

To: Lillywhite Tom [GRO]; Thompson Peter [GRO]; Welsh Graham [GRO]; Munro Donna [GRO]
Cc: Jenkins Gareth GI [GRO]
From: Thomas Penny [/O=EXCHANGE/OU=ADMINGROUP1/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=THOMASP]
Sent: Fri 7/2/2010 12:27:00 PM (UTC)
Subject: FW: Duplicatation of Transaction Records in ARQ Returns - Discussion with POL

Please note I have NOT shared these notes with POL and would prefer we did not

Penny Thomas
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From: Thomas Penny
Sent: 02 July 2010 13:08
To: Lillywhite Tom; Thompson Peter; Welsh Graham; Munro Donna
Cc: Jenkins Gareth GI
Subject: FW: Duplicatation of Transaction Records in ARQ Returns - Discussion with POL

I have just completed a conference call with Mark Dinsdale, Alan Simpson and Jane Owen. My notes:-

- I provided a sample workaround spreadsheet and took them through the detail.
- I confirmed that this occurred only in audit data and not in live data
- There were questions asked why we could not present actual data as against audit data – this I explained.
- They asked why records had been duplicated – this I explained.
- I talked them through the ARQs affected list and asked that they confirm whether West Byfleet and Porters Avenue were the only cases listed that had progressed to Court. – *ACTION: Jane to speak with Jason Collins and Andrew Daley area managers*
- I asked them to confirm whether transaction records for West Byfleet had actually been presented at Court or whether records had only been passed to the defence expert – *ACTION: Jane*
- They were concerned how it would look if we had to replace transaction data that had already been presented at Court and indeed what the defence expert could make of this issue in Court.
- I stated that Gareth Jenkins could discuss this issue with the defence expert (for both West Byfleet and Porters Avenue) when the CT for his meeting had been signed. – *ACTION: Penny*
- Mark to progress CT approval – *ACTION: Mark*
- I confirmed that all the ARQ returns identified had duplicate records and they said they would advise area managers this was the case. I offered to speak with either if they required any qualification of detail.
- I said investigators needed to be aware where duplicated records had been returned and that we would need to re-create spreadsheets where progression to Court would occur – *ACTION: Jane*
- I stated that POL needed to formally accept this workaround before any further records could be returned.
- I was asked whether anyone was working on a fix – I confirmed development had already started. I said that there was currently a Change Freeze – Alan was aware of this.
- I was asked to provide an estimated timeframe for fix implementation should POL accept this workaround. I was also asked whether I could provide regular progress reviews – *ACTION: Penny – I have sent a note to Pat Lywood asking if this would be Release 2.1 in August*
- Mark/Alan said they needed legal guidance – *ACTION: Mark to speak with POL legal*
- I said that I would seek legal guidance once it had been identified whether transaction records had been presented in Court or not – *ACTION: Penny*
- I asked for a priorities list for future returns – *ACTION: Jane*

We agreed to speak again early next week

Kind regards
Penny

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From: Thomas Penny
Sent: 30 June 2010 13:51
To: Lillywhite Tom; Munro Donna
Cc: Thompson Peter; Welsh Graham
Subject: FW: Duplication of Transaction Records in ARQ Returns

Note has been sent.

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From: Thomas Penny
Sent: 30 June 2010 13:33
To: sue.lowther@[redacted] GRO; mark.dinsdale@[redacted] GRO; jane.m.owen@[redacted] GRO
Subject: Duplication of Transaction Records in ARQ Returns

Sue/Mark/Jane

We have identified that a number of recent ARQ returns contain duplicated transaction records.

With Horizon counters, the mechanism by which Data is audited has always worked on the principle that it is acceptable to audit the same data more than once – in particular if in doubt as to whether or not it has been previously audited successfully.

The Mechanism used on Horizon to retrieve the data took this into account and only presented one instance of such duplicate data in the ARQ extracts.

However it has recently been noticed that the HNG-X retrieval mechanism does not remove such duplicates and a quick scan of the ARQs provided to Post Office Ltd since the change to the new system indicates that about 35% of the ARQs might contain some duplicate data. A Peak has been raised to enhance the extraction toolset and remove such duplicate data in the future. However until the fix is developed, tested and deployed, there is a possibility that data is duplicated.

The reliable way to identify a duplicate transaction is to use the <Num> attribute that is used to generate the unique sequence numbers. This attribute is not currently included in the Excel version of ARQ data that has been passed to Post Office Ltd in the past. This will be included in all future ARQs until the problem is fixed. A workaround, using the <NUM> attribute is suggested, and a detailed process is attached.

Note that we have identified a scenario with Postal Services transactions where multiple, identical mails items are accepted (ie the Quantity button is set to greater than 1), but Postage Labels are printed for each individual item. This results in separate transactions being generated for each item, which are identical in the ARQ extracts (there is another minor difference in the raw data apart from the <Num> attribute, but this different attribute is not currently included in the ARQ extract).

I've put together a spreadsheet detailing affected ARQs, which is also attached.

Mark/Jane I've tried to call you both this morning but I understand you are both tied up. Please call and we can discuss.

Kind regards
Penny/Tom

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Tom Lillywhite
Principal Security Consultant
Information & Security Services

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