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Answering the compliance call

Business Systems (UK) Ltd talks to FStech about the current state of play in the mobile call recording sector

Financial firms have struggled with the FSA regulations on mobile call recording, introduced in November 2011 and stating that all mobile phone conversations relating to transactions in the equities, bond, derivatives and financial commodity markets must be recorded and stored to help deter and detect market abuse in the UK. Analysts have estimated that since mobile call recording regulations were introduced as few as 33 per cent of firms are in compliance.

Business Systems believes that the pace of adoption for mobile recording is now picking up. "When the mobile recording regulations were introduced, we found that the technology wasn't really there to provide a seamless mobile recording experience," says Phil Wigglesworth, Technical Consultant at Business Systems (UK) Ltd. "Most of the solutions on offer relied on applications being installed on the mobile handset, these applications would then route the call via a call recording system. The problem with these applications was that this would add to the connection time of these calls, sometimes up to 30 seconds just to route the call and connect at the other end. Also what would happen if the application failed or was tampered with by the mobile user? This would prevent any calls from recording and as such could not be considered as a truly compliant solution."

There are, however, now true 'In Network' recording solutions available which no longer rely on application-based recording. "All of the call routing is carried out by the mobile network provider and a duplicate stream of the call is sent to the recording solution, whether it is in the cloud or on premise. This means that recording will always take place and there are no problems caused by application failure. Because of this, customers now have the assurance of purchasing a mobile recording solution which is truly compliant with FCA regulations."

Business Systems promotes the use of 'open' systems, offering a range of solutions to find the best fit for a customer. "We are not tied down to a particular vendor so we can tailor a recording solution according to the customer's requirements," says Wigglesworth. The company works with a number of mobile recording solutions, the main systems being Teleware and O2. The former offers a SIM-based solution which can be offered as either a cloud-based or on premise system. Typically a customer would be provided with new SIM cards for their mobile handsets. Once the SIM has been installed into the handset, any calls made or received will be recorded by the call recording solution. O2, meanwhile, have recently released a network-based recording solution which has attracted a lot of positive attention over the last few months. The solution will take a duplicate of the mobile call and send this off to a call recording solution. This can be either a cloud-based solution provided by O2 or the customer may have an on premise solution which can record these calls.

So, what are the main considerations that FIs need to keep in mind when circling this area? Firstly, does the customer require hosted recording or on premise? Sometimes a company's compliance department will have the final say on whether mobile recording must be kept on premise, other times it could be budgetary restrictions which mean the hosted solution is preferred.

Also, does the customer require calls to be recorded while roaming? "Most customers we have spoken to, require call recording while their users are roaming abroad. Typically there is a roaming restriction around the CAMEL network (Customised Applications for Mobile network Enhanced Logic). If a user is abroad and their calls do need to be recorded, they would have to be in one of the countries that is within the CAMEL network," says Wigglesworth.

And lastly, does the customer require recording resilience? "We have had a number of opportunities now where the customer needs to ensure that their call recording solution will still function in the event of component failure," notes Wigglesworth. "There are mobile recording solutions available which allow recording failover (N+1) and dual recording (2N). These types of resilience will allow the solution to either failover to a secondary recording system or would consist of two separate recording systems recording the same audio. The advantage of a dual recording solution is there would be no interruption of recording if one of the recording systems failed."

Further information on Business Systems (UK) Ltd at: www.businesssystemsuk.co.uk