

From: Ballantyne John [/O=EXCHANGE/OU=ADMINGROUP1/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BALLANTYNEJ]
Sent: Mon 12/04/2010 8:21:51 AM (UTC)
To: Jenkins Gareth GI [GRO]; Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount); [GRO]; Wright Mark [GRO]; Holmes Alan [GRO]
Cc: Simpkins John [GRO]; Turner Ian T [GRO]; Allen Graham (BRA01) [GRO]; Goddard Steve SD [GRO]; Beardmore Andy [GRO]; Porter Steven [GRO]
Subject: RE: Peak PC0196948
Attachment: 278311.zip

All,

Preserving the evidence is a support first principal. Still have the logs attached, attached (unobfuscated).

Regards
John

From: Jenkins Gareth GI
Sent: 08 April 2010 09:23
To: Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount); Wright Mark; Holmes Alan
Cc: Ballantyne John; Simpkins John; Turner Ian T; Allen Graham (BRA01); Goddard Steve SD; Beardmore Andy; Porter Steven
Subject: RE: Peak PC0196948

Steve,

Thanks for following this up and I appreciate how busy your guys are.

I accept that as far as Peak PC0196948 is concerned there is probably nothing further that we can do, assuming that John Ballantyne no longer has the Counter Logs. However as the scenario is quite different from that in PC0196949, I think it would be worth passing the Peak across to GDC to see if we can find out what is going wrong. In particular for PC0196948, the issue is that the JSN seems to be calculated incorrectly on the Log On the following day when the User session failed on Log Out the previous day. (I'm speculating here, but could the Log Out with the missing jsn which failed at the counter, have resulted in the BRDB_BRANCH_NODE_INFO being updated with the JSN and the BRDB_RX_MESSAGE_JOURNAL not being updated due to some database glitch in Rollback? That could explain the situation, but if that can happen it is very worrying.) However for PC0196949, the issue is completely different in that the missing JSN is in a 10 minute gap on one afternoon and seems to be due to a failed BRDB rollback.

I've now picked up Mark's voicemail, and perhaps it is worth my explaining what the BRDB issue is for Peak PC0196948. (However Alan's email below shows that there is now nothing we can do easily to fix this issue.)

The JSN is used as a unique Audit sequence (just like the Riposte Num attribute). Part of our Integrity position is that we never have a missing / lost / duplicate JSN (in a similar way to Riposte Num). There is an overnight process that extracts all records from the BRDB_RX_MESSAGE_JOURNAL table to a file for audit purposes. This process checks whether there are any missing / duplicate JSNs since that implies an Integrity issue. Therefore what I wanted to know was why this process hadn't picked up the fact that there was a missing JSN. Alan has pointed out that as the missing JSN was the last JSN from that counter for that day, then the BRDB process can't pick it up as "missing", so this is something we need to reconsider from a design point of view.

However the same question needs to be asked about why the overnight process did not detect the gap (or perhaps did detect the gap but nobody noticed) when archiving the branch in Peak PC0196949. Is it too late to check that out with the Maestro logs from the BRDB Archive process on 26/3/10?

Is there any point in considering altering the Counter Log archiving period to a longer period if we can't get logs back in

time? There's plenty of space on the Hard Disk! I gather that archiving wasn't working for the first month or so of HNG-X Counters!

Regards

Gareth

Gareth Jenkins
Distinguished Engineer
Applications Architect
Royal Mail Group Account

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From: Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount)
Sent: 07 April 2010 14:07
To: Holmes Alan; Jenkins Gareth GI; Turner Ian T; Allen Graham (BRA01); Goddard Steve SD; Beardmore Andy
Cc: Ballantyne John; Simpkins John; Wright Mark
Subject: RE: Peak PC0196948

Gents,

I appreciate the importance of this problem. At the moment we are trying to manage a work in progress of 309 calls.

Neither of the Peak calls you mention here are with the SSC for any action to be taken (like gathering additional evidence)

No request has been made for additional evidence via the ad-hoc process

Please work with us on this and make a specific request, that I can manage, via some part of the support process.

Alan: Can I ask that PC0196948 is returned to the SSC.

Gareth: Can you update PC0196948, is it just the BRDB harvesting for the audit trail that you want us to check?

Steve

From: Holmes Alan
Sent: 07 April 2010 12:28
To: Jenkins Gareth GI; Turner Ian T; Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount); Allen Graham (BRA01); Goddard

Steve SD; Beardmore Andy
Subject: RE: Peak PC0196948

Gents

There is another Peak PC0196949, which is also about a JSN gap at another branch. This does seem to have collected some evidence along the way, but is currently with team TfS DBA who have been asked to gather additional evidence from the BRDB before forwarding to development.

These two problems occurred at around the same time 26th March, which I am told coincides with the BRDB having one of it's "I want to be alone" moments. I have no idea whether the two occurrences have the same root cause.

The situation with the BRDB harvester picking up the error is much more interesting in the case of PC0196948. The gap occurs between two days harvested data. I discussed this with Steve Goddard & Andy Beardmore yesterday. They confirmed that the current design of the harvester is such that it would not pick up a JSN gap in these circumstances. Changing it to remember where it left off the previous day for each counter would be not insignificant but, I think, needs looking into.

Just to reiterate Gareth's statement below, the integrity of the JSN sequences are absolutely vital to the overall integrity of this data.

Alan

From: Jenkins Gareth GI
Sent: 07 April 2010 11:26
To: Turner Ian T; Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount)
Cc: Allen Graham (BRA01); Holmes Alan
Subject: RE: Peak PC0196948

Ian,

As discussed, you beat me to this, as I'd spotted this Peak and was concerned about it too.

Steve:

Reading through the Peak, Alan Holmes asked 2 questions:

1. Why was JSN 1156187 missing?
2. Had the BRDB Harvester picked it up?

It would appear that John Ballantyne did extract the logs on 1/4/10, so are these logs still available or has John deleted them?

Also is it possible to find out if the BRDB Harvester picked this up (and if it did why nobody was made aware of this?

A missing JSN indicates a major flaw in the overall design and Integrity of HNG-X. If we can't explain this, then we will be unable to assert that HNG-X is a robust system in court so it is important that we get to the bottom of this.

Please can we have this Peak re-opened and progressed.

Regards

Gareth

Gareth Jenkins
Distinguished Engineer
Applications Architect
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From: Turner Ian T
Sent: 07 April 2010 08:06
To: Jenkins Gareth GI; Parker Steve (PostOfficeAccount)
Cc: Allen Graham (BRA01)
Subject: Peak PC0196948

Gareth,

peak PC0196948 identified a gap in JSN numbers that occurred between 26th and 27th Mar. this eventually got to the GDC as A priority on 6th April.

GDC needed evidence to progress, but there was none as the 7 day limit had passed for evidence retention.

The peak is now in final so no action is being taken because of lack of evidence.

is this a big issue - or is the priority inappropriate? It looks like we are possibly losing data?

Steve,

I am concerned that A priority peaks can be treated like this and that logs are not captured and secured as a matter of course for this sort of incident, at least until we have had a chance to analyse? This may be at the SMC or at the SSC?

This could be tip of the iceberg or could be red herring, I would have at the very least expected some sort of follow up check of JSNs recorded in the peak to ascertain if there is a problem?

anyway, I would value your views on this and would like to know if there is a need for some better mechanism for capturing logs and promoting A priorities so we don't have issues like this?

I am sorry if this seems like a rant, but I am concerned that we may have a gap here in the way we deal with incidents?

Thanks

regards

Ian

Ian T Turner

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