



Cardiff Bus Engineers Go Digital

Cardiff Bus has equipped its engineers with rugged tablets as part of a digitisation programme to eliminate paper and provide real-time information on workshop activity and vehicle availability. Carrying 100,000 passengers a day on 3,000 journeys covering 27,000 miles, Cardiff run a fleet of 175 buses with 55 electric vehicles; the largest operational fleet of zero emission buses in Wales.

“With our investment in electric buses we’ve bought cleaner air for Cardiff,” says Chris Morgan, Engineering Manager at Cardiff Bus. “Now with introduction of digital working we are bringing new levels of efficiency and standards to our maintenance operation that will keep our fleet in the best possible working order.”

We’re already carrying more passengers with our existing fleet and it’s crucial we continually improve vehicle performance and reduce time in the workshop. The move to fully digital working will play a key role in meeting that objective.”

The Freeway software used for the workshop digitisation has already been implemented in the workshop and is used to schedule maintenance work, manage defects, parts and fuel spend. Cardiff employs around 30 fitters and each have been issued with their own tablet, extending automation from the office to the workshop floor.

Freeway’s mobile web app eliminates paper forms such as job cards and are loaded with DVSA inspection sheets. The devices synchronise in real-time with Freeway’s central system and this gives management a first-hand view of the status of every vehicle, ensuring managers are immediately aware of any issues such as critical defects.

“With the tablets we’re already getting real-time inspection reports so we are much

more informed – and instantly informed,” says Morgan. “One phenomenal feature is that fitters have the complete maintenance histories in the palm of their hand. That helps take away any doubt; they can see what work was done previously, what parts were used and immediately spot recurring defects.”

The Freeway tablets provide another benefit by linking engineering to stores and purchasing that is already managed by Freeway. “Previously determining and then locating the correct part could be very time consuming. Now fitters can see on their tablets the parts required, availability and storeroom location and that’s tremendous,” Morgan explains.

Cardiff is introducing dashboards that provides a live view of all daily work in progress, with a large wall-mounted screen in the workshop office. With visibility of defects reported by drivers, engineers know immediately what needs to be fixed before the morning run-out. “That’s the sort of additional visibility that Freeway offers and really makes a difference and means we can better utilise resources, respond quicker and be more efficient,” Morgan adds.

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Chris Morgan, Engineering Manager at Cardiff Bus

CARDIFF FACTOID

Trolleybuses

Cardiff was once a city of trolleybuses. Numbering 80 at their peak, the trolleybuses operated from 1942 to 1970 having replaced an earlier tram system. They didn’t require tracks like trams which provided flexibility. The Cardiff services were unusual as they had both single-deck and double-deckers trolleybuses to accommodate low bridges. Running on electricity from twin overhead wires, trolleybuses were arguably ahead of their time. Here we are half a century later and buses are moving back to electric!

