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DP257

‘DCC Management of Duplicate Messages’

Modification Report

Version 0.1

11 December 2023

Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer
communication

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About this document

This document is a draft Modification Report. It currently sets out the background, issue, and progression timetable for this modification, along with any relevant discussions, views and conclusions. This document will be updated as this modification progresses.

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1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by David Rollason on behalf of Data Communications Company (DCC).

Part of the DCC's remit is to ensure data is easily communicated to Parties (Suppliers, Network Distributors, Other Users) from Smart Meters. This creates varying levels of traffic through the DCC System, and there are several factors that impact the traffic flow. The DCC is undertaking a project on Traffic Management within their system to ensure that the system is provided in a cost-effective, sustainable, and scalable way.

As part of this work, the DCC has identified areas that could be addressed to provide capacity improvements. One area is duplicated messages. These occur when two Parties request exactly the same information in a short timeframe. This results in two identical messages going through the DCC Total System to retrieve the same information.

The Proposer would like to explore a solution that would look at halving the journey of retrieving a Service Response if the information was previously requested.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

DCC System Traffic

SEC Appendix E 'DCC User Interface Services Schedule' (UISS) sets out the DCC's Service Requests (SRs) exchanged between the DCC and Users. As the number of Smart Meters installed increases, the volume of SRs will naturally increase. Additionally, it is predicted that the number of Other Users and frequency of requests is likely to increase in the coming years. This is a result of consumers wishing to have more access to their data to help use potential new products and services.

The DCC has highlighted that it is not cost efficient to procure capacity to manage the future peak loads which will leave the Total System at low capacity for the majority of time. Therefore, the DCC would like to address how it reduces the traffic footprint.

Duplicate Messages

Duplicate messages are a result of multiple Parties requesting the same information or repeat requests where the first message did not reach the requesting User. The most common example of duplicated message is a meter reading request: a Supplier will request a meter reading for billing purposes and an Other User requests the same data for a consumer's consumption app.

Currently, each individual SR would need to travel the full length of the DCC Total System, generate a response from the Device, and that response travels all the way back to the User.

What is the issue?

DCC has analysed their system data and found that 72% of Service Requests are duplicates. This takes up significant system capacity, which is increasing demand on DCC Systems.

It is likely that going forward more Parties will want more access to more data, which would increase traffic volume.

The DCC is tasked by the Office of Gas and Electricity Market (OFGEM) to provide the most cost-effective system it can and therefore is looking for alternatives to manage the increase in volume. DCC could purchase more capacity to manage the incoming SRs, however these costs would be passed to industry Parties and ultimately consumers.

What is the impact this is having?

The volume of duplicate messages increases strain on DCC Total System and poses a risk of reduced performance and service provision. At times of high traffic, the additional messages could result in either the DCC not meeting its Target Response Times (TRTs), or cause failure of the messages being delivered due to requests exceeding the DCC Total System capacity.

Impact on consumers

There may be an impact if responses are not received in time, in the case of consumers' prepayment top-ups. It may also slow down the install and commission of Smart Meters on site.

3. Assessment of the proposal

Areas for assessment

What would the Proposer like to achieve?

The Proposer would like to develop a solution by which identical data that is requested by two Users does not have to go through DCC Total System to be retrieved.

Data Storing and Security

As part of Section G 'Security' (G2.18) data should be disposed of when it is no longer required for Authorised Business. Therefore, a solution that has data storage in mind should have data security and privacy assurances discussed and where necessary put in place as part of the solution development.

The modification will be presented to the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) for input on how the developed solution will remain compliant with data security.

What Service Requests and Devices would be impacted?

The modification report will look at duplicate messages for both ESME and GSME SMETS2 Devices, however the scope of which Service Requests to be addressed as part of this modification will need to be agreed. Data from SMETS1 Devices is being addressed by [DP256 'SEC Alignment with DCC SMETS1 MHHS Capacity Requirements'](#).

Sub-Committee input

SECAS will engage with the Chairs from the Operations Group (OPSG), the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC), the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) and the Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority (SMKI PMA) to confirm what input is required from these forums. SECAS believes the following Sub-Committees will need to provide the following input to this modification:

Sub-Committee input	
Sub-Committee	Input sought
OPSG	Input on business requirements and solution development.
SMKI PMA	None
SSC	Input on developing a solution that meets the SSC's approval of data security
TABASC	Input to the solution development and end-to-end process for any changes to DCC Systems.

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	11 Dec 2023
Presented to CSC for initial comment	19 Dec 2023

Italics denote planned events that could be subject to change

Appendix 2: Glossary

This table lists all the acronyms used in this document and the full term they are an abbreviation for.

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
DCC	Data Communications Company
OFGEM	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
OPSG	Operations Group
SECAS	The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SMKI PMA	Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority
SR	Service Requests
SSC	Security Sub-Committee
TABASC	Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee
TRT	Target Response Time
UISS	DCC User Interface Services Schedule