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Horizon Spot Review 5 – Response

Bracknell Site & Centrally Input Transactions

Summary

An assertion has been made by Mr Michael Rudkin that during a visit to the Fujitsu Bracknell site on Tuesday 19th August 2008, he observed an individual based in the basement of the building who demonstrated the ability to access 'live' branch data and directly adjust transactions on the Horizon system.

Given the amount of time that has passed, neither POL nor Fujitsu have any record of Mr Rudkin attending the Bracknell site.

It has however been determined that the basement of Fujitsu's building contained a Horizon test environment. This environment was not physically connected to the live Horizon environment. It was therefore impossible for anyone in this room to have adjusted any live transaction records though they may have shown Mr Rudkin some form of adjustment to the test environment.

Spot review scope

This Spot Review covers 4 key areas:

1. What Horizon functions and access was available from the basement room of Fujitsu's Bracknell Site that was visited by Mr Rudkin?
2. What happened during Mr Rudkin's visit to the Bracknell site?
3. What access and authorisations were available from the test environment at the Bracknell site? This section addresses the 7 specific questions put forward Second Sight in the email from Ian Henderson to Steve Allchorn of 7 June 2013.
4. What historic access was available to live Horizon data?

Issue 1: What Horizon functions and access are available from the basement room of Fujitsu's Bracknell Site that was witnessed by Mr Rudkin?

The Bracknell Site Set-Up In 2008

In August 2008 there were 4 separate test environments set up in the basement area of the Fujitsu building:

- BTC1 & BTC3 : These two test environments were used for functional testing of changes being made to Horizon at that time, e.g. the introduction of MoneyGram (**the Functional Test Environment**)

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- V&I: The Horizon Volume test environment (**the Volume Test Environment**)
- REL : The Horizon release test environment (where deployment of software packages were tested) (**the Release Test Environment**)

It is this test environment that is believed to have been witnessed by Mr Rudkin.

Along with these environments, preparation activities were underway in the basement to build a volume and release environment for HNG, however, this environment would not have been in a working state at the time of Mr Rudkin's visit.

POL had access to the functional test environment.

Fujitsu controlled the Volume and Release Test environments. Their focus was not counter functionality; they were designed to provide performance capability and software deployment to the data centre platforms rather than counter.

Test environment only

The key point here is the phrase 'test environment'. In August 2008, the live Horizon Data Centre was dual-located in Wigan and Bootle. Access to the live site was strictly controlled and one could not interfere with the live transaction databases from the test environments at Bracknell.

To create the test environment at Bracknell, POL/Fujitsu physically built a completely separate set of servers that reflected the live configuration in Wigan/Bootle. These servers were hosted in the basement in Bracknell, along with test counters to connect to them. Access to the test environments then (and which remains the case now) was controlled via secure rooms and user logon authentication.

Critically, there was no physical connection between the live and test environments. The test environments at Bracknell could not access nor manipulate any data in the live environment.

However, as a test environment, there would have been terminals where interrogation of the test copies of the live databases would have been possible. To a lay person, this may look like activity in the live environment. But, to be clear, this would have been interrogation of the test databases only, as there was complete physical separation between the test and live systems.

Issue 2: What happened during Mr Rudkin's visit to the Bracknell site?

Post Office has made a concerted attempt to corroborate Mr Rudkin's stated visit and purpose through existing records held for that date and POL projects being managed during that time in 2008. The intention here has been to try and verify Mr Rudkin's statement through identification of the individual(s) who came into contact with him during his visit.

It is worth noting that Mr Rudkin states that he was unaccompanied when visiting Bracknell and cannot remember the name of the individual who greeted him on site and escorted him through to the basement (test environment) area during his visit.

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We have additionally attempted to establish the Bracknell visitor logs for the date stated in the Spot Review to verify Mr Rudkin's attendance and his contact on the day, however Fujitsu have confirmed that these records are not retained for as far back as 2008.

Fujitsu have additionally made the effort go through all email, documents and archived information to hand but do not have any information for Tuesday 19th August 2008 that would suggest they had visitors to the site.

Commented [AP61]: What did this entail? We don't need to provide details but need to be confident that this process is robust in case we are challenged by SS.

Mr Rudkin states that the intention for his visit to the Bracknell site on that day was for 'bureau de change automation'. We have looked at the Horizon test plan for 2008 and the only subject related project that was scheduled for transaction testing at that time was the Bureau Pre-Order Automation project. Minutes from meetings for June and July 2008 for that project mention an action to set up a Bracknell site visit for 'FED' to view the test transactions on the 19 August 2008.

Logic would suggest that the intention to hold this test session for the project on that day correlates with Mr Rudkin's stated visit. However, a number of individuals listed as being involved in the project – including the Bureau product manager and assigned business analyst - have no recollection of either the formal visit having taken place or recognition of Mr Rudkin as an invited individual to the Bracknell site. One of the individuals spoken to was, at the material time, in post as the test manager assigned to the project. Having searched his Lotus Notes time records, he has confirmed that he was working in Bracknell on Tuesday 19 August 2008, however he has no recollection of Mr Rudkin or a related visit to the test environment on that day.

Further investigation into the Lotus Notes records of the test team in Bracknell indicates that there were just three POL test managers present on site in Bracknell on the 19 August 2008. None of them have any calendar records relating to a visit by Mr Rudkin. The account provided by Mr Rudkin suggests that he came across at least five individuals on his journey from the first floor in Bracknell into the basement area.

Commented [AP62]: What account? I don't think I've seen this.

Mr Rudkin's account of the journey he took with his building contact, from reception to upstairs and then down through security doors and down a stairwell to gain access to the basement, aligns with the structural layout in the building.

Based on the above, neither POL nor Fujitsu appear to have any record of Mr Rudkin attending the Bracknell site however, that is not to say that his visit did not happen.

Alleged Comments

Mr Rudkin mentions that he heard the basement test environment being referred to as the 'covert operations' room. There is no evidence to suggest that this was ever a term used to describe the basement area and none of the test team questioned have heard of the phrase even in a joking context.

Mr Rudkin additionally mentions that whilst in the basement area he evidenced access to the live Horizon system. This would not have been the case as the test environment was an independently built environment from the live production system. It is possible that Mr Rudkin did not fully understand the functions of the test environment that he visited and made certain assumptions regarding what he saw and heard.

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Issue 3: What access and authorisations were available from the test environment at the Bracknell site?

This section addresses the 7 specific questions put forward by Second Sight in the email from Ian Henderson to Steve Allchorn of 7 June 2013.

Question 1:

What capabilities did the POL Bracknell team have? (As far as TC or Rem Out type transactions or Journal adjustments are concerned).

Response:

The POL Bracknell Team had no access to the live system therefore could not conduct any of these transactions.

Question 2:

What were the PHYSICAL or LOGICAL controls over their use of the systems available to them?

Response:

There was no Physical or Logical connection to the live system from the areas in Bracknell being discussed/ investigated. Detailed documentation has been supplied of the testing processes and procedures recently audited and the design documents to support this position.

Question 3:

What audit trail is available to show the extent that they posted TC or Rem Out type transactions, or Journal adjustments?

Response:

When any transactions are posted to the database they are contained in the audit trail. As both the original Horizon and replacement HNGx test systems were available to the test teams in that period the test area and the test data is often refreshed and changed it would not be possible to identify any transactions from this period in the test system. Specifically we do not keep audits of test systems, only the Live system. As stated in response to question 1, the teams in the area of Bracknell concerned would have no access to the live system.

Question 4:

Can we reply of the COMPLETENESS of the audit trail? i.e. does it record all transactions or just transactions meeting certain criteria? Is it protected from user manipulation?

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Response:

The detailed answer to this is included in two papers *Horizon Data Integrity* and *Horizon Online Data Integrity for Post Office Ltd* which have been presented as evidence in a number of previous court cases.

Question 5:

What USER ID was used if TC type transactions or journal adjustments were posted?

Response:

On the old Horizon System (which was Live in 2008) Data introduced to the system in the Data Centre would not be marked with any user ID. To be clear, however, it was impossible to introduce data into the live system from the test environment.

Question 6:

Could the POL Bracknell team log on with either super user or SMPR credentials?

Response:

Not into the live system for reasons already outlined.

Question 7:

How would TC, Rem Out or Journal Adjustment type transactions executed by the POL Bracknell team be seen by SPMR of Branches affected by those actions?

Response:

The PO Bracknell team did not have access to the live system.

Issue 4: What historic access was available to live Horizon data?

As referenced in the Spot Review, the Horizon Operating Manual from 2006 notes that the introduction of a new system meant that POL could "no longer adjust client accounts on site". POL has been asked to clarify whether this meant that POL could access and change live Horizon data.

In parallel to Horizon, POL operates a finance IT system. This finance system manages the relationships between POL and its product suppliers. These relationships are the "client accounts" referred to in the Operating Manual.

In 2006, POL upgraded its finance system to a new SAP finance system. Before this upgrade, transaction records were sent from Horizon to the old finance system. When certain types of error were made in recording transactions in branch, POL's Product and Branch Accounting (**P&BA**) team based in Chesterfield could make manual adjustments to the finance system records so that the client accounts would be corrected. This is what the Operations Manual meant by an adjustment being "on site" – the site being the Chesterfield site of the P&BA team.

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For clarity, the manual adjustments to the finance system did not change the Horizon records and therefore did not change the branch's local accounting position.

Post 2006 and the introduction of the SAP system, POL changed this process. The errors that would historically have been corrected by manual adjustment are now corrected by way of a transaction correction being issued to the branch. On the SPMR accepting the transaction correction, the Horizon data is updated and this flows through to the SAP finance system.

It was this change of process that led to the above entry in the Operations Manual. This change, and the ability to access the old financial system, is also entirely unrelated to the test environment at Bracknell.