To: Chambers Anne O[_____GRO_____]; Welsh Graham[_____GRO_____]
Cc: Jenkins Gareth GI[_____GRO_____]
From: Burton John[/O=ICL/OU=UKSOUTH FEL01/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BURTONJFG]
Sent: Fri 6/2/2006 9:35:16 AM (UTC)
Subject: | RE: Horizon System Performance

Anne, Graham,
I reviewed Gareth's feasibility report and costings this morning, so understand things better than I did. His report is based on a great deal of prototyping work that has been done over the last few months - of the order 0f 100 man days. That work looked at a number of options, and has homed in on the one that gave the best improvements - along the lines you mention in your first point.

The report should go into POL next week. It'll then be up to them whether or not they want to pay us to do the work. If they decide to go ahead, we're looking at a likely delivery date of first calendar quarter in 2007. That would give around 2 years of useful life before being overtaken by HNG-X.

I understand your frustration at having to deal with irate postmasters and having to tell them that the system is working to its spec. We can only hope that POL do agree to funding this work, so that you then have something positive to say.

I can't see much point 2nd & 3rd line support doing further investigation, when we now know what needs to be done to make a substantial improvement. Please say, Gareth, if you disagree.

Regards, John

-----Original Message-----
From: Chambers Anne O
Sent: 01 June 2006 18:11
To: Burton John
Cc: Welsh Graham
Subject: RE: Horizon System Performance

John,

I've looked at many branches now, and they range from very slow to horrifically slow when rolling over stock units. It does vary depending on the particular process followed at each branch, and if you break it down into various components each may appear to be (just) within 4 times as long as the weekly rollover used to be, but the impact on the PMs is horrible.
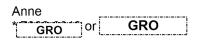
There have been some piecemeal changes to try to improve certain areas, but most of these have made little improvement, and overall, may have been a waste of effort.

As I see it, there are two main problems:

1. The balancing process repeatedly scans and rebuilds the data tree. This was identified as a problem at least 6 months ago, and improvements to this are, I think, what Gareth is proposing.

2. Counters are inadequate for the applications now being run on them and do run generally slowly at times. This hasn't really been fully investigated, and is really difficult to quantify or prove that it is happening - the only evidence is what the PM reports. It is however adding to customer dissatisfaction and could get worse even if we improve balancing.

I am not at all happy about fobbing postmasters off and telling them that the system is working as designed when it is plainly inadequate for the job. I am also very unhappy that it has taken six months even to get to the point of starting to consider whether POL will pay for improvements.

I too would like guidance on when 2nd and 3rd line support should investigate further. Our current response has to be 'yes we know balancing is very slow, it is being investigated' - what else can we say?

Anne
*[__GRO__] or [__GRO__]

-----Original Message-----
From: Burton John
Sent: 01 June 2006 17:36
To: Welsh Graham; Chambers Anne O
Subject: RE: Horizon System Performance

Graham,

Hmm, I see exactly what you mean. By coincidence, I'm reviewing Gareth's report on this issue tomorrow morning, before it's submitted to POL. I gather it quotes some hefty prices for making improvements, but I'll be better informed after the review.

Cheers, John

-----Original Message-----
From: Welsh Graham
Sent: 01 June 2006 17:31
To: Chambers Anne O; Burton John
Subject: FW: Horizon System Performance

Anne,

Can you please comment on the attached............

John,

This issue is getting silly in the amount of time and resource being applied for a system that is performing to design.............. Yes I know but frankly the level of grief and support required is crazy!

Regards,

Graham

-----Original Message-----
From: kimberley.yip[GRO] [GRO]
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2006 3:48 PM
To: graham.welsh[GRO]
Cc: dave.hulbert[GRO]
Subject: Horizon System Performance

Graham

Please forgive me if you are not the appropriate person to forward this email to.

I have been contacted again by the POL Service Line to obtain an update on progress on the current Horizon System performance issues.

One particular branch has been escalated to me (Flint - 332614) and the last rollover timings have been sent to me by Anne Chambers, see below:

From 17:00 the branch started printing the daily reports and this continued until 18:30. They then declared stamps and cash, and pressed the Balance report button at 18:37. The Trial Balance was not printed until 21:12 (i.e.
over 2.5 hours later). Much of this time the system was processing the month's transactions. There is a gap between about 19:30 and 20:05 where it may have been waiting for input from the PM, but I can't be certain.

After the Trial Balance, the report was abandoned, presumably because the PM needed to check and resolve the discrepancies. At 21:27 cash and stamps were redeclared (with some variation from the original), and at 21:28 the Balance report button was pressed again. The second Trial Balance was printed at 22:58 (1.5 hours) and the Final Balance at 23:04.

I've looked at what was going on during the balance report production.
There was nothing out of the ordinary, apart from the very large number of transactions being processed (about 40,000). The number of transactions processed per second was rather less than we sometimes see, but not significantly so, apart from the period 19:00 to 19:10 when the counter end-of-day processes were running.

Anne also provided me with some recommendations which I have passed onto the branch and I will ask FS to do a similar exercise to the one above (i.e. provide timings) when the next TP rollover is completed, 14 June 06, to see if there are any significant improvements. I have been told about another branch so I am hoping to do a similar exercise. In both cases the rollover times do seem excessive and my worry is that these are not isolated incidents. So in terms of the time it is taking branches to complete the balance process, can FS provide me with details on what constitutes an acceptable length of time , for example, if it takes 4 hours then this is reasonable or if it's more than 5 hours then it needs investigating etc. This will then give me a better understanding on what I should be passing onto FS or if I should be passing on the recommendations to implement.

One of the recommendations was to roll Balance Period very week, can you confirm that this does reduce the overall time taken to roll into a new TP at the end of the period ?

If you need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me

Regards

Kimberley Yip
Service Analyst (Branch Systems)

1st Floor, South Wing, Post Office Ltd, Cortonwood Business Park, Cortonwood Drive, BARNSLEY, S73 0TB

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