would then kick in a few days later.

"Our unlimited plan customers have told us they want more clarity around how the program works and what they can expect," AT&T said in a statement Thursday.

Several subscribers told The Associated Press that their data service had been throttled at just over 2 gigabytes of data use, lower than most people on AT&T's "limited" plans. Some of them said their phones were practically useless for two weeks out the month because the data service was slowed so drastically.

AT&T doesn't sell the "unlimited data" plan any more, but subscribers

have been allowed to keep it. The company charges \$30 per month for the same amount it charges for 3 gigabytes of data on a new "tiered" or limited plan.

AT&T has about 17 million "unlimited" smartphone subscribers, most of whom use iPhones.

The Dallas-based phone company said [subscribers](#) with "unlimited" plans and smartphones capable of using the new "LTE" data network would see the slowdown at 5 gigabytes rather than three. The LTE network is faster and doesn't have many users yet.

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