

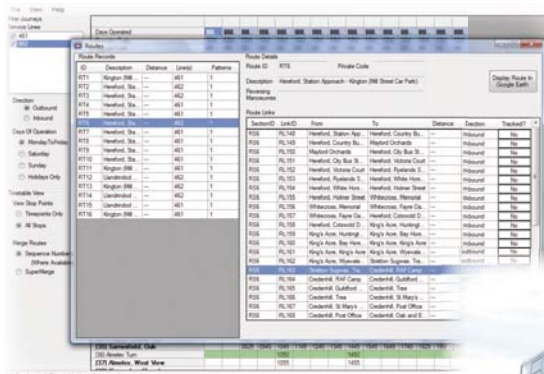
Getting ready for Electronic Bus Service Registrations and TransXChange

Recently Omnibus has received an increasing number of enquiries concerning Electronic Bus Service Registrations (EBSR) and TransXChange as customers begin to explore the benefits these could bring. We have been developing software to meet the requirements of EBSR and TransXChange and feel that this has now reached a stage where we can announce our progress.

A suite of TransXChange modules is already available from Omnibus that allows data to be exported from OmniTIMES (and OmniBASE) in TransXChange format and, in reverse, allows TransXChange data to be imported directly into OmniTIMES. To fully exploit the potential of the format, OmniTIMES has had extra functionality added to make it easier for users to add intermediate stops, including the ATCO Reference Code for each stop.

This technology is already in use with PTI Cymru and Northamptonshire Council, who are using it to import EBSR information into OmniTIMES for their Traveline Database. We also have some operations

using the modules to export timetable data in TransXChange format to Real Time Information and Ticket Machine systems. The software to undertake EBSR will soon be in trial testing in a Pilot Project with VOSA starting in October 2008. We will be launching the EBSR module at the Eurobus 2008 Exhibition at the NEC 4th-6th November 2008 and will be happy to demonstrate this alongside all our other software products.



An important goal for the modules is speed of operation. With the modules importing files in a matter of seconds, we believe we have achieved that

goal – although we invite you to put it to the test.

And Mapping...

In addition to the modules for EBSR and TransXChange, Omnibus has also developed a Mapping module to complement OmniTIMES. OmniMAP is designed to allow users to plot routes on a map, indicating calling points, timing points and the route taken between them. This links to OmniTIMES more seamlessly

than any previous mapping solution and allows mapping data to be linked with OmniTIMES timetables. Using the two products together provides not only accurate stop data, but also accurate mileage information.



Software updates...

As well as ensuring that our existing product range links seamlessly with all the new modules launched this year, several of our products have had additional functionality added. Much of this is due to our clients' input and experiences with the software - so thank you for that!

PocketFLAG is the new addition to OmniFLAG, allowing mobile staff to access and record details 'on the spot', making the database more flexible for the external workforce and removing the need to re-input data.

Changes within OmniMAN will now

enable users to share work easily. Also, users can now interpolate intermediate bus timings from existing timing points, with OmniTIMES automatically filling in the times across ALL bus stops from a time point only timetable..

The Omnibus Depot Allocation System, now known as OmniDAS, is now a fully modular, Windows™ based system which will streamline both single and multi-depot operations.

All the above will be available for demonstration at Eurobus Expo 2008 (5/ T122). Come along and see for yourself.

Benefits for Local Authorities

The use of TransXChange and the move towards EBSR will have a significant impact on work undertaken by Local Authorities. The time consuming business of manually inputting registrations will vanish at a stroke. The import routine for TransXChange files will produce stop level OmniTIMES data, suitable for use with our other products. This achieves major savings in removing the need to re-input data, minimising the potential for error.

Continued overleaf...

Case Study

FIRST GROUP

As the UK's largest bus operator, FirstGroup runs 9,000 buses in around 40 major towns and cities and carries 3 million passengers each year. Omnibus has supplied the Group with scheduling software for over 8 years now, and feels this has been a sufficiently thorough test of the products for a case study.

FirstGroup rolled out OmniTIMES, OmniBASE, OmniMAN and OmniROTA to its operating companies from 2000 to assist with the scheduling of its services. Since then, OmniSTOP has been added, producing the distinctive FirstGroup displays seen around the country. So, with such a large organisation, how is the software used in each company? "They all use it differently, and of course it depends on the level of change" said David Houston, Schedules Manager of the UK Bus operation. "Major re-timing would normally be carried out in OmniTIMES, but of course the tools it contains will allow the whole timetable to be changed in minutes. Route changes are carried out quickly in OmniTIMES if it is just a case of changing, adding or removing a point. There are also tools that make major network changes easy, providing the user carefully plans how to tackle the job. Of course there are safeguards in case mistakes are made, ranging from copies of individual files, to disaster recovery backups."

Whilst obtaining anecdotes from organisations with the stature of FirstGroup is always difficult, David recalled one of the more 'die-hard' schedulers on installation; "He was used to having his old system sitting in the corner. He said, 'I must have had my head buried in the sand far too long. It truly is a most wonderful scheduling package.'"

"Omnibus software has been extremely useful in our program of replacing older depots. Costing the implications of moving to a proposed new site is easy, and the rescheduling for the actual move is straightforward. Also, acquisitions have been quickly added to our databases using the software, giving much more reliable information about these operations than we could have otherwise obtained."

After implementing OmniSTOP, FirstGroup found that using data for additional purposes had big benefits; "Where users have bus stop and NaPTAN data available, there are significant gains to be made in either time saved, or increased number of stops serviced with information. If they don't possess NaPTAN data they save some time, but the main gain is in quality and consistency of presentation."

Managing such a large network of services, FirstGroup has built relationships with other stakeholders in each area. "We provide Local Authorities with various files. Those that have Omnibus, and request files, can simply read our OmniTIMES files. For others we can offer a variety of ATCO-Cif formats or an export that opens readily in a spreadsheet. Once Local Authorities purchase TransXChange import software, we will be able to offer files in this much more versatile format as well."

A key factor to the success is the strength of relationship between the two companies. David describes the FirstGroup experience of Omnibus as "Fabulous, friendly, pain free, 'can-do' software supplier. Support is handled impressively, most issues are resolved during the call, and usually simply require instruction on how to do something. Where modification to software is required, this is usually provided within a few hours."

The most recent addition to the FirstGroup portfolio is PocketBUS, which is currently on trial. "PocketBUS will provide on street staff, with a source of information to pass on to customers, and to aid them in controlling operational aspects of the service. It will also allow them to carry out live surveys, and record the results for further analysis."



EBSR Update ...continued

Benefits for Operators

The move to EBSR, with data fed directly from the scheduling system will remove the paperwork associated with changes in registrations. This will speed up the process leading to deadlines being met more easily (or lead times for projects cut). It will also ensure the accurate interpretation of registrations by those who receive them.

Feeding data to third party software is another advantage. TransXChange is set to become the industry standard format for transferring data between systems and already Real Time Information Systems and Ticket Machine suppliers require information in this format. The ability to provide such accurate information quickly, with minimum effort, is a business essential.

The way forward

The TransXChange modules and OmniMAP are already available and if you would like further information please contact us on 0161 683 3100 or via our website: www.omnibus.uk.com