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UK Interoperability Standards

Open Forum 2017



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Ofcom and All IP

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NICC Standards Limited



Ofcom's guiding principles for an IP based PATS network

In the Connected Nations 2016 report we recognised the network evolution that is occurring and the wide ranging challenges that it presents and set out a number of high level principles to ensure that consumers are informed and protected throughout this journey

These principles included:

- Maintaining access to the emergency services
- The continuation of protections afforded to vulnerable consumers commensurate to the technology and usage
- Equivalents to social phone tariffs and handling of debt
- The engagement with providers of third party services (such as personal alarms) that rely on existing network to minimise disruption to these services and the risks to vulnerable consumers
- Giving reasonable notice to both consumers as well as downstream service providers of changes to network services or technology
- Ensuring that consumers who do not migrate on a voluntary basis are no worse off than before
- Providing assistance to vulnerable consumers and ensuring they receive a telephone service that they recognise





Challenges

The challenges the industry faces are not with the all IP voice technology per se, but the eco system and customer usage that have taken advantage of the underlying PSTN technology. These challenges include:

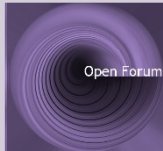
Telecare alarms (TSA)

- In the UK between 1.5 to 2 million people live independently in the community supported through remotely connected alarm and telecare services
- These systems provide a vital service to consumers, but many rely on the characteristics of the legacy PSTN
- Migration to IP and alternative transport mechanisms are identified as necessary, however timescales and extent vary

Point of Sale card authorisation

- Point of Sale (POS) Terminals in the UK transport approximately 1.25 billion POS transactions per year from around 650k terminals, mainly over the PSTN
- Up to 25% of the estate is thought to be IP enabled but are currently only seeing a 7% YoY activation of IP
- Many larger (Tier 1) retailers use IP connectivity
 - It is the independent shopkeepers, restaurants and many smaller business that are most likely to be impacted





What is Ofcom doing?

Ofcom has been active in this area over the past year:

- We have set up a working group bringing together the telecommunications industry as well as representatives from the over-the-top (OTT) providers of services
 - This group meets quarterly, helping inform Ofcom of plans and issues faced by all sides of the customer journey to All-IP
- We have a large internal working group that is charged with reviewing and discussing the wide ranging implications of an All-IP world
 - This work draws together many interdependent work streams such as consumer protection, competition and technology
 - Linkages also exist with other Ofcom activities including our market reviews, consumer protection, investigations and international liaison
- We are engaging with Government, trade and consumer bodies and other regulatory bodies including BEREC
- The board of Ofcom has a keen interest in this major technology change and is regularly briefed on industry developments and timescales





Next Steps and Testing

Ofcom will be further sign posting our principles and approach with the Connected Nations 2017 report

We continue to build a picture of PSTN providers plans for communications and migrations

We continue to talk to consumers of PSTN services about the forthcoming impacts and understand their mitigation plans

We have asked the NICC task group to define some meaningful test cases and test environments to support trade body and manufactures/supplier testing

Ofcom will be pulling together an industry wide testing forum to share results and conclusions drawn





Thank You