

# TECH **i**nspector



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ABELLIO is introducing smartphone and tablet based electronic job-cards. Denesh Ashok, Head of IT at Abellio, explains that the Freeway element is focused on optimising engineering and workshop processes.

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Abellio is extending its use of the Freeway Fleet Management system to provide an additional 120 workshop users with access to Freeway via smartphone and tablet based electronic job-cards.

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## Keeping Tower Transit On Track

TOWER TRANSIT has implemented a new fleet management system to analyse the operating costs for each of the vehicles and routes it operates. The system – from Freeway - also ensures that all business bids are based on achievable and sustainable contract prices.

Carrying almost 120 million passengers a year, Tower Transit's London fleet has increased to almost 450 buses on 24 routes, including 33 hybrid buses and 8 Hydrogen powered buses. The software captures every single cost – maintenance, repair and running costs, and calculates fuel efficiency. These analyses can be broken down by vehicle, by route or by user-specified period, and the results not only indicate underperformance, but also highlight the most cost efficient vehicles and the most profitable routes.

*"Freeway generates reports based on a specified date range, per vehicle model, or per route,"* explains Eddie Street, Engineering Systems Support Manager, Tower Transit. *"The zero emission buses that we operate on behalf of London Buses were put into operation over a complete London bus route, enabling day-to-day testing of the viability of the technology. The system is very responsive, and it's easy to drill down and analyse the data."*

Freeway also captures vehicle servicing and operating defects, and the procurement function enables auto replenishment of parts.



Ray Silcox, Senior Diagnostic Engineer

## Singapore in Transit

Tower Transit is busy implementing Freeway's fleet management solution to analyse the operating costs for each of its vehicles in Singapore. Under the new S\$556 million, five-year government contract, Tower Transit will run 26 services in the Western part of the island beginning mid-2016, progressively increasing its fleet to 500 buses.

Tower will also use Freeway's mobile apps to conduct vehicle inspections. Drivers will use the pre-service check app on their smartphones to conduct their pre-journey walk-around checks, and engineers will be issued with tablets that will facilitate their inspections and allow them to photograph issues that require attention. The data will be automatically uploaded into the system, making the administrative process more efficient and eliminating discrepancies that may arise from manual updating.

Senior Diagnostic Engineer, Ray Silcox, will train a team of 33 engineers and technicians to keep Tower Transit's fleet in tip top condition to meet – and possibly exceed – the strict service standards imposed on bus operators in Singapore. Apart from the servicing and maintenance aspect, Freeway's procurement function enables automatic replenishment of parts.

*"Because of our previous experience using Freeway in London, it was fairly simple to implement the system in Singapore," said Mark Herbert, Head of Engineering. "There are a number of things that make Freeway unique; chief among them is the after-sales support that we've received. Having direct communication with Freeway for technical support has been invaluable."*

## ABELLIO GOES MOBILE

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The project builds on Abellio's seven years of experience in using Freeway to manage and optimise maintenance operations and spares procurement for its fleet of more than 1,000 London buses. The software is already used extensively by more than 100 staff throughout the Abellio bus business at more than 30 separate stores at 6 London depots.

The expansion in the use of Freeway is part of a wider Abellio IT initiative called Project Genesis, which incorporates a number of business processes. The engineering inspection and electronic job-cards link directly with the existing Freeway systems and functionality.

Fitters using the tablet based inspections will be able to carry out tasks that are already scheduled by Freeway and will be able to 'request parts' directly from the Freeway managed stores. Dynamic analysis will be extended to include labour and defect data, and managers will receive additional labour cost reports to augment the automated Freeway stores cost reports that they currently receive.

*"We provide very comprehensive parts management and costing functions to Abellio. Project Genesis will mean we can extend our offering and provide Abellio with complete vehicle costing analysis, inclusive of all labour costs on a per vehicle and a pence per mile basis,"* says Patrick Tandy, Managing Director of Freeway.

Denesh Ashok, Head of IT at Abellio, explains that the Freeway element is focused on optimising engineering and workshop processes. *"We want tablet based inspections to replace paper so that defects are immediately and transparently visible throughout the business. Similarly, we want defect rectification to be instantly recorded via the Freeway application, so that Operations has complete and transparent visibility of engineering activity."*

Owned by Dutch Railways, Abellio London & Surrey operates bus services in central, south and west London and across north Surrey. Its fleet of more than 1,000 buses operates on 44 routes, all of which are run under contract to London buses.

# Freeway / Abellio stores innovations

During the last seven years, Freeway has worked closely with Abellio to deliver numerous procurement innovations for more than 100 users including:

- *E-mail and smartphone based authorisation that provides managers with both visibility and control of all spend.*

- *Extension of procurement processes (order, receipt and invoice matching) from engineering to all company purchasing across 30 separate departments (including health & safety, operations, and training at six separate depots).*

- *Extending e-mail communication to suppliers from simply sending authorised invoices to automating communication related to invoice problems (documenting to the supplier that an invoice is registered for non-payment and the 'reason' that is recorded, such as 'incorrect quantity', 'incorrect value', 'goods-receipt not recorded').*

- *Centralised Invoice-Management (via Abellio's Glasgow based centralised invoice matching facility) for Orders raised at any of the London company locations.*

- *Integrated Document Management with smart scan facilities to rapidly scan and store supplier documentation.*

- *Automating management reporting to designated staff who receive automated reports of daily and weekly spend for each location (summarised by Nominal Code and backed by per-vehicle analysis).*

# Reading maintains a top class fleet

Reading Buses is using Freeway's fleet management system to capture and analyse maintenance and repair data for all its vehicles, which operate on various routes in Reading and Newbury. The software is helping the company to maintain a highly efficient mixed fleet and consistently achieve high maintenance standards.

The bus company eliminates vehicle problems through the Freeway-coordinated inspection programme and service intervals, and by rectifying all defects as soon as they are discovered. The software manages scheduled and ongoing vehicle maintenance, and produces workshop job cards linked to the individual inspection and maintenance histories for each vehicle. Labour costs on sub-contracted vehicles are also captured.

Freeway provides stock control, order management and fleet asset management. It also calculates fuel efficiency; integrating with Reading Buses' fuel management software so that a complete picture of the total running costs per mile for each vehicle make and model is available for the entire fleet. Analysis of all this data can alert managers to any under-performance, and can also provide a cost-based comparison between actual and budgeted costs.

According to Mike Batt, Purchasing and Facilities Manager, Reading Buses, the company was one of the first UK bus operators to install the Freeway transport management system. *"Although not bespoke to us, Freeway has developed right alongside us, adding new functionality to accommodate our evolving requirements."*

*"Reading Buses has used Freeway for more than a decade,"* said Patrick Tandy, Managing Director, Freeway Fleet Systems. *"The bus company's use of the software has developed from managing running repairs for older vehicles to keeping a modern fleet in first class condition. The flexibility of the software is achieved by Freeway's responsiveness to customers' changing requirements, adding new functionality as and when they need it."*



*As our requirements have evolved, so Freeway has evolved right along with us,"* added Batt. *"If you asked me what is it about Freeway that makes it unique, I'd say its flexibility and ability to adapt to our needs. There has been nothing we've asked for that Freeway couldn't provide. That's pretty special."*

## STREAMLINING HCT'S OPERATIONS

HCT Group is employing the latest fleet management technology to capture and analyse maintenance data for all the Group's 500 vehicles - helping managers to maintain a highly efficient fleet and uphold a high level of service for its customers.

The Freeway software keeps track of maintenance, repairs, parts used and running costs for all vehicles within the HCT Group. The fleet, which includes 14 bendy buses, 28 double-deckers, 196 single-deckers, five coaches and 201 minibuses, operates out of ten depots spread across London, Yorkshire, the Southwest and the Channel Islands.

The system builds up a detailed history for each vehicle, enabling management to identify any recurring problems or under-performance. It also calculates fuel efficiency, producing a fuel cost analysis by vehicle, by route or by user-specified period. Such results also provide a cost-based comparison between real and projected costs.

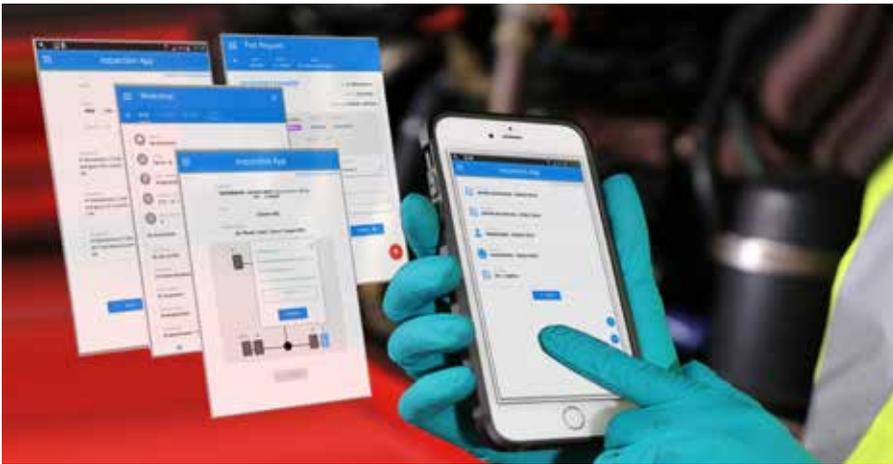
Freeway's fleet maintenance programme enables HCT Group's workshops to plan and schedule routine servicing, inspections and MOTs. The software provides full visibility of the company's existing parts inventory and helps to control the cost of restocking.



*"The information Freeway provides allows for improved management of our vehicle assets throughout the Group,"* said Mike Swan, Materials Controller, HCT Group. *"Freeway correctly allocates costs, and we can track assets and their history."*

*"What makes Freeway unique is its flexibility,"* said Steve Perks, Group Head of Engineering, HCT Group. *"Freeway listened to our business needs and adapted the product accordingly so it meets our requirements."*

*"Freeway's versatility sets it apart from other fleet management solutions,"* added Swan. *"It is also refreshing to work with a software provider who listens to and understands our business needs and tailors development of their programme to meet those needs."*



FREEWAY'S fleet maintenance smartphone apps have been created as an integral part of enterprise level fleet management systems, and include engineer inspections, defect recording, electronic job cards and driver walk-around checks. The apps run on any mobile device, and provide a speedy electronic alternative to paper based inspections.

The simple tick-box style inspection driver app eliminates paper forms and ensures that drivers complete their pre-journey checks properly. By guiding drivers through checks and ensuring good working practice, operators are assured that stringent safety procedures are adhered to, reducing risks.

The detailed engineering inspection app, meanwhile, incorporates methodology, fail criteria and smart defaults. Reporting is live so work can be allocated for action immediately; it is linked directly to a Freeway electronic job-card, which also provides time-sheet recording.

*"Our new apps are not conventional mobile apps, but they are designed to work as a seamless and integral part of the central fleet management system," says Patrick Tandy, MD of Freeway. "As data is entered into a device, it instantly updates the Freeway system for immediate action - such as ordering a part and scheduling work. In effect, we are taking Freeway mobile so more can be done 'in hand' in the workplace, whether it be on site, off site, in the workshop or in the yard. The mobile working eliminates unnecessary paperwork, improving efficiency, productivity and accuracy."* says Patrick Tandy, Managing Director of Freeway.

*"The mobile inspections can be carried out at any location, so no vehicle down-time is required for the inspection. Also, if any critical defects are discovered, there is instant notification to operations, engineering and stores so that any impact on operations can be dealt with,"* Tandy explains.

## Appointments

Alan Willson, a familiar figure in the world of passenger transport systems, has joined Freeway to develop business in the coach and bus sector. Alan has worked at all levels of the passenger transport industry for more than decades, from driver through Depot Manager to Director. Most recently, he has been assisting operators implement sustainable IT solutions that streamline their business processes and improve profitability.

## Events Roundup

### FREEWAY ROADSHOWS

Freeway is organising a series of regional seminars over the next few months and will be joined by technology partners such as Omnibus and WISE. The first venues have been booked in Reading and Manchester – please contact Alan Willson on 02393 877 695 or email alan@freewayfleet.com

### ALBUM Conference 09 – 10 May 2017

The 2017 ALBUM Conference will be hosted by Blackpool Transport at the Hilton Hotel in Blackpool. The main conference sessions and trade exhibition are on Tuesday 9th May and Wednesday 10th May, ending with a gala dinner on Wednesday evening. Freeway will be exhibiting alongside the conference, which this year is themed 'Driving the customer experience'.

### Coach and Bus UK 04 – 05 October 2017

Coach & Bus UK is the new name for Coach & Bus Live and runs for two days at the NEC, Birmingham, Wed 4 Oct to Thurs 5 Oct. Freeway will be showing the latest developments in fleet maintenance software and will be one of 200 exhibitors, with displays of vehicles, technology, and service innovations for the UK market.

## Partnership News

### OMNIBUS

Freeway has agreed a partnership with leading Passenger Transport Software supplier Omnibus (find them online at omnibus.solutions). The two organisations will collaborate on a number of fronts, initially in the joint development of mobile phone and tablet based routines aimed at streamlining daily business processes, such as combined driver sign-on and daily vehicle checks. They will also work on live information interchange in areas such as vehicle availability and location reporting.

Freeway's UK Sales and Marketing Manager for Coach & Bus, Alan Willson, commented *'We are very excited to be working with such a strong industry player such as Omnibus. We already have a very fertile 'think-tank' of ideas based on how we can best streamline business processes, and would welcome engagement from existing and prospective customers as we pursue these.'*

### WISE



WISE Procurement has been appointed as an Authorised Partner of Freeway. The partnership will give Freeway customers access to specialist advice into other technologies such as mobile devices, communications, cameras and telematics. Freeway MD Patrick Tandy (pictured with Phil Murphy on the right) said, *"Phil has a lot of knowledge in complimentary technologies that he can advise on and supply through WISE Procurement, which compares the market for the best deals for fleet operators."*

Recently WISE has undertaken installations of the latest 3G road safety cameras. Designed to reduce risk and improve safety through live monitoring of journeys and instantaneous recording of incidents, the 3G cameras offer Europe-wide roaming, risk management, FNOL, insurance claims management, and driver behaviour reports.

