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Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme

Horizon Data

Issue

This question often phrased by Applicants and Second Sight is:

"Can Post Office remotely access Horizon?"

Phrasing the question in this way does not address the issue that is of concern to Second Sight and Applicants. It refers generically to "Horizon" but more particularly is about the transaction data recorded by Horizon. Also, the word "access" means the ability to **view** transaction data without editing it – Post Office / Fujitsu has always been able to view transaction data in order to provide support and conduct maintenance but this does not allow access to any functionality that could be used to edit recorded transaction data. However it is the alleged capacity of Post Office / Fujitsu to **edit** transaction data that appears to be of concern.

Thus, this paper addresses the question:

Can Post Office or Fujitsu edit transaction data without the knowledge of a Subpostmaster?"

Post Office confirms There is no functionality in Horizon for either a branch, Post Office or Fujitsu (suppliers of the Horizon system) to edit, manipulate or remove transaction data once it has been recorded in a branch's accounts. Post Office can only post additional, correcting transactions to a branch's accounts but only in ways that are visible to Subpostmasters

This document

This document provides a generic response to the general question posed above. It is noted that, as yet, neither Second Sight or any Applicant have presented Post Office with a specific evidenced example of data irregularities or anomalies that may suggest data integrity issues. Nevertheless, Post Office is of course prepared to investigate incidents alleged by claimants as part of the Complaint and Mediation Scheme providing they are clearly identified (by at least the date, and preferably also the approximate time) in an Applicant's Case Questionnaire Response.

This document has been prepared with the assistance of Fujitsu and the Post Office IT&C Team. Both have approved this document as being accurate.

Response

There is no functionality in Horizon for either a branch, Post Office or Fujitsu to edit, manipulate or remove a transaction once it has been recorded in a branch's accounts.

Although once recorded a transaction cannot be edited or deleted, transactions (including negative transactions) can be **added** to a branch's accounts , but only in the following ways:

Are the three ways below, the only ways to affect a branch's accounts?

1 In branch

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Branch staff record additional transactions during their normal daily use of Horizon. So long as they are logging on with their own unique User ID and not sharing User IDs and passwords within a branch, each transaction will be logged against the user's own User ID.

Horizon does not include functionality that allows either Post Office or Fujitsu to log on to a branch terminal of Horizon remotely in order to edit transactions recorded by Branch staff. It is possible for Fujitsu to **view** branch data in order to provide support and conduct maintenance but this does not allow access to any functionality that could be used to edit branch data.

There is the capability for Post Office employees to log on to a branch terminal locally (i.e. **by being physically in a branch**) using a new User ID and password and then conduct transactions. This would only be done in special circumstances (such as when defunding a branch following a branch closure). Any transactions conducted would be recorded against that new User ID and not against the User ID of any branch staff.

2 TAs and TCs

Post Office can send transaction acknowledgements (**TA**) or transaction corrections (**TC**) to branches. TAs are used to record transactions that have been processed in branch through other systems (eg. the sale of Lottery products on the Camelot terminal) and TCs to correct errors made by branches.

Both TAs and TCs need to be accepted by a user logged into the branch Horizon terminal before they are recorded in the branch accounts. They are therefore fully visible to each branch.

3 Balancing Transactions

Fujitsu (but not Post Office) can manually inject a new transaction into a branch's accounts using the Balancing Transaction Process. This process is used in the event of an accounting error that cannot be corrected by use of a TA or TC.

It is in accordance with good industry practice to have functionality of this nature in a system like Horizon.

Within the Audit Store is an audit log that automatically records any use of Balancing Transactions. This log shows that a Balancing Transaction has only be used once in the last 7 years (being the retention period for the log).

The circumstances surrounding this one incident are as follows:

- HNGX was being piloted amongst **x** branches over **x** month period. An issue was reported by a Subpostmaster that resulted in a duplicate transaction being generated when the application went off line unexpectedly.
- Fujitsu software support repaired the accounts by insertion of auditable records into the branch database.

The use of this process is strictly controlled by Post Office. When the Balancing Transaction Process is used, it leaves clear and identifiable audit trail and is done so with full knowledge and consent of the Subpostmaster of the affected branch.

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These access controls meet industry good practice standards and are audited under ISO27001 and by LINK (the industry body for ATMs) and PCI (card payment compliance).

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