

Case study

DFTS Smartnumbers for the Armed Forces

Keeping key people connected

Today's defensive strategies rely on swift and secure access to people wherever they may be. Using DFTS Smartnumbers means military and civilian staff can be contacted via personal non-geographic numbers. Their incoming calls are dynamically routed to the device of choice be it a desk phone or mobile handset wherever they are – in the office, at home or travelling. Or, even voicemail for those moments when it's inconvenient to take calls directly.

For people like Major Owen Finnie, often on the move, it offers easier collaboration and greater efficiency. DFTS Smartnumbers provides the only number people ever need to know to reach him.

“With DFTS Smartnumbers I'm always available and I can work more flexibly. That makes me more productive and means I can achieve a better work life balance.”

Major Owen Finnie, Fixed Voice Service Assurance Lead, DE&S, ISS Networks, Ministry of Defence



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“The ability to move your telephone number around to wherever you are working is enormously beneficial. Our whole ethos is towards hot-desking and flexible working, and DFTS Smartnumbers fits perfectly with that environment.”

Paul Colgate, DE&S, ISS Service Operations, CIS Assurance, Ministry of Defence

DFTS Smartnumbers supports MOD flexible working by enabling multiple devices to be accessed using just one number

Challenge

Defence communication has always demanded a powerful balance of security, capability, and innovation. BT provides the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), its suppliers and partners across government with a wide range of secure communications services through the Defence Fixed Telecommunications Service (DFTS). A contract that has been running since 1997.

Over the years, flexible working has become more and more commonplace, driven by the need for greater efficiency and advances in collaborative technology. Today, MOD military and civilian personnel need to be readily contactable wherever in the world they may be.

Solution

With DFTS Smartnumbers – a fully managed, hosted service delivered by BT – people are allocated a non-geographic, virtual telephone number with integrated voicemail, which becomes the only number they ever need to publicise. The service delivers calls to the user's specified location anywhere in the world. Call routing instructions can be changed in an instant, either using a touchtone keypad, or through an intuitive web portal from any Defence Information Infrastructure (DII)-enabled computer.

There are three variants of the Smartnumbers service. Smartnumbers Web is a single number service with integrated voicemail that can be managed either via a web interface or using a telephone keypad. Smartnumbers Mail

provides a standard voicemail service that can be accessed from any location. Lastly, Smartnumbers Team allocates a single number to a group of people, allowing queuing and automated distribution of calls to team members at any location. This variant is also very useful for project work or services operating a shift or rota arrangement.

Paul Colgate of DE&S, ISS¹ Service Operations, CIS Assurance at the MOD, says: “When I'm at my desk I can log onto Smartnumbers Web and manage my calls in real time. With just one click I can take an incoming call at my desk or on my MOD BlackBerry, delegate it to a colleague, or send it to voicemail, depending on what I am doing at the time and who's calling me. It really helps me make the most productive use of my time.” Other efficiency tools built into Smartnumbers Web include the ability to create a directory of frequently called numbers and key contacts, and click to dial using the web interface.

DFTS Smartnumbers is a fully managed service, hosted on the secure military network and fully security accredited. While users have direct personal control over call routing, all administration tasks such as password resets and adding new accounts are handled centrally via the DFTS Customer Assured Service Centre (CASC) help desk.

“The service we get from the DFTS delivery teams is superb,” confirms Paul Colgate. “They are always very accommodating and pragmatic, and when we ask for something we know it will be done well and on time.”

Value

DFTS Smartnumbers has a host of business and personal benefits. First and foremost it makes communication and collaboration simpler, with people always contactable via the same phone number. Keith Bartlam, Technical Manager, DE&S, ISS Networks, adds: “I use the one-click dialling facility of DFTS Smartnumbers extensively, as well as the call manager application that allows me to manage my incoming calls in real time. The web interface is very intuitive and easy to use.”

By supporting flexible working practices for greater efficiency and a better work life balance, DFTS Smartnumbers reduces dependence on (and the incremental costs of using) mobile phones. Also, because calls can be routed anywhere, it enhances business resilience. Mick Miles, Fixed Voice Service Assurance team member, DE&S, ISS Networks at the MOD, says: “There's almost 20,000 DFTS Smartnumbers in service and the platform's scalable to support many more. It's a really productive solution for any mobile tri-service or civilian staff member.”

There are savings too. DFTS Smartnumbers avoids the cost of administering moves and changes on fixed network services when people move office or location. It also forces all voice calls on-net, which maximises the use of all-inclusive and preferred rate call routing options, so minimising call charges for the MOD.



¹ Defence Equipment and Support, Information Systems and Services

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Mick Miles, Fixed Voice Service Assurance, DE&S, ISS Networks, Ministry of Defence

Major Owen Finnie, Fixed Voice Service Assurance lead, DE&S, ISS Networks at the MOD, says: “I advertise my Smartnumber on my email signature block. Having the one number makes me more contactable than I would otherwise be. It works really well alongside the MOD BlackBerry service and that allows me to respond much more quickly to issues. I estimate that it helps me turn at least two hours of wasted travel time into productive time each week.”

Extrapolating those productivity benefits across the MOD for just half of the DFTS Smartnumbers users would equate to productivity savings equivalent to around 200 man-years per annum, a huge benefit by any standards. Paul Colgate sums up: “The ability to move your telephone number around to wherever you are working is enormously beneficial. Our whole ethos is towards hot-desking and flexible working, and DFTS Smartnumbers fits perfectly with that environment.”

Core services

- DFTS Smartnumbers
- MOD BlackBerry
- DFTS Managed Mobile
- DFTS Circuit Switched Service (CSS)



Offices worldwide

The services described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to the respective British Telecommunications plc standard conditions of contract. Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract.

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09/13