Presentation from

APT

Report on Number Hijacking

July 2008

Background

➢ Pacific Island administrations are well aware that the unauthorised hijacking of number ranges and country codes of some Pacific Islands and the use of these numbers for IRSF and other fraudulent activities is occurring.

➢ Hijacked calls are calls that do not terminate in the Pacific Island country because some-one, for fraudulent reasons, has filtered the calls away from the routing to the intended country

➢ Gives rise to GSM roaming International Revenue Share Fraud (IRSF) involving losses of hundreds of thousands of dollars

➢ Other fraudsters filter the calls to porn sites without the knowledge of the home operator to collect the terminate rate (remember there are millions of minutes involved)

➢ This has caused some operators to block calls to the Pacific Islands to avoid getting caught by the fraud.

Number Hijacking what's known

➢ The perpetrators, do it for financial gain, they have no concern for impact on the country or regional economies

➢ Some operators block the country codes as a prevention control:

  ➢ It's an aggressive approach, contrary to the ITU recommendation (E.156) on blocking of country codes and stops all traffic to the affected country causing many other problems

  ➢ Fails to address the true cause of this globally organised criminal activity and stop the perpetrators

Impact of Number Hijacking

Noting that the Pacific Islands operators do not know the Number Hijacking is taking place:

➢ The hijacking of a countries country code means that people cannot ring that Pacific Island. This affects the well being of Pacific Island country affecting all areas of social activity and trade including the mainstay tourism

➢ Gives the Pacific Islands a bad reputation when it is not their fault – they are the innocent party

➢ The hijacking (and blocking) of calls has a severe effect on the fragile economy of a small Pacific Island country who, because of their isolation, are totally reliant on telecommunications for trade etc. (Most Pacific Islands rely heavily on the highly competitive tourist market).

➢ Reduces inbound traffic which directly affects the revenue of the operator

➢ Makes it very difficult to establish roaming agreements with fellow GSMA members

➢ Allows the perpetrators to go free

PITA's approach to managing the problem

➢ PITA encouraged its members to terminate all "audiotext" contracts by the end of 2006.

➢ In 2006 PITA & GSMA-Fraud Forum recommended removal of the blocking of Pacific Island Country Codes for operators who had terminated "audiotext" contracts and supplied white lists.

➢ Making Pacific Islands operators aware of Subscriber Identity Fraud which is a vital component of IRSF.

➢ Promotion of NRTRDE (This included PITA drafting an RFP and asked suppliers to quote. The quotes were then evaluated and results of the evaluation were passed to members).

➢ Promoted awareness of Number Hijacking to Regulatory bodies and to lobby the ITU to get support to require operators to provide information on circuit routing in cases of fraud (quoting confidentiality of how they route their calls is the biggest single issue in tracking Number Hijacking)

➢ Visited the FCC to make them aware of the problem.

➢ Attended the APT Preparatory meeting for the WTSA

APT's Preparatory Meeting for WTSA

The APT Preparatory Meeting for WTSA was held in Kobe, Japan, 9 – 14 June

➢ At the suggestion of the ITU, PITA attended the APT Preparatory Meeting for the ITU WTSA which is to be held in Johannesburg later this year

➢ Attended by a large number of countries including three from the Pacific (Cook Islands, Palau and PNG)

➢ We were successful in getting the meeting to agree to a proposed resolution to give the Regulators greater power to deal with Number Hijacking problems as a Preliminary APT Common Proposal (PACP)

Next Steps

The APT will send out to Government member administrations this month voting papers to seek the approval of members to forward the various PACPs (about 28) as a Common Proposals to go to the WTSA:

➢ Members MUST vote for the Common Proposal if it is to succeed (the numbers required are 9 votes for with less than 25% against)

➢ Assuming that this proposal gets enough support, then it will go to the ITU WTSA as a APT Common Proposal (ACP).

➢ It is important that we get at least one Pacific Island who is an ITU member to attend the ITU WTSA to champion the resolution.

Further Measures to deal with Number Hijacking Issues

Other measures include:

➢ Preventing Subscriber Identity fraud - targeting the provision of SIM cards

➢ Lobbing the Regulators to make them aware of the problem and to seek their assistance to help trace how the calls are being routed.

➢ Installation of NRTRDE

➢ Regular testing of International circuits by Reach and Telecom New Zealand

Thank You