

27th May 2014

Participants

- DAC: Damian Barry, Jack Sandover, Christopher Jones, Joff McGill (Sense / UKCoD), Jim Edwards (Signature / UKCoD)
- BT: Greg Mook (Regulatory Affairs), Sarah Jefferson (Regulatory Affairs), Graham Sutherland (CEO, BT Business),
- Ofcom: Chris Taylor

Graham Sutherland apologised on behalf of BT for the delay in launching NGTR. BT does not like missing deadlines but the problem identified was related to 999 calls so the decision was made on safety grounds.

GS reiterated BT's commitment to NGTR, saying BT understood its responsibilities as an organisation to deliver. The right resource is in place, led by Colin Lees who is the right technical leader for the project.

Three key phases between now and launch:

Fixing and testing - to take place between now and the end of June. BT are working with a number of suppliers to solve the problem and reasonable progress is being made. A key milestone will be at the end of June when a fix is scheduled to be delivered by one of our key suppliers and put in place. After initial testing of the fix, BT will be better placed to state when it will deliver the NGTR.

'Prove' the service out - from July to September, with a key milestone of August when BT will be looking for a wider range of participants to test the service both in terms of volume and different needs.

Launch - expected for very early October, with the date to be confirmed once fixing and testing is in place and complete. In the unlikely event that the acceptable quality of service level is not achieved during the proving phase, BT will not launch the service. In this case, launch will be delayed further until the required service standards are met.

Subject to Apple's App Store approval being given, both Android and Apple apps will be available at launch; for other platforms BT is working with the supplier and hope to develop a web page / service in the future.

Information and Communication

GS stated BT's commitment to open communication over NGTR, both in terms of the work being done to fix and test the service, and over information for consumers at launch. In a wide ranging discussion about information and communication the following points led to a conclusion about the depth and breadth of information / communication needed:

- Trust needs to be regained so that users have confidence in NGTR, when it will be available and what it has to offer
- It should not be underestimated how new some of the features of NGTR will be and so users will be facing scenarios they have not previously considered
- Users may be making consumer choices on handsets and mobile contracts and need to know the impact of NGTR on their choices in terms of both cost and functionality
- Ongoing communication is needed from both the senior executives leading the project, and the project team

In response BT committed to:

- Regular updates to DAC, every two weeks, between now and launch
- Adding content to the website, responding to questions / concerns with more FAQs
- A user guide for NGTR

- Recognising different audiences, and what NGTR could mean to them (e.g. organisations – NGT isn't compatible where a number of extensions are routed into a single number (this is a clarification from BT after the meeting))
- Detailed information to enable users to identify which handsets will support simultaneous voice and text, on both wifi and mobile data networks
- review launch communication plans

Testing

BT confirmed that 50 people have so far have expressed interest in testing but not all of these have installed the app or desktop software for testing and even fewer are making regular calls. The active testers are providing feedback via a closed blog. Users of all mobile networks are represented.

In a discussion that recognised the importance of testing, particularly given what happened in April, it was acknowledged that:

- More testers are needed, particularly from the 1st August.
- Different approaches may be needed to recruit testers
- There are some gaps in the testers profiles e.g. deafblind people
- Users want confidence that a variety of scenarios have been considered and tested

In response the following commitments were made:

- DAC and its members can and will continue to promote the opportunity to test the service through their own member communication channels
- BT are open to more proactive activities to identify potential testers and would consider approaches from DAC or its members to organise specific seminars
- DAC will provide a matrix setting out different scenarios for testing

General

The discussion was open and honest, and both DAC and BT will work on an agreed set of notes that can be used publically. DAC asked BT about contingency plans if all does not go smoothly. BT expressed confidence in the resources, leadership and process it now has in place which it is confident will result in the launch of NGTR.

Conclusion

DAC were grateful to BT for the openness and honesty in addressing both the problems so far, and the plan to launch NGTR. BT recognised the importance of such transparency if trust and confidence are to be rebuilt. As part of this the approach to communication needs to be upped considerably and reassurance is needed about the depth and breadth of testing the new service (once fixed). BT will re-look at their plans for launching the service in light of the discussions and commitments made in this meeting.