

Fujitsu Services,
22 Baker Street,
London,
W1U 3BW,
08/04/10

Mark Burley,
Post Office Ltd,
2nd Floor
148 Old Street
London
EC1V 9HQ

London,

Dear Mark,

Please find enclosed a statement detailing Fujitsu's position with respect to the Final Balance Report issue from the HNG-X Pilot. This statement has now been confirmed by our Commercial, Legal and Programme Leads.

Signed on behalf of Fujitsu Services by,

Alan D'Alvarez
Programme Director,
Royal Mail Group Business Unit

Background

During Branch Trading Statement (BTS) Production the report is produced twice in the form of:-

- A Trial Report to allow the Postmaster to check that the data is correct.
- A Final Report which is produced after the Trial Report has been confirmed. This indicates that the Branch has rolled over in the next Trading Period.

The BTS consist of two parts:-

- A Summary of Stock Unit and Suspense Account activities (relating to Cash and Cash movements) over the Trading Period.
- Consolidated Stock Levels for all Volume Stock Items.

Problem Description

On the Final Report, the Stock Holding figures in the second section of the Report are incorrect on the final balance.

Points to Note

- The first section of the Final Report (relating to Cash and Cash movements) is correct.
- The figures that are stored as Opening figures for the new Trading Period are correct. To expand on this slightly, at the time the Final BTS Report is produced some Opening Figures for the Suspense Account are stored back in the BRDB. These figures are from the first part of the report and so are not corrupted by the defect and therefore are correct.
- The figures on both sections of the Trial Report, (which the Postmaster is asked to check) are correct.

Cause

The root cause of the issue is that the code that re-prints the report makes incorrect use of the cache of data held at the counter for generating the report as it is printing the report.

To expand on this further:-

1. When the BTS is being produced, it is done based on data written to the Branch Database (BRDB) whenever a Stock Unit Rolls over.
2. BTS Production retrieves this data from BRDB to the counter.
3. The counter then uses it to generate the Trial BTS.
4. There is a defect in the way that the report is produced such that some of the in-memory copy of the data is overwritten when the Trial BTS is produced.
5. A consequence of this is that when the final BTS is produced it is using incorrect data.
6. The problem has been fixed by ensuring that the final BTS uses the original data retrieved by the counter at step 2 rather than the data left over after step 4.
7. The problem was first reported by the Warwick Branch when it was pointed out that the trial Balance figures were correct and the Final Balance figures were incorrect.
8. Comparing the Trial and Final balance figures with the corresponding Stock Unit Balance Reports shows easily that the Trial Balance is correct and the Final Balance is incorrect.
9. None of the incorrect data is stored to BRDB so there is no possibility of ongoing corruption of stock levels.

Key Questions

Can Fujitsu provide a complete and comprehensive list of all products where the volumes on the Final Balance Report differ to those on the Trial Balance Report?

All figures relating to the Volume Stock Holdings can be corrupted by the issue, but not necessarily all the figures will be incorrect.

How Has the Defect Arisen?

The defect is a software issue that was not detected in application testing by the Joint Test Team.

What are the Impacts of this Defect – detailing all stock items affected?

All the Volume Stock items in this section of the report could be affected.

What is Fujitsu doing to resolve this defect?

Fujitsu has developed a software fix to resolve the issue by ensuring that the Final Report uses the original data retrieved by the counter at Step 2 described above rather than using the data left after Step 4. This is a counter fix that has been signed-off in test as part of the 01.08 Maintenance Release counter fixes and has been deployed to the live HNG-X branches. For HNG-X migrations in the immediate future, the 01.08 counter fixes are deployed and committed to the branch 1 working day after HNG-X becomes operational. Before this fix was available, Fujitsu had written a KEL which includes instructions to the HSD to give advice to Postmasters. The advice is to use the Trial Report, which is correct. The Final Report is to be kept but not used.

The 01.08 Counter fixes will be included within the next Counter Migration package, to remove the need for deploying additional fixes to branches within 24 hours of migrating to HNG-X.

Can Fujitsu Provide a Statement Proving the Integrity of the Data is not compromised in any way, and the only impact is incorrectly reported data?

Fujitsu confirms that this defect relates specifically to the printing of Report data to support the production of the Office's Branch Trading Statement created immediately following the Offices migration onto the HNG-X system. This defect results in a discrepancy with the volume data reported in the Final Balance Report following the printing of the Trial Balance Report, and is not related in any way to the underlying Branch Data held in the operational HNG-X system. This in no way compromises the underlying Data held in respect of the individual branch or the system as a whole.

Can Fujitsu provide a commitment to support POL in proving the integrity of the system in any subsequent legal action (specifically where the difference in the two reports is used as a means to challenge the integrity of the system)?

Fujitsu is willing to provide a commitment to assist in trying to prove the integrity of the system in any subsequent legal action in accordance with the existing contractual arrangements.