

ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SOFTWARE?

Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of OmniNEWS. In this newsletter we are announcing significant developments to the Omnibus software line up and a major acquisition. These are very exciting times for us.

This year, within the media, our focus is on encouraging people to get the most out of their software which, bearing in mind that one of the features of TransXChange will be its 'commonality', is a very current topic. Omnibus have worked hard to further develop OmniTIMES and our other modules to ensure they are ready for this challenge.

If you want to examine whether there is more you can get out of your software, do get in touch.

Enhancing Depot Allocation

Omnibus have announced that they have acquired the majority of the software and support staff of the Hampshire based company, APS Computing. This move, which includes the Windows based depot allocation system and time and attendance system, will strengthen existing products and make Omnibus DAS a market leader in its use of allocation technology.

"There are several routines and features of the APS software which will complement our existing Depot Allocation System", said Simon Hartley of Omnibus. "It will enable us to make better use of the database structure and move to a Microsoft Windows environment, which obviously is what most clients know and use." Simon concludes; "This places the Omnibus Depot Allocation System as the prime choice for potential customers."

In addition to the technology, the acquisition includes development and support staff whose expertise will be fully utilised by Omnibus. John Austin, Managing Director of APS commented, "We are pleased to be combining the strengths of both the APS and Omnibus products. We

recognised that Omnibus has an excellent reputation for their support and integrity as a company, so it made sense to merge the two products."

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus said, "We are very pleased to have acquired the APS software to build upon our existing Depot Allocation System. This gives us the ability to provide a comprehensive Windows based system to lead the marketplace."



Peter shakes hands with John Austin of APS

Trans - XChanging Information

With the recent announcements that trials of the TransXChange interface are going well, Omnibus feel it is time to launch our TransXChange Importer and Exporter.

The reason for the launch now – before the format becomes embedded into requirements for Registrations etc. – is that UK organisations are starting to consider the impact of TransXChange and are preparing for its rollout.

Very briefly, the two modules are:

- **Importer** – Imports TransXChange files (such as Electronic Bus Service Registrations) directly into OmniTIMES to create a timetable database

- **Exporter** - takes OmniTIMES timetables directly into valid TXC formats.

Both modules support current schema for TransXChange (up to v.2.2a).

"Operators are slowly beginning to move forward with electronic registration of bus services, and Local Authorities want to ensure they can handle this data. The Importer enables them to bring electronically registered timetables into OmniTIMES" said Jeremy Howat, Sales and Marketing Manager for Omnibus.

"Not only that, TransXChange means it is now far easier to move data between different systems. This allows potential clients with access to their data in TransXChange format, for such purposes as Traveline, to be able add on OmniTIMES and OmniSTOP for publicity purposes, even if they weren't used to create the original files"

Service Code	Line	Line Name	Start	End	Day	Time	Order	Priority	Vehicle Type	Notes
100	100	100	07:00	08:00	1	07:00	1	1	1	
101	101	101	08:00	09:00	1	08:00	1	1	1	
102	102	102	09:00	10:00	1	09:00	1	1	1	
103	103	103	10:00	11:00	1	10:00	1	1	1	
104	104	104	11:00	12:00	1	11:00	1	1	1	
105	105	105	12:00	13:00	1	12:00	1	1	1	
106	106	106	13:00	14:00	1	13:00	1	1	1	
107	107	107	14:00	15:00	1	14:00	1	1	1	
108	108	108	15:00	16:00	1	15:00	1	1	1	
109	109	109	16:00	17:00	1	16:00	1	1	1	
110	110	110	17:00	18:00	1	17:00	1	1	1	

PUTTING MAPS TO WORK

Using Omnibus products to schedule, timetable and operate bus routes is to get a geographical boost with the launch of a brand new product – **Omnimap**.

Utilising a renowned Geographical Information System and Ordnance Survey mapping to street level, **Omnimap** gives users levels of functionality previously unseen in the bus industry. **Omnimap** will plot all bus stops in an area using NaPTAN information, and import service data from **Omnitimes** to plot the routes, showing all bus stops on the route, not just the timing points.

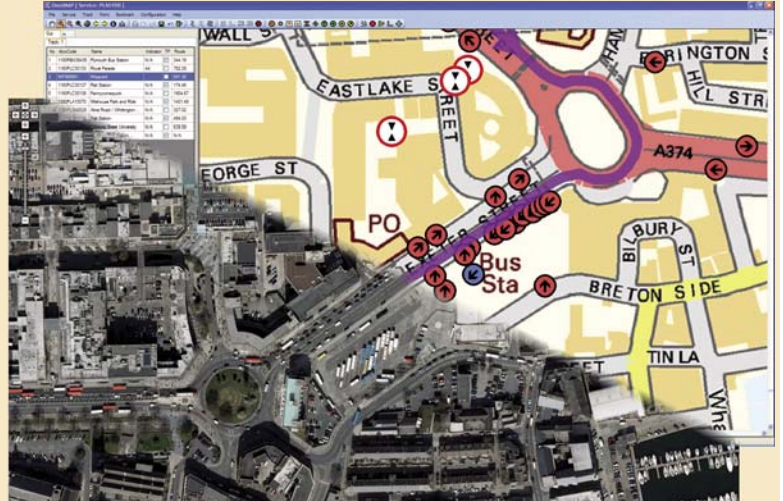
"This gives users immediate and visual perspectives of their routes and bus stop network", comments Omnibus Managing Director, Peter Crichton. "There are a number of useful aids; such as being able to add into the map an image of a location in Google Maps, and having the software identify one-way streets or low bridges."

The software has many other useful functions, including the ability to update road links. With this tool, users can include additional road detail, such as lanes in bus stations, which the maps may ignore. As the route is plotted to the map, **Omnimap** will calculate the distance between stops and export all the relevant geographical information for use in Traveline, TransXChange and other third party systems.

In developing the software, Omnibus looked at the demands of clients for information about bus stop positions, the routes of services and location of

potential problems, such as low bridges or width restrictions. Peter says of **Omnimap**, "Using maps effectively is never as simple as just following a road or putting a pin in a map, there are - many factors to consider, for example, limiting vehicle size to road characteristics. **Omnimap** is designed specifically with public transport in mind."

Omnimap, with Google map image overlaid



C a s e S t u d y B R I S T O L C I T Y C O U N C I L

Two years ago, Bristol's Public Transport and Park & Ride Group went from looking after 500 bus stops to managing all 1500 stops within the Council's boundaries. In addition, they were set a key performance target for 70% of all stops to have current passenger information on display within the first year.

"Historically, we managed bus stop displays using a publishing package", comments Ian Saywell, Public Transport Officer. "This meant that when changes came in, it took a full eight weeks to organise and produce displays. Once we took over all stops in the area, a major change would involve 300 or more displays, so we had to take action."



Bristol City Council already used Omnibus software, and turned to **Omnistop** to help solve the problem. "Initially we had some help formatting the displays, but very soon **Omnistop** was pumping out timetables for the bus stops." Ian summarised, "We have now hit our second year performance target in a row this year of 80% of stops with current information – this was achieved with weeks to spare. We are now preparing for a 90% target for 2008/9."

As for efficiencies, whilst the Council trebled the number of stops that they manage, the size of the team has remained stable. "We have even gone from producing displays on a last-minute basis to having the time to plan and improve. We are now looking at providing interchange information at a number of locations across the City including a number of Bristol's urban rail stations."

As Richard, the team's Technical Support Officer, has mastered the software it really is a case of just pressing 'print'!



We look after all aspects of the bus stop infrastructure, and not to have to stress about displays is a very good thing. The design is professional to look at and includes key components such as colour coded services and line diagrams showing routes and journey times. We also use **Omnistop** to insert A4 or A5 sized posters on to our displays promoting the City's 'Night-Flyer' and Park & Ride bus services as well as Traveline."

All at Omnibus would like to congratulate Ian, Richard, Bob and Nicola on hitting their targets – it's not too far to get to the magic 100%!