

Another internal Telstra document notes "As a result of the investigations into difficult customer complaints and associated reports it has become apparent that the present RVA for incorrect numbers requires revision". This memo refers in particular to the message "The number you have called is not connected or has been changed. Please check the number before calling again. You have not been charged for this call." This confirms Telstra's acknowledgement that serious faults existed, particularly since the author of this memo goes on to say "....this message tends to give the caller the impression that the business they are calling has ceased trading, and they should try another trader."

Internal Memo



To: [Redacted]
From: [Redacted]
Subject: Change to Network RVA
Date: 3 November 1993
To: [Redacted] Don Pines

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Customer Service Planning and
Development
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Nick,
As a result of the investigations into difficult customer complaints and associated reports, it has become apparent that the present Recorded Voice Announcement (RVA) for incorrect numbers requires revision. The RVA in question is worded:

"The number you have called is not connected or has been changed. Please check the number before calling again. You have not been charged for this call"

The problem arises when equipment or customer faults cause customers who are calling legitimate numbers to be connected to this message. In a business environment, especially in these times, this message tends to give the caller the impression that the business they are calling has ceased trading, and they should try another trader.

What is required is a less conclusive set of words that make allowances for the fact the customers are connected to these messages when in fact the required number is operational. Once we have a set of words that are agreed to be all sections of the corporation, and market tested, Network Products will implement the new RVA in association with providing reference numbers on all such messages. These reference numbers will aid in fault location.

The sample message is indicative of what I feel the flavor of the new RVA should be, and is not meant to be the finished article.

"Telecom regrets that we have been unable to connect this call. Please check the number before calling again. The following reference number should be noted and reported to Telecom should the difficulty continue. Reference 142"

This needs to be implemented in the near future to reduce customer complaints, aid fault finding and reduce rework. Your immediate attention would be appreciated.

Regards
[Redacted]

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Anyone who uses a telephone has at some time reached a recorded voice announcing "The number you are calling is disconnected" or something similar. Within the telecommunications industry these messages are referred to as RVAs or Recorded Voice Announcements (refer Glossary). Among the multitude of FOI documents that I received in 1994 was a copy of a Telstra internal e-mail dated 26/9/93, which refers to the need to "have a very basic review of all our RVA messages and how they are applied." This e-mail goes on to say "... I am sure when we start to scratch around we will find a host of network circumstances where inappropriate RVAs are going to line." Obviously Telstra were aware of RVA problems long before I experienced them.

[Handwritten signature] 73

Holmes, Jim

From: DPInel
To: EBlake
Cc: DPInel; AHurnich; JHolmes
Subject: RVA Messages
Date: Sunday, 26 September, 1993 2:12PM

Ed,

We need to have a very basic review of all our RVA messages and how they are applied. At the moment, a customer who dials a legitimate number which is redirected to a non-existent number gets a "the number you have dialed is incorrect or has been disconnected" message. This is patently wrong and whilst the "old school" continues to tell me this is all the customer's fault, it is clearly unacceptable. I have only quoted one common example - I am sure when we start to scratch around we will find a host of network circumstances where inappropriate RVAs are going to line.

Can you please have someone identify the current network RVAs and where they are applied. A review of these could identify some that are better replaced with redirection to an operator for assistance, some where we should repeat the number dialed to the A party, some where the words should be changed for clarity and accuracy and some where the conditions serviced by a single RVA need to be split to a number of varying options.

On a related point, I think we need to review busy and congestion tones and consider replacing with a voice message. At the moment, many customers cannot readily differentiate the tones (I have trouble myself) and this may be causing some unnecessary problems. We already put a voice announcement on congestion in the Trunk network so maybe a similar approach to the junction and local networks is appropriate.

Don

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