Meter Trouble Report Working Group

Minutes of the 1st Meeting

Date: May 13, 2005
Time: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Location: Clarkson SCC

Attendees

Tuire Pickering; IESO Chairperson
Al Dharshi; OPG MMP
Vlad Stanišić; OPG MMP
Mark Passi; Falconbridge MMP (Absent)
Dave Akers; Newmarket Hydro MMP (Absent)
Len Macdonald; Newmarket Hydro MMP
Art Stokman; Guelph Hydro MMP (Absent)
Hans Paris;Guelph Hydro MMP
Rob Henschel; Horizon Utilities
Patricia Price; Horizon Utilities MSP
Travis Iwamoto; Hydro One MSP
Gordon Messervey; Hydro One MSP
Keith Rye; Peterborough MSP (Absent)
Alex N Lunycz ; Rodan MSP
Jim Baksi; IESO
Rowan Jones; IESO (Absent)
David Wilkinson; IESO
Victor Wong; IESO

1. Introductory Remarks

The next meeting of the MTR WG has been scheduled for 8:30 AM to 12:00 Noon on Thursday, June 23, 2005 at our Skymark Office.

The target completion date for the MTR WG is November 1, 2005 with a presentation to the RMSC on November 16, 2005 and followed by a distribution of the results to the CRSC.

The most recent delivery that was recommended by the previous MTR Working Group was the implementation of was the XML report for MTRs. Based on current usage, Tuire raised the concern that MSPs and MMPs my not be aware of this facility and the potential benefits of providing an alternate method of tacking and reporting MTR activity/history. More communications to MSPs and MMPs may be required to increase the awareness of the XML report.

Guelph Hydro made a request for the final report of the last MTR Working Group to be distributed to the members.

Action Item: Tuire will forward the report to all members.

MTRs are time consuming for everyone and especially those that go back and forth between the MSP and IESO. Because of the increased costs and delays in handling these types of MTRs, the working group will investigate and propose improvements in this area.

OPG has a problem with the reduction of the number of channels that are specified in the MIRT file for the alternate. This item will need to be discussed further with the Metering Installation Group.

2. Communication

OPG began the discussion with a description of their communication issues.
For the communication errors 60 to 80 % were not repeatable by OPG or others. In many of the cases the meters could be successfully called the next day by the IESO.
OPG stated that IONs required better grounding and when tied to a cable, noise on the line was reduced and the communications improved. For Q1000s, OPG improved the communications by inserting a 40 second delay in the conf file for the meter in the MV90.

Action Item: Tuire will confirm what is contained in IESO's conf files.

OPG has 3 tries on dial out before failure of the call. This increases the total tries before a failure is recorded as has three calls before filure .OPG will confirm the required set up of MV90 to achieve this.l . IESO tries 4 times in total to contact a meter with very little success on the final try.

Victor raised the concern that meters were being contacted during the IESO's interrogation window from midnight to 6:00 AM EST as busy signals have been observed. It was stated that some participants may be calling during this time to meet their particular business needs. The IESO may need to send out a reminder to MMPs and MSPs that no calls can be made during IESO's interrogation window.. There are also meters that are daisy chained with in some cases more than 4 meters to a single phone line and with call processor that constantly fail. The MIRT file provided by the MSPs did not always have the same dial string for all meters using the same phone line. Adjustments made by the IESO to improve the communication would not be reflected in a new MIRT if the meter was replaced. To resolve this problem, the IESO would like a communication diagram for problem stations/meters from the MSP. OPG volunteered to provide the MTR WG with a sample communications diagram for consideration.
The repeat offenders (i.e. meters that fail frequently) are being monitored on a monthly basis and forwarded to the Metering Installation Group for review and follow-up. The difference between OPG and the IESO set-up was discussed. The need to establish a standard for modem wait times through the use a comma and/or tilde was recommended. Rodan and OPG mentioned that some our communications problems may be related to trunk line capacity problems with Bell or our use of PBX system. Experience to date by MSPs and MMPs with the MV90 systems is that PBX system has caused dial out problems and that the use of direct lines solved all problems.

Action Item: Victor will contact telecommunication staff in the IESO to see in Bell maintenance activity can affect the performance of our MV90 interrogations. Victor will also review of the time delay setting on the IESO modems for commas and tildes.

HONI asked if ITRON could suggest ways to make MV90 communications quicker for the IONs.

IESO reported that GLP had removed the collection of events as recommended by ITRON from IONs but still required 1.5 hours for an all read.

Rodan made a request to publish modem types and the initialization strings. IESO is using strings as defined by ITRON (on their website) and recommended modems (US robotics).

De-registration of legacy meters was causing communication MTRs as the old meter remains on the call schedule until the new replacement meter and associated totalization table have been signed off and returned to the IESO. Under these conditions the MSPs are asked to provide data or accept the use of alternate, if applicable, for MTR resolution. The MSPs questioned "How to identify gap and provide the estimate on the old meter". "Like for Like" still requires a MTR to provide the audit of the edit. A ticket should be opened to record the process of the replacement. An auto MTR would be issued enen though a ticket has been opened. The meter change out is a lengthy process due to the amount of paperwork required.

Guelph Hydro questioned the requirement to collect data the next day. If there was a delay it could eliminate the need for data files as many of the meters do respond on the subsequent call. He also enquired whether or not the MMPs could send in data instead of the IESO calling nightly.

3. Power Outages/Zero Loading

There was a question on how to apply logic between the main and alternate meter.

The last working group established a form for submission by the MMP for power outages. This form is mentioned in the external Market Manual. It was to be submitted to the responsible MSP with a copy to the IESO. This form was not designed to stop the MTR but to allow the MSP to quickly resolve the MTR.
This form has not been widely used. Hydro one has modified the form to include information as required by the IESO for resolution of power outages.
HONI requested that more information regarding the outage times and loading period questions be included in the initial issue of the MTR. This is being provided in manual issue MTRs but not on the system generated ones.
If the load transfer associated with a meter outage cannot be found there needs to be a process/guideline for deciding if an MTR should be issued to the MSP to confirm that the load has been transferred to another delivery point. The IESO currently has no auto process to validate zero loading.

IESO questioned how the MMP gets information from the LDC or Transmitter to confirm outages.
Short outages are not difficult to confirm.

In the past "Incidents of Importance" reports were issued by the control stations that allowed the power outages to be confirmed.

OPG is currently upgrading the power supplies to the alternate meter.

The Voltage/current readings on compliant meters can be used to help confirm system outages.

Action Item: Jim Baksi will present a proposal regarding a new method of processing power outages at the next meeting.

4. VPN

This is an issue that was raised previously but encountered difficulties in application through MV90. MV90 does not support VPN/firewall crossover. Without this capability built into the MV90 it will be difficult to access multiple private networks with internet enabled meters.
OPG is currently reviewing the use of IP for their meters. There are issues with the router configuration and time synch may be required to allow for the change to the Ethernet port.
Alternate meters are not set up for IP access and there would be added cost to reconfigure and re-register these meters with IESO. The primary drivers for OPGI are the reduction in long distance telephone costs and improved reliability. The lack of experience of MSPs in using IP is a concern.
This item is tabled until Mark Passi is able to provide input regarding his experiences.

5. Use of the MTR Exception list to restrict issuance of MTRs

An exception list is manually maintained by production staff to suspend the creation of MTRs for new metering installations This list can be used to for new stations that are under going commissioning or for meters that have not completed registration (on ticket for change out).
This is manual process for Production staff and should be limited in use.

6. HONI Topics for discussion

The following issues were provided by HON1 for discussion.

Item #	Main Issue	Description
1	System or Automated Issued MTR's	What are the benefits of having MTR's Automatically released without being manually reviewed? We see some significant area for improvement if this was changed to ALL MTR's being manually issued.
2	Ensuring that All know information (IESO or MSP) is provided at the Time the MTR is released.	Perhaps a check list type of procedure can be developed for staff to follow. This will help to ensure that MTR's have all the required information that should be in the MTR.
3	Defining the Details and Information to be provided within an MTR.	Developing Check lists & Templates to be used in conjunction with each MTR that is released can help both IESO and MSP to be consistent in how matters are dealt with.
4	Standardizing Responses for Routine Resolutions to MTR's	Developing and agreeing to standard acceptable resolution responses can help eliminate the need to interpret and understand resolution requirements.
5	Timeline/Deadline Adjustment	What are the benefits of a 48 hours deadline? Can this be reviewed to be more flexible i.e. a 10 day turnaround that can be in line with the release of the preliminary billing statements.

6	Access to IESO Processes and Procedures	If MSP's had access to IESO internal processes and procedures MSP's would be able to ensure that our processes are in-line with these documents.
7	Performance Measuring Statistics	What and how is this information used to calculate the performance statistics? MSP's require this detailed information to be able to build the processes required to ensure targets are met.
8	Training	Are their any training programs in place for the Users of Workflow? Can this be developed?

Summary of discussion by MTR WG on above issues raised by HON1:

Item 8
Web based training for MSP is being developed by the IESO training group and is expected to be released by September 2005. It will demonstrate the workflow actions required by an MSP to complete the MTR.
Item 4
Standard responses could be developed for MTR issues. The IESO is in agreement with this approach. A subgroup could be established to provide samples for commonly required responses.
Action Item: Tuire will analyse patterns, error codes and the number of MTRs.
Item 6
The IESO would prefer to use existing manuals for the processes and procedures. The group could identify specific examples on what is missing.
Item 7
These are monitored and established by the Metering Installation Group of the IESO and further details would need to be pursued with them with regards to receiving further details on how performance is measured.
Item 5
Rodan gives the MSP performance to all their customers as does Horizon. The MSP have expressed a concern regarding these statisticsand asked if the measure of resolving an MTR could be increased to a more than 2 BD. They were reminded by the IESO that this is a market rule and significant work and stakeholdering would be required to change it.The obligation to ensure that the revenue metering data is correct for settlements is the rationale for resolving MTRs with 2 Business days..
For the 2 BD statistics, MTRs can be excluded if supporting documentation is provide to the IESO in a timely manner. This requires the identification of the MTR and a description of the extenuating circumstance to be e-mailed to Tuire for review.
Item 1- 3
There is insufficient staff at the IESO to review all MTRs manually and would introduce a time delay in the issuance of the MTRs . Depending on work load the MTRs may not be issued to the MSP until late in the day. System generated MTRs contain standard information and is limited in scope by the information that is passed on from the MV90 to the MTR workflow system.
Manual MTRs that are processed by IESO staff may contain additional information and requirements for resolution.
Action: Table this for a later meeting.