

A Daelibs Discussion Document ©

Telephone logging of care-in-the-home services. Is it a subtle form of elder abuse? My early research led me to form an opinion that it is.

- The following discussion is based on a sociological view of providing personal care services to support people who are elderly and frail to remain living at home in the community.
- The logic of the discussion is founded on over eighteen years of working in community care service programs. The considerations are based on six years of academic research associated with the social circumstances of older people who are living at home with the support of health care and social support services.
- Twelve years of hands on research and development has been committed to developing technology that can be used to improve the efficiency of managing the delivery and accounting of community aged care services.
- The research and development has shown there are significant benefits to be gained from electronically recording events of service delivery in community care.
- It was clear from our early research work that the electronic record of a service event needs to be flexible and with the capacity to be carried by the service recipient.
- Experimentation in 1994/1995 established the provision of an electronic signature to be used by the service recipient to record the delivery of services by the service provider agency was a viable technology and methodology to use.
- Since 1998, a number of significant community service organisations that are using the Daelibs (data analysis electronically logged information based system) technology, have proven the design concept is stable and reliable.
- From a sociological perspective, relying on the service recipient to provide the mechanism (a telephone handset) to process records of service attendance; was considered, in its design concept, to be restrictive in its application and invasive of the vulnerable consumer's rights.
- Based on several years of research and development work, the 5th generation of Daelibs technology is being prepared to work with any release of the proposed Australian government Health Access Card.
- Like the Beta and the VHS technology market dominance struggle, I am of a firm opinion the concept of using the telephone Caller Line Identification (CLI) number to identify a community service attendance event will be a short lived phenomena.

Discussion:

As a sociologist I have a special interest in the personal and people focused matters relating to the business of managing community care services. I offer this paper as a medium of social consideration. Your comments would be welcomed.

Back in the early 1990s, I commenced research for the development of ways to electronically record the delivery of personal health care and social support services to people who are elderly (and younger with a disability) living at home on the community.

My introduction to the research was based around a telephone product. The product was designed to provide both an emergency alarm and the ability to record the attendance of services required to support the older person to maintain their ability to live at home, rather than enter a residential care facility.

Whilst the idea of logging and storing the attendance in the special telephone had merit, the cost factor of a highly specialised telephone handset was a major discouragement to the concept being adapted across the board.

The emergency alarm aspect, to enable an older person to use a personal radio pendant to trigger an automated telephone dialler to call a 24 hour emergency response centre, is well serviced by a number of professional service provider agencies using dedicated equipment for this purpose. It is a fantastic concept and needs to be more widely used.

Emerging from the combined emergency alarm and service recording telephone, the idea of using the standard telephone handset to log the attendance of a service provider's attendance to the home of a frail and elderly person has become a growing service attendance recording design concept.

When the service provider enters the older person's home they use the service recipient's personal telephone handset to call either a 1800 or a 1300 number. There are two ways of logging the attendance.

One method is for the call to be automatically answered at the other end capturing the telephone number of the initiating hand set. Once the call is answered the answering computer having captured the incoming Caller Line Identification (CLI) number immediately hangs up. This allows the CLI, the date and time of the call to be logged by the computer answering the call.

Using the 1800 number there is no cost to the elderly person.

To log the beginning and the end times of the delivery it is necessary for the service provider to use the service recipient's handset on arrival and departure from the older person's home.

A second methodology, not so likely to be used, is to use a 1300 where the older person may be responsible for a local call charge against their telephone account.

There can also be other variances of the concept design, where the service provider may be required to log a personal identification number (PIN) to identify who they are. The system

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can also be designed to deliver a pre recorded administration message to the service provider as they log their service attendance call.

The concept does not require the service provider to invest any capital in data recording hardware. The service recipient's telephone removes the need for that investment.

For many service provider agencies this is a very attractive low cost method of recording service attendance to people who are elderly and frail or for younger people who may be housebound with a disability and receiving care at home.

From a technical point of view, provided the service recipient is in their home to receive the service, the concept can 'electronically record' the delivery of a personal care and or domestic assistance service. If the service recipient is not home then the service provider has no way of using the service recipient's telephone number as the basis for logging the delivery of service to them.

In the mid 1990's, when developing the Daelibs products design I saw the economic advantages of using the telephone logging service with the care recipient's telephone. We undertook the development of a system based on this design principle. From this early research and development I drew two conclusions.

The model limits the overall management benefits that can be achieved from this type of service attendance data capture. The data capture is tied to the client's home telephone.

However, the issue that caused me to drop the design model was related to a sociological point of view. As a sociologist, using the service provider's telephone concept to electronically log service attendance verges, I believe, on the edge of abuse of the most vulnerable people in our society.

In the early research, I remember a vocal younger man with disability strongly objecting to the concept. He did not want to have to end a phone conversation for the service provider to log their presence or departure. He was also concerned that the practice of using his telephone for this purpose could lead to unscrupulous people abusing the requirement to make other phone calls. His view was, if he was intellectually impaired, what was to stop people using the phone when they were not supposed to. His comments were enough to convince me it was not a practice on which to build the Daelibs products.

I also discovered that some older people, when asked to hang up on a telephone conversation to allow the service provider to log-on or log-off their times of service provision were resentful at the intrusion into their privacy.

What if the service recipient, for reasons of privacy, chooses to have the CLI blocked on their telephone? Should they have a choice about their telephone handset being used to record service attendances, and thereby having the CLI block removed?

If people are concerned about ID cards, we certainly need to debate the question, is this use of an older person's telephone for a personal ID a trend that is sociologically acceptable? After some research, I concluded not. What do you think? Your comments are welcome.

From a technical perspective the service attendance concept only works when the service recipient is at home. The telephone number ID is a fixed location personal identification and cannot, by its nature of association, be used as mobile service recipient ID.

From the perspective of the telecommunications carrier, if there are many hundreds potentially thousands of data logging records being carried free of charge by capturing only the CLI and avoiding the call connection fee, is that of concern?

The future likelihood of a Health Access ID Card, that is personal and can be carried by the service recipient, will provide the capacity for all service provider agencies to use a common identification reference coordinate.

This concept will coordinated universal statistical government funding analysis. Will such an evolution make the home telephone number of a service recipient, being a personal ID, a short lived idea?

From the Daelibs perspective, once we abandoned the telephone logging idea, the attendance record system has been based on the service recipient having a personal ID used as an electronic signature. With the fifth generation (e-S Logger) design of the Daelibs data loggers, provision has been made to adapt the Loggers to read Smart Cards in various forms.

From the outset we have endeavoured to continue the evolution of our product in a way that will as best possible avoid the situation whereby the general design concept is made obsolete. The principle of a personal portable electronic signature has been at the core of that design process.

Backed by years of research, I am convinced, there is significant merit in the principle of the introduction of a universal electronic signature for people who are the beneficiaries of government funded personal care services. Our work clearly indicates that only from a universal data resource will it be possible to achieve a better understanding of the unit cost of management of these services.

Apart form the sociological perspective, it is obvious that using a telephone CLI is not a going to be the technology that is used for a universal personal and unique electronic identification.

DKTOB is well situated to supply the Daelibs e-S Logger to the evolving electronic record developments being driven by government. If you have an interest in staying in touch with the Daelibs developments, register your expression of interest through the **Contact Us** tab on our www.daelibs.com Web Home Page.

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