ITS United Kingdom

Better transport through technology

SMARTER LOCAL TRANSPORT

SMARTER LOCAL TRANSPORT

ABOUT ITS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT

Over the last few years more and more local authorities have invested in Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to deliver policy objectives and improve local travel. ITS offers a basket of services that bring together existing transport technologies and leading edge services for tackling a range of transport and environment challenges. ITS can help authorities:

- better co-ordinate traffic signals for reliable journeys and/or to improve air quality

- enable pedestrian and cycle friendly zones to co-exist with busy roads.

- deliver the network management duty described in the Traffic Management Act

- tell people when the next bus will arrive and give it priority over other vehicles

- inform people about parking spaces which they can opt to pay for by mobile phones

- improve people's safety and security through latest CCTV monitoring

- manage networks when things go wrong (floods, poor weather or major incidents)

- provide interoperable smart cards for use in public transport and other travel situations.

All these examples are in day-to-day use in the UK local transport authorities and ITS is no longer a specialism. Adopting ITS is one step towards smarter travelling for the future, by:

- Delivering information local people and visitors rightly now expect about transport

- Making the most out of existing transport networks, without new road building

LEFT The opening screen of DfT's web-based journey planning service 'Transport Direct'

Picture courtesy of DfT and Transport Direct

- Starting the path to people's travel behaviour change to address environmental challenges

- Enabling future links to in vehicle systems, personal navigation and payment for travel.

LOCAL BENEFITS FROM ITS

ITS has proven outcome related benefits, such as:

- Improving travel – for example halving the time spent looking for parking spaces in Southampton

- Helping policy objectives – like increasing bus patronage in Bristol by 10%

- Best value – eg reducing costs in York by using the existing City Council IT network

- Reducing accidents by 70% in Norfolk using intelligent road markings

- Reducing the impact of floods in Worcester by warning of closed roads

- Minimising the impact of opening a new city centre store (IKEA, Coventry)

- Delivering journey time reliability in Essex

- Allowing monitoring of performance in line with the Traffic Management Act

- Providing vision impaired passengers with appropriate SMS information in Brighton.

ITS: PART OF DAY-TO-DAY TRANSPORT – AN EXAMPLE

ITS is now proven. During the mid-1990s the DfT and Industry developed the Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) programme to develop an open specification that allows systems to share information with each other. From the outset the focus of UTMC has been on practical implementation and meeting real needs to allow local authorities to purchase systems that allow informed decision making in traffic problems, using a variety of tools. Using UTMC, you can 'pick and mix' suppliers of roadside equipment, communications and software.

UTMC uses the same technology that underpins the internet. This means wide expertise is available now. This future-proofs investment and avoids risky 'one-off' IT projects. ITS can also evolve with your needs. You could start with simply a car park, a central computer and a few variable message signs to reduce car park congestion. But some authorities have already grouped together to purchase multi-city, region-wide services that include many systems with a single contractor, reducing costs of maintenance and duplication.

By specifying UTMC-compliant equipment, new communications systems can be used.

For example, for traffic signals, wireless technologies can minimise revenue costs. Many people think ITS needs special skills, rather than off the shelf products, but between 2002 and early 2008 over 40 UK local authorities invested in ITS.

HELP IS AVAILABLE!

The ITS (UK) Local Authority Interest Group is a forum for developing good practice for all aspects of ITS in local transport, promoting ITS to central government and advising how a business case can be developed. Its membership consists of both Local Authority and private sector participants, and it provides a neutral ground for these to meet. ITS (UK) is a not-for-profit public/private sector association for promoting all aspects of ITS across all forms of transport.
http://www.its-uk.org.uk/groups/group.aspx?id=6

The UTMC Development Group (UDG) – the UDG has been set up to oversee the future development of UTMC and has representatives from local authorities, suppliers, national and regional governments. They are responsible for maintaining the specifications and standards, and developing UTMC.
www.utmc.uk.com

DfT has published a toolkit that links ITS solutions with policy objectives, and shows examples of typical benefits from similar implementations.
http://www.dft.gov.uk/itstoolkit/

WHERE NEXT?

If you want to know more about capturing benefits from ITS and UTMC, key next steps are:

- Have your technical team look at the companion document from ITS (UK) for more help

- Talk with stakeholders, such as public transport operators, local developers and neighbouring authorities about their ITS plans. They may have ideas to develop with you as well as potential ways to share costs

- Contact ITS (UK) to find out more – mailbox@its-uk.org.uk

ITS United Kingdom
Suite 312 Tower Bridge Business Centre
46-48 East Smithfield
London E1W 1AW

Tel +44 (0)20 7709 3003
Fax +44 (0)20 7709 3007
www.**its-uk**.org.uk

Published by RTI Focus (UK) Ltd © April 2009