

NSI Bulletin - Issue 10:

Topic: The Move to All IP

Article courtesy of Nick Whiting, Head of BT Redcare

Back in 2017, it was announced that the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) would be retired in 2025. At the time, 2025 seemed a long way away. As we now move into the third quarter of 2023 there are less than 27 months until the PSTN switch off.

September 5th was a significant milestone in the plan this year, as it marked the implementation of a national stop sell of Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) products (traditional phone lines). We are also approaching another major step with the ending of the trials in Salisbury and Mildenhall exchanges in October.

What do these milestones mean?

For Salisbury and Mildenhall, any in scope lines not yet migrated and with no usage in the last 6 months will be withdrawn from service, and any PSTN alarm signalling on those lines will stop working. Openreach are actively engaged with communication providers to get people migrated over. For the national stop sell, communication providers will no longer be able to order a traditional PSTN phone line and most changes to an existing line – for example a communication provider change – will no longer be possible without an upgrade to a digital phone service. This will increase the number of migrations that will take place.

It's important installers have their own migration plans for their PSTN alarm signalling so that they can ensure their customers stay protected, as a phone service migration will mean existing PSTN alarm signalling will stop working. Communication providers can choose to upgrade their customers at any time and, as PSTN based signalling will stop working after a phone service upgrade, it could mean installers are faced with customers being left without service. If this happens to multiple customers, communications providers may struggle to find resource to get them back online.

The challenges and benefits to upgrading

There are a number of other challenges that are presented at the same time. Hopefully those that have already swapped their customers' PSTN alarm signalling out have done so to future-proof devices. A false economy occurs if devices using 3G or 2G have been used with the imminent sunset of 3G and the denigration of 2G services, as this is repurposed to support 5G, limiting the life of these systems with the need to swap out again.

2G sunset has been announced, and is set to conclude in 2033, which might seem like a long way off. Sound familiar? We know engineering resource is already an issue today but with the deadline getting closer, leaving upgrades to the last minute will only increase demand, and this could also lead to supply chain issues and product shortages as we saw with some suppliers during the pandemic.

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There is the benefit to both installers and end customers of upgrading to a modern, future proof system with more resilience and additional features. It is a huge challenge for installers, but suppliers recognise this and are there to help. With toolkits available comprising of videos, infographics and joint branded collateral to help educate and inform the end customer about what is happening and why, there are also offers on pricing to minimise the cost of swap outs and allowing you to plan ahead.

NSI News

Recent developments have led to a mandate for evacuation alert systems in all newly constructed high-rise residential buildings in England and Scotland that are 18 metres tall or higher. Learn more in International Fire and Safety Journal Issue 26:

<https://digital.internationalfireandsafetyjournal.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=1dc606f8-a789-41ba-86c4-5c8aa88314d5&pnum=58>

With transported asset cargo crime on the increase, proactive measures are underway to tackle the risks. Read more in September's Freight Business Journal:

<https://online.fliphtml5.com/mldwj/hnqg/#p=38>

The UK's private security sector have collaborated with the UK Defence and Security Exports Department and the Department for Business and Trade to produce a new brochure on 'Securing Critical National Infrastructure':

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650d96112f404b000dc3d7c7/securing_critical_national_infrastructure_an_introduction_to_uk_capability.pdf

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