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SECMP0062 ‘Northbound Application Traffic Management’ & SECMP0067 ‘Service Request Traffic Management’

October 2019 Working Group Meeting

Introduction and summary of progress

The meeting for [SECMP0062 ‘Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection’](#) started with a summary of the issue and the solution. A summary of the Modification Proposal’s progress was provided to explain why the Monthly Working Group was looking at the Modification Proposal again. The Proposal was approved Panel in July 2019 and the Modification Report Consultation (MRC) closed. It then progressed to Change Board where it was voted to be ‘Sent Back’ to Refinement. This decision was reached due to Network Parties responding in the MRC that they had issues with the solution which convinced the other Board members that further work was needed, although they approved of the intent of the modification. It was therefore recommended that the Data Communications Company (DCC) as the Proposer of the Modification should take the Proposal away and answer these queries before returning it to Panel.

Discussions on the MRC Responses

After the summary update was delivered, the Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) handed over to the DCC who had answers prepared for each of the MRC respondents. The DCC started by addressing the individual points concerning the Network Parties claims that a large amount of Alerts would still be generated. DCC stated that some of the Alert codes that Network Parties raised would not be generated frequently enough to be classified as an Alert Storm. This was refuted in the meeting saying that this was owed to a large quantity of devices that generate the nuisance Alerts, rather than a small number generating a high number per device. DCC stated they could look into adding other configuration settings to capture these Alerts causing issues. A Working Group member mentioned that the inclusion of the 8F3E Alert on the exclusion list was problematic for them, as this was one of the key contributors to Alert Storms.

DCC reviewed the issue of the reporting by email in the case of every incident to the Network Parties. They added this was because of the Working Group mentioning earlier in the process that they want proactive notification, rather than manually checking the SSI dashboard. One of the Working group members pushed back on this view, stating that they wanted to investigate that option, rather than commit to it outright. DCC said with the reporting, amendment could be made so that within a 24-hour window (a deadband duration) rather than every incident to prevent administrative issues. DCC confirmed that this would still result in an email for every device, but a reduction on every incident per device. A Working Group member said that this showed an improvement and did answer their query on whether the number of emails being sent to Network parties could be reduced. Another Working Group member said that this still would cause some administrative issues, and further claiming that with the omission of Alerts that are currently causing traffic and the level of emails – this would be doing more harm than good to them. They reiterated that they wouldn’t turn of notification for incidents, saying that they need the notification if incidents are raised in their name. This prompted

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calls to examine the Incident and Problems Management processes and identify who receives the emails for this reporting. SECAS stated they would look to confirm this ahead of a future Working Group meeting.

Discussions moved to the use of the DCC's Technical Operations Centre (TOC) being involved alongside the Modification Proposal. In response to claims that the solution only addresses symptoms, rather than the issue's root cause – DCC said this would aid investigations in further preventing Alert Storms. They claimed the TOC operates very close to real time (approx. 15 minutes behind) and could be used to identify trends for certain Alert codes. One Working Group member welcomed this, but said that this should be used to proactively identify these trends to lessen the impacts of Alert Storms and provide a larger picture to Users which Alerts are providing the excess traffic. They also asked if the TOC could provide Users with any additional information as part of reporting.

When a timeline for the Modification proposal was discussed, Working Group members felt that if the solution was to change to any significant degree, industry should be consulted again through another Refinement Consultation. They felt this would be better than agreeing any changes, going to panel and then asking industry to approve or reject these changes without any input beforehand. One Working Group member asked that as any part of a Refinement Consultation, respondents should be asked whether they would be using the metadata in Part 2 of the solution. This was justified in trying to work out who would be using the SSI notification against the DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS) schema changes. This also offered an opportunity for any amendment to the list of excluded Alerts if any new Alerts were causing difficulty such as the 8F3E. One Working Group member asked if this list could be amended to include the full Alert title as well as the code number.

Finally, questions were asked about why the solution had been made at a Data Service Provider (DSP) rather than Communication Service Provider (CSP) level. One Working Group member felt that although the solution had been asked this question before, they felt that given issues they cited with Arqiva this should be reviewed. DCC said that a future modification could be used for improving the CSP, but wanted to keep the scope of this proposal solely on the DSP. This prompted further discussion as to what the DSP messaging servers could reliably receive from Arqiva and what realistic limit there is currently.

Next Steps

There was a brief discussion on [SECMP0067 'Service Request Traffic Management'](#) where the Working Group and SECAS agreed both Modification Proposals should be further investigated and discussed at the next Working Group meeting in November 2019. Before the next meeting, DCC and SECAS were tasked with answering a number of queries that came up in this meeting and from offline comments via Working Group members. These included accurately defining the DCC's System Capacity limits and explaining the Incident and Problems management process to give the solution and accompanying business cases greater clarity before issuing Refinement Consultations.