

OmniSTOP – bespoke bus stop displays at the touch of a button

For operators or local authorities who want to provide accurate timetable information – and what other kind is there? – at their bus stops, OmniSTOP has made quick and easy what was once a time-consuming process.

The beauty of OmniSTOP is that it can show the actual times buses pass a particular stop, and it can do so in a number of ways.

Jon Brierley of Omnibus explained. “We can show a complete listing in time order of all services using a stop. Alternatively, we can show each service separately, again either with lists of times or, on high-frequency corridors, with the service interval.”

Indeed, if the program finds a regular headway service, the text “every 10 minutes” will be displayed rather than list every specific departure. Footnotes are created automatically for journeys that stop short of the main terminal point or deviate from the standard route. This basic data can be supported by a linear map, each route colour coded to ease identification.

A range of formats can be printed to suit different sizes of timetable case – Lancashire County Council, for example, utilise three



different formats. The display can also incorporate other types of information – the operator’s logo (in full colour) and details such as the Traveline contact number.

“Timetables are sales tools,” Jon points out. “An attractive well-presented display gives waiting customers confidence in the professionalism of the information provider, be it the bus operator or their local council. With OmniSTOP it is a straightforward job to produce attractive and accurate stop-specific information.”

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Want to discuss something face-to-face or to learn more about any Omnibus products?

Members of the team will be at two major transport events in 2006, the ATCO summer conference and Euro Bus Expo, and will be ready to answer questions, demonstrate products

– and even provide a chocolate or two!

Omnibus is also holding three User Group days at its Oldham headquarters from Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st September, with each day offering a programme aimed at different audiences. Invitations will be issued shortly.

WELCOME TO OMNINEWS



When Omnibus started in 1991 it was a small business, offering a unique blend of experience to a handful of customers – an understanding of scheduling and an understanding of computers.

Today, with 18 employees and a combined experience of over 300 years in the public transport industry, we have a real awareness of the pressures which operators and local authorities face.

Over the years the number of customers using our products has grown rapidly, and over 20,000 vehicles are running on schedules produced by Omnibus. Our products are used not only by transport operators, but also by many local authorities, and are in use at over 150 locations in the UK and abroad.

With so many users, and with an ever-expanding range of products, we decided it was time to update people with details of the services we offer – services which can make life easier for them, for their staff and, ultimately, for their customers.

And that’s why we have produced OmniNEWS, to provide a concise quarterly roundup of what’s happening at Omnibus.

I hope you find it useful.

Peter Crichton

NEW FACE AT OMNIBUS



Omnibus is delighted to welcome Simon Hall to the team, as Development Manager. Although Simon is a new face at Omnibus, he is most certainly not a new face in the bus industry, bringing with him over 30 years of hands-on operational experience in London, most recently with FirstGroup, where he was IT Manager, Buses.

Simon said: "I've worked with the Omnibus products as a customer, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to help the business develop. There's no escaping the fact that IT will continue to be of growing importance in bus operations, and it's great to be in a company which is at the leading edge of technological progress."

C a s e S t u d y

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

There are 8,500 bus stops in Lancashire and it is planned that by 2008 they will all be showing stop-specific timetable information. It's a massive task, but one which has been simplified through the county's use of their Omnibus products.

"In the last 12 months, since we started using the full capability of OmniSTOP to produce individual timetables, we have increased the number of stops with specific information from around 10% of the total in the county to around 25%", says Lancashire County Council's Ian Barratt.

That is a benefit which is immediately visible to the county's bus users.

OmniSTOP has made this task much easier, Ian Barratt says, and in particular it has been able to incorporate SMS codes for each stop, which will become increasingly important as the SMS system is rolled out to more services.

All of which is a far cry from the established practice of simply posting a timetable showing the entire route, leaving users to work out for themselves when a bus would be due at a stop which was not shown as a timing point.

Behind the OmniSTOP information is Lancashire's use of OmniTIMES, which does much more than just produce bus timetables. OmniTIMES is used to support

the information used by the county's PTI call centre, and the same data set is used by two neighbouring authorities, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, to support their call centres. The OmniTIMES data is also used on the Department for Transport's journey planning website.

"There are big advantages in having one data set from which we can run everything," Ian Barratt continues, "and in being able to work with mapping software too."

There are also wider benefits. Consider the county's Local Transport Plan, where there are targets to provide appropriate levels of bus service to communities of different sizes. With the support of OmniTIMES, Lancashire County Council's transport planners are able to calculate service levels for communities large and small throughout the county, and to then check whether or not the services meet the targets.

OmniTIMES and OmniSTOP have dramatically changed – and speeded up – the process by which Lancashire County Council plan timetables and distribute the information through various agencies utilising a wide range of media.

"I'm very impressed," Ian Barratt concludes. "Omnibus has proved to be a good company to work with. They are good partners."

Moving forward with DAS

Following the acquisition and successful handover of the Depot Allocation System from Excel Solutions, the team at Omnibus are now working to develop the system further.

The Depot Allocation System is an established real time driver and vehicle management product and includes

swipe card technology to enable an efficient sign-on process. In conjunction with the Time & Attendance module, all depot and engineering staff can be effectively resourced thereby allowing companies to focus on the demands of the customer while achieving strict cost controls.

TransXchange

The Department of Transport TransXchange protocol is a new standardised data format intended to smooth the exchange of timetable information between any users such as Operators, Local Authorities and Government departments. Omnibus is pleased to be enthusiastically involved in the development of this technology and can already read and write TransXchange documents.