



# Assuring safety and security for BT and its customers

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Rob Causer  
Security Control Centre Manager  
BT Operate

## BT **smartnumbers** service transforms BT security centre processes and makes people more productive

### Client

An unassuming Northampton office block houses nearly 60 highly skilled people who around the clock supervise worldwide BT security and alarm systems. Akin to the organisation’s nerve centre, it’s here that key UK building access is managed, potential criminal activity is detected, investigations are co-ordinated, and the personal safety of travelling BT staff is assured. BT customer security systems also are supported.

Called the Security Control Centre (SCC), the Northampton-based facility is part of BT Operate – the division of BT responsible for deploying and running core networks and systems, including the company’s global 21C network platform. In so doing BT Operate drives communication services for BT Retail, BT Global Services, and BT Wholesale customers; and for their customers too.

### Challenge

Although not strictly speaking a contact centre, calls into the SCC nevertheless have to be accurately passed to people with the right skill sets, and handled in tightly targeted timescales. To do those things the organisation relied upon a legacy ACD system, based upon a traditional Nortel voice switch, which was reaching end of life.

Rob Causer, Security Control Centre Manager, explains: “Besides being increasingly difficult and costly to maintain, our old ACD system could not provide the vital statistics we needed to manage our activities. Also we were limited as to the number of users it could handle and the number of individual call queues we could create.”

With call profiles continuously altering as the day progresses – for example, most serious criminal activity occurs within a four-hour window around midnight – more agility was required to allow staff to move around as demands changed.

Rob Causer adds: “In addition, BT wanted the SCC to be part of contingency planning for out-of-the-ordinary situations, but we were at the limits of what the existing architecture could support.” That realisation was the trigger point for BT Operate to review call-handling arrangements in the SCC.

### Solution

It was perhaps not surprising that BT Operate should choose to use the power of a BT service to solve its own call-handling problems. In fact, the SCC had been formed in August 2009 by the merger of different BT security and alarms teams, one of which was already using the BT **smartnumbers** service.

# Case study

## BT Operate

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Tony Watson  
BT Account Director  
BT **smartnumbers**

BT **smartnumbers** can direct calls virtually from anywhere to anywhere across any combination of fixed or mobile networks. Call routings can be changed online in real time offering substantial improvements in resilience and business continuity.

The service is provided and managed from within the BT network cloud. This means not only that carrier class availability is assured, because there is no hardware to go wrong, but also that no up-front capital expenditure is necessary. It is naturally backed by comprehensive management information and reporting.

Rob Causer says: “We knew that a **smartnumbers** solution would work for us, but circumstances dictated that we needed a working system within a very short timescale. So we threw the problem at the **smartnumbers** team to see what they could do.”

Nine different call queues were set up, each corresponding to a particular BT or customer community. Many SCC people are becoming multi-skilled and these agents are able to

log into multiple queues. The two principal queues – alarms and security – continued to use existing phone numbers, while new numbers were assigned for the others.

The SCC is required to record all incoming and outgoing calls. The project included integration between BT **smartnumbers** and the existing NICE voice recording equipment. An IVR front end also needed menu modifications and its messages re-recording. Finally call plans within the BT core network needed amending.

Each of the nine queues receives calls made to their corresponding telephone number before being presented to available agents that have logged into that queue. The BT **smartnumbers** service provides a “whisper” through the agents’ headsets so that they are aware of the type of call being presented and can answer appropriately.

If all agents assigned to a particular queue are occupied, calls are queued in the BT network so channels in and out of the SCC are not blocked. Comfort prompts are relayed to waiting customers, who are offered the option of leaving a message for non-urgent matters. In this event members of the SCC team are sent an alert.

There was a slight wobble at the end of the implementation project when an overenthusiastic person in the BT network team redirected the current inbound numbers to the BT **smartnumbers** service too early. This resulted in all calls to a particular number being delivered to an SCC supervisor who happened to be logged in to test the service.

Rob Causer recalls: “With the help of the BT **smartnumbers** project team we were quickly able to log in other team members until the situation was normalised.”

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Rob Causer  
Security Control Centre Manager  
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### Value

With the BT **smartnumbers** service in place, the SCC has been able to make fundamental changes to the way it works. Real time visibility of what’s happening is provided by both physical wallboards and web-based representations of the same information. Rob Causer says: “With better management information and greater visibility of call handling from anywhere, team leaders can be far more proactive in managing demand.”

The SCC is also much more resilient and its ability to recover from a disaster has been assured. Tony Watson, BT Account Director at BT **smartnumbers**, explains: “For example, should it ever be necessary to evacuate the Northampton building, or worse, the BT **smartnumbers** service can be immediately reconfigured online to allow staff to log in from mobile phones, from home, or from another BT building.” Similarly the system offers new flexible working options.

“We immediately saw a 10 per cent improvement in our time to answer, which means that our people are being more productive. As the multi-skilling programme moves forward we’ll be able to optimise use of resources for even greater improvements,” concludes Rob Causer. “Just as importantly, our people are happier because they feel empowered and more in control.”

### Offices worldwide

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