

MTAC Workgroup 123
Service Information Needs, Reporting, and Communication Channels

November 13, 2008 Meeting Notes

Opening Remarks

Becky Dobbins thanked John Sexton for his assistance with the November 7, 2008, meeting notes, and noted one correction. On Page 2, second paragraph, where it talks about the BSN providing an update on improved communications, it should say the update would be given at a future workgroup meeting, not at the general MTAC meeting.

Ms. Dobbins noted that the starting time for the November 18 meeting in Room 2P310 has been changed to 3:30 p.m. EST to accommodate other MTAC workgroup meetings that conflicted with the original start time for the WG 123 meeting. Those planning to attend the November 18 meeting in person need to e-mail their name to Ms. Dobbins so it can be added to the security roster for entry into the building. Dates and times for the next three meetings are shown at the end of these notes. In addition, potential meeting dates for January also are included – if there are any conflicts, e-mail John Sexton or Becky Dobbins.

Also included in the November 7 meeting notes was a last call for submission of the one-page outline for recommendations.

Parcel Update

Ms. Dobbins noted that there is no update today from the parcel group, but they are meeting tomorrow. The proposed agenda looks good, she noted, and the group is making excellent progress. That system is fairly mature, Ms. Dobbins said, and the group has already reviewed a wealth of information.

BSN Update

The Business Service Network (BSN) is having a telecon this week on communication issues and how to improve that process. An update will be given at the November 18 meeting.

Short-Term Deliverables

Ms. Dobbins re-capped the short-term deliverables as noted by the USPS in the November 7 telecon.

Kathy Siviter said PostCom was disappointed to hear where the USPS stands in terms of building an internal diagnostic system that might provide both industry and the USPS with a common source of timely, actionable, granular service performance data. She said the bad news is that the USPS' timing for establishing such a system is still far in the future, but perhaps the good news is that the workgroup can have a hand in shaping what is to come. The group needs to focus on what it should do toward the longer-term goal, as well as what should be done in the interim relative to service performance data.

John Sexton raised the concern that the USPS' planned phasing approach to IMb goes beyond the product implications for Confirm. Ms. Dobbins said that Pritha Mehra on the November 7 telecon had been very up front with the status of development of the diagnostic system. Additional information about IMb

implementation will be shared with the industry this week and at the upcoming MTAC meeting, she said. Ms. Mehra had reported that in May 2009, the USPS will provide the interface with *PostalOne!*, electronic documentation capability, the ability to scan some containers, and ability for those participating to not have to submit hardcopy documentation. It will be later in 2009 before additional information will be available. But that means that this workgroup can help shape the requirements for the diagnostic system in the future. It's a good opportunity, Ms. Dobbins said, for the group to identify and prioritize elements for review. We need to determine what we can do in the short term because it will be awhile before there is output from the system the USPS is developing with IMb.

Ms. Siviter asked how the USPS plans to be able to slice and dice service performance data during FY 2009 for all market-dominant products, if it is not going to have a diagnostic system in place beyond that it already has for First-Class EXFC mail data. She noted that Ms. Dobbins some time ago had presented to the group information about the systems and data the USPS uses today in the field to identify and resolve service issues at a more granular level. Those systems primarily use First-Class Mail EXFC data, as well as other processing data and seed data. How will the USPS bring data on Standard Mail and Periodicals performance, for instance, to that same functionality?

Ms. Dobbins said that Periodicals service performance data will come from the Red Tag/DelTrak systems for FY 2009. Those systems already allow some slicing and dicing of data reporting, with an established set of business rules. But from an external system perspective, she said, diagnostic capabilities are not really there.

For Standard Mail, Ms. Dobbins said the USPS will continue to use industry-provided reports and systems. The USPS will be using the IMb pilot participants' service data for measurement purposes in FY 2009, and will pull info from the pilot participants into Excel spreadsheets for diagnostic purposes.

Linda Kingsley noted that the USPS has committed to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) on the report formats for all market-dominant products, including Standard Mail. Those reports will be posted on the USPS' web site and publicly available. Ms. Siviter noted that those reports will not provide the USPS or industry with actionable, timely, granular data to pinpoint and resolve service issues.

Bob Fisher said that the USPS has internal systems geared around its operating conditions to manage its business, such as the Daily Mail Condition Report, as well as industry reports from customers. While the USPS does not have detailed actionable data, it is actively discussing that need from an operations standpoint in developing diagnostic requirements for the Intelligent Mail system. Ms. Dobbins said that system is being built on IMb data which will provide a wealth of information for the USPS, and – through a Confirm-like service – will be available to industry.

Ms. Siviter said that business customers want to know the USPS has a vision to get to a system that both the USPS and industry share in terms of data access, to identify and resolve service issues. Ms. Dobbins said that in the short-term, that is not in the plan. But if in the short term the USPS and industry can establish business rules for sharing information, and put together requirements for the longer-term deliverables, is that what the group wants to focus on?

Mr. Sexton asked for clarification – is it the USPS' plan for FY 2009 to focus on industry-provided data? What is the USPS plan for the longer term? We want to see what the USPS' longer term vision is for a diagnostic system. We should be focusing on that vision together – not creating something different. Industry wants to piggyback on that effort and discuss access to the same system. Ms. Dobbins said that is the Intelligent Mail barcode system in development. Mr. Sexton said the more we can talk about what the USPS is building, the better. We should be looking at a strawman for that system and providing input.

Ms. Dobbins said the USPS feels it has enough feedback from the group (MTAC 123, and previous workgroups such as WG #114) and other efforts to put together a definition of system requirements for business customers. Ms. Siviter said the group would like to see in writing what the USPS' understanding is of our needs. Ms. Dobbins said the USPS will put something together which the industry can review.

Bob Fisher will be giving an update at the next meeting in terms of short term deliverables on shared information. We need to have a common understanding of the business rules.

Some additional work is being done by a subset of the group on the communications issues raised, and good progress is being made. An update will be given at the November 18 meeting.

The workgroup participants asked why the workgroup must conclude by January, if the diagnostic system time line is still in the future. Ms. Kingsley said that the USPS needs to know the system requirements prior to the next set of pricing changes. Another workgroup can be formed later on, if needed. Mr. Sexton said that the group should focus on the long term recommendations, but as things become more real and IMb implementation begins, there should be a review process when the diagnostic system is implemented (like with WG 122 and IMb implementation).

Ty Taylor said that from his company perspective – although this workgroup has been a very organized effort, has stayed on track and has provided much information – it doesn't seem that we've resolved anything or tackled the real issues. He does not feel like the major questions from his company have been answered, he said. Ms. Siviter asked if he could elaborate, and he responded that he could put together those questions, but not by next week. One question from his company's perspective, he noted, would be how they will get scans beyond the piece level as they do today. Ms. Dobbins said the USPS' ability to scan at the tray/sack and container level are part of the IMb system being built. Piece information from the pilot for First-Class Mail and Standard Mail is what the USPS is relying on today for service measurement reporting.

Mr. Taylor asked how mailers will get scan data back on anything but the piece level. Today, piece level scan data is provided through Confirm or similar products. Ms. Siviter asked for clarification if interim processing scans were to be included in measurement, which assesses only the induction and delivery time points in the USPS' system. Mr. Taylor said if the container scan represents the start-the-clock, then that scan data should be provided, which the USPS has said it will be under the Full Service IMb option. If the USPS comes out next week, however, and says it will not provide container scans, how will that impact measurement, he asked.

Ms. Dobbins said it depends on when and how the mailing is entered. In some cases, the container scan is the start-the-clock, in other cases the start-the-clock is triggered differently, but that information would be provided in under the Full Service IMb option.

Mr. Taylor asked when the USPS has to go back and present to the PRC or Congress its measurement results. Ms. Kingsley noted that the USPS continues to consult with the PRC on a monthly basis. The first measurement reports will be published for Quarter 1, in January or early February, once approved by the USPS' Board of Governors. The report detail and format already is laid out in the document posted on prc.gov by the PRC in June. Ms. Dobbins said the USPS could do an update on the reporting formats at a future meeting if desired by the workgroup participants.

Mr. Taylor asked what the baseline target for service performance will be. Ms. Kingsley said that the USPS is meeting next week with the PRC, then likely will share the baseline performance targets at the MTAC meeting. She cautioned that FY 2009 is the baseline year, however, so performance likely won't be 95 percent

everywhere.

Ms. Siviter stressed that the FY 2009 performance results will only represent those product groups where IMb adoption occurs in FY 2009. Ms. Dobbins agreed that FY 2009 is the baseline year and only will include data from the pilot IMb participants for First-Class Mail and Standard Mail. Periodicals data will come from the Red Tag and DelTrak participants. All the data will be fed to the USPS' external contractor, who will generate the reports. The information, along with EXFC and some internal data for special services and packages, will be posted on the usps.com web site. After official review by the Board of Governors, the information will become public.

Action Items

The following list represents new action items added from today's telecon, as well as those still pending from the prior meeting.

New or Pending	Action Item	Assigned To
Pending	Shared/exchanged data formats (short term). List of requested information/formats (long term)	Bob Fisher
Pending	Subgroup to put together list of criteria for USPS reporting data on potential delivery delays at a more granular level than disaster reporting provided today via RIBBS	Subgroup
Pending	Workgroup participants that use service performance data systems today should advise the USPS of what issues they face in terms of data management and storage.	Industry Participants
Pending	The USPS will check on the status of plans to continue distribution of the service standards disk tool.	USPS
Pending	The USPS will review and respond to the list provided by PCH showing the types of discrepancies over a one month period between the USPS' EDW data and DelCon data from PCH's consolidator.	USPS
Pending	The USPS will update and re-distribute the comparison grid showing what workgroup members are doing in terms of measurement data.	Becky Dobbins
Pending	Provide the USPS with additional agenda items for upcoming meetings	All participants
Last Call – need ASAP	Workgroup participants will submit to the co-chairs a one-page, easy to read, simple outline of their recommendations in terms of what they want from service performance measurement that they do not get today.	All industry participants

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, in person and by phone, beginning at 3:30 pm EST, at USPS headquarters, room 2P310. Future meetings are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, December 2, 2008 Webinar/telecon 12:00 Noon EST

Tuesday, December 9, 2008 Webinar/telecon 12:00 Noon EST

Tuesday, December 16, 2008 Webinar/telecon 12:00 noon EST

Proposed January dates (please give feedback using email):

Tuesday, January 6

Monday, January 12

Thursday January 22 (week of two holidays)