



SBR Barriers to Adoption - Outcomes

UNCLASSIFIED External
File ref: 15052017

Title:	Follow-up conversation – SBR Barriers to Adoption		
Issue date:	19 May 2017		
Venue:	Telepresence		
Event date:	12 May 2017	Start: 11:00am	Finish: 12:00

Chair:	Phil Schofield	Facilitator:	Sharna Maltman
Contact	Sharna Maltman	Contact phone:	(07) 3149 5913

Attendees: names/section	Industry: Chithira Parameshwaran (Datacom), Rick Harvey (Layer Security), Mike Behling (MYOB), David Tuke (Oban Solutions), Michael Wright (Sage), Jasmina Carhill (Super Choice), Paul Duran (Webscale). ATO: Andrew Mohr, Chris Thorne, Damian Haslam, Danny Figueiredo, Gary Baxter, Joe Maxymenko, Lisa Masin, Natalie Perring, Nicole Moutia, Phil Schofield, Sharna Maltman, Timothy Stimson.
Apologies: name/section	Jacqui Marchment.

Next meeting	TBC
---------------------	-----

Agenda item: 1 – Welcome and Background

Participants were welcomed and attendance recorded. Phil Schofield highlighted previous conversations with Digital Service Providers (DSPs) on this topic for context.

Phil asked participants to consider the irritants according to a simple ranking scheme rating their priority as High (1), Medium (2) or Low (3).

Agenda item: 2 – Top 10 Irritants – DSP Feedback on Priorities

Summary of irritant prioritisation	
Priority rating	Irritant description*
High	Authorisation and authentication [7] EVTE stability and performance issues [1(b)] Lack of a live, end to end test environment [5]
Medium	Production stability and performance issues [1(a)]
Low	Information on SBR services is difficult to find [4] Development tools and standards [2]
Resolved	Complex message standards and transport activities [3]
No consensus	The ebMS3 client should be provided or easily obtainable [6]

* Numbers in square brackets refer to the number of the respective irritant in the list, below.

1. a) Production stability and performance issues, and b) EVTE stability and performance issues:

- *MYOB* – SBR2 was down for 4 hours last night (11 May 2017) so part of the problem is about getting confidence in a system that has issues. The issues were worse before the SAN was replaced – there has been a marked improvement in the general stability of SBR2 with the new SAN. However, developers want to see how the system will cope under a load as there isn't a lot of trust in its capability. There have been a lot of words / reports but developers are yet to see how it actually performs. It was highlighted that the negative impacts are felt mostly by the end users not developers i.e. tax agents lodging.
- *Oban* – unlike the ATO, we see the EVTE as a production environment. Therefore, the current EVTE is a barrier to our process because when it's down, it hits us (i.e. as a production environment, it enables developers to produce software). The up and down nature of it in recent times has impacted on both us and our clients. From our perspective, the ATO does not give the EVTE as high a priority as they should – they are not just 'test' environments (this was agreed by others).

Agenda item: 2 – Top 10 Irritants – DSP Feedback on Priorities

- The ATO observed the need to consider the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the ATO and DSPs, and what is realistic given the nature of the systems run by the ATO.
- DSPs were asked if they felt the SLA was being met – *MYOB* commented that they weren't sure we have a SLA at this time and that either way, developers weren't consulted. *MYOB* noted that this is why some developers have built their own testing environments but that it was very difficult to set up the same testing details / conformance etc.
- *MYOB* commented that for this issue to be resolved, we need to come to an agreement on:
 - What is that environment?
 - What should its availability be?
- *Oban* – reinforced *MYOB*'s comments and pointed out this was a key impact on them as developers get a lot of criticism from their clients on it. Furthermore, even if developers do set up their own testing environments they can't replicate the real thing.
- *MYOB* – this issue should be treated as 2 separate things and rated as such.
 - Production Stability, and
 - EVTE (i.e. to get the right fit for purpose system) because if you don't have an environment to complete testing / conformance self-certification, you don't have the ability to go any further which is a blocker.
- Others – agreed, with SuperChoice also highlighting their recent issues with the EVTE when testing SuperTICK. In addition, Sage emphasised the random, unexplainable rejections reducing the confidence in SBR and driving users back to ELS (which is perceived as 'stable' and 'reliable').

Priority rating for Production stability: Medium

Priority rating for EVTE stability: High

2. Development tools and standards:

- *Oban* – this is a standard problem with software development and not something to focus too much on (“the ATO shouldn't get too bogged down with this one”) as no one has yet figured out how to translate English into code successfully etc.
- *MYOB* – agreed, and noted that improvements can be seen. However, it is still annoying that we are still experiencing a lot of typo issues which is a problem. A machine-readable solution would be better.
- The ATO noted that we are trying to automate and rationalise specifications.

Priority rating: Low

3. Complex message standards and transport structures:

- *MYOB* – this is incorrect now, we have moved on. XBRL was originally the language but we have other options now including XML and the way this should be approached is to choose the most appropriate language for a service – this should be monitored and controlled by the Technical Working Group (TWG).
- *Oban* – didn't oppose the view above but wanted to note that the real blocker for XBRL is the invested required in learning it and tooling for it (i.e. the commercial tools are enterprise-level expensive tools). *Oban*'s disappointment was noted

Agenda item: 2 – Top 10 Irritants – DSP Feedback on Priorities

that the standards are moving which is frustrating for us an early adopter.

Priority rating: Resolved

4. Information on SBR services is difficult to find:

- *MYOB* – as you work with each authority you have to contact each one individually to authorise and to get access to conformance suits, test servers, documentation etc. which is a nightmare. Currently, there is no single place to get everything.
- *Oban* – agree, we need a service catalogue (i.e. API catalogue) for developers to access which would be much more effective and similar to the YETI taxonomy pages.
- The ATO confirmed this was already underway.

Priority rating: Low (noting at the 'upper end' of this category)

5. Lack of live, end-to-end testing environment:

- *MYOB* – There was an independent review done (internal ATO review) of the EVTE but not sure where that is at currently. Hoping it that it will be able to show the ATO some evidence / responses to these questions.
- The ATO commented that the review will look at extending the current forms based testing to make it more business oriented / more like production / and with a greater ability to check performance outages etc. Chris Thorne informed developers that he has requested additional funding next year to extend the EVTE to make it more realistic.
- *MYOB* – having the appropriate testing environment that is like the production version is a pretty high priority as we still suffer with issues where the current EVTE doesn't show problems and then you get into production and have problems. So getting this fixed will elevate a lot of issues for developers.

Priority rating: High (after EVTE stability and performance)

6. In the context of B2G environment, there is a perception that ebMS3 client (message handler) should be provided or easily obtainable:

- *Layer Security* – better to separate the difference between the transport and the business application. We have built our own ebMS3 client handler – not for our own use but we have people who can't afford any of the big offerings as they just need it for a small, fast and simple component that they can embed in their application. There is a need for it so the easily obtainable part will happen but the question of free can't really be considered given the developers who have already made significant investments.
- *SuperChoice* – agree, there are a lot of commercial products out there that make a large investment in this world so we don't see why this needs to be a free offering.
- *Oban* – we built our own ebMS3 stack specifically for large scale operations and we also certified. Should a free offering pop up in this space then what about the previous investment and business case that has been put in by other developers already. If a free offering is made available then the investment of others must be considered. It is not a blocker as such, but an issue / perceived blocker.

Agenda item: 2 – Top 10 Irritants – DSP Feedback on Priorities

- The ATO noted that this is a contentious issue / not a clear pathway forward.

Priority rating: unable to reach consensus

7. Authorisation and authentication:

- *MYOB* – the difficulties / barriers is that all the State government departments are using SBR1 and AUSkey which under the Terms and Conditions of the AUSkey we can't use the AUSkey to lodge via Cloud systems. Therefore, this is actually a deterrent. Until we get across-the-board authorisation systems that work for all Agencies this will be an issue – we need a Cloud-based authentication model for State government agencies.
- *Oban* – strategically, this is the number 1 top ranking issue of all and is a blocker at all levels. Identifying the consumer and secondly, identify the service provider and linking the two correctly and authorising a service providing to action on behalf of the individual or entity correctly as part of cloud authentication is the major blocker.
- *Layer Security* – there are message providers in the middle that want to transport messages which AUSkey doesn't allow. The Digital Business Council is trying to work through this issue for eInvoicing currently also, ranked as a top priority.
- *Oban* – this issue is also impacting anything in the Blockchain space.
- *MYOB* – this would appear to be the biggest blocker / issue that we have had for some time and even current software services are not available to us because of current security / authenticate / authorisation issues that the government has. Additionally, Single Touch Payroll (STP) has this issue on its list. This needs to get sorted ASAP.

Priority rating: High (highest rated issue)

8. Enterprise capability to partnering:

- Not discussed due to time constraints.

9. Effective design approach for specifying business, service delivery and technical implementations:

- Not discussed due to time constraints.

10. The ability of the ATO to rectify problems with SBR Services in a timely manner:

- Not discussed due to time constraints.

Agenda item: 3 – ATO Priorities

Chris Thorne advised developers that he will take advice from these meetings on the priorities / weighting of issues but so far, the ATO has a number of bids in place for funding to address the following issues:

1. Production stability and performance issues – to make improvements in EVTE and production.
2. Development tools and standards – looking at automating specifications to

Agenda item: 3 – ATO Priorities

make them machine readable.

- 5. Lack of live, end-to-end testing environment – looking into a live environment.
- 9. Effective design approach for specifying business, service delivery and technical implementations – around the design engagement process.
- 10. The ability of the ATO to rectify problems with SBR Services in a timely manner – the ATO currently publishes the defect list fortnightly however, looking to open this up more i.e. greater visibility.

It was noted that at this stage, ***none of the above has been approved.***

Agenda item: 4 – Close

Phil Schofield noted that the ATO will now need to consider the best way to capture feedback on the issues we didn't cover during this meeting in the coming days.

- If you have any feedback about the purpose and content of this meeting or suggestions to improve how it is run, please email SIPO@ato.gov.au.