

# Transport Direct: an audit of the concept: CAP Gemini report

## Caveat for CAP Gemini Report

The creation of a new service, provisionally called "Transport Direct" was announced in *Transport 2010*, the Government's 10 year plan for transport.

Transport Direct will enable people to plan their journeys and to compare routes and prices. It is intended that it will cover all types of transport within the UK - air, rail, coach, bus and car. By 2003 it is expected to include:

- real-time train operating information (that is actual rather than timetabled);
- real-time information on many local bus services;
- multi-modal travel information on the internet, covering road journeys as well as all public transport modes at a single point of contact;
- booking of long-distance multi-modal journeys on the internet;
- development of internet based maps which allow travellers to examine public transport options both for visiting a specific venue and for general travel around an area they are considering visiting.

Earlier this year Cap Gemini were commissioned by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions to validate the Government's proposals for Transport Direct. Their findings are attached. The comments and views expressed are those of Cap Gemini and not necessarily those of DETR and its Ministers.

## Introduction

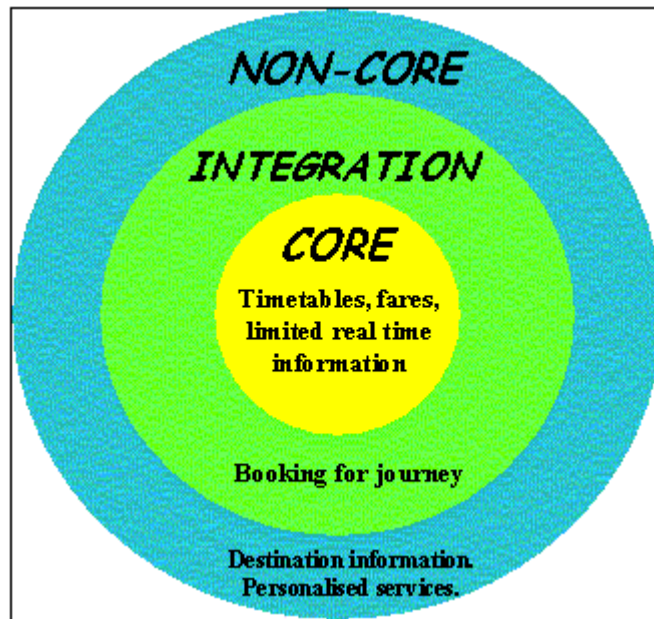
1. A key part of the Government's Transport Policy is the provision of information about public and private transport to enable more informed decision-making by consumers. The 1998 Transport White Paper stated that "Our aim is for a public transport information system to be systematically extended across the country by 2000". The information service in England and Wales is due to commence by the end of July, under the brand name '*traveline*', giving the traveller access to timetables for rail, bus, and coach services, with Scotland to follow in December.

2. The DETR commissioned Cap Gemini Ernst & Young to consider how to build on the success of *traveline* and continue to improve the breadth and quality of transport information available. A UK-wide "comprehensive travel information and retailing service", provisionally titled 'Transport Direct', is seen as the goal.

## Scope of Transport Direct

3. Travellers may consider a wide range of information when planning their journey, including times, fares, information about their journey such as interchange facilities, real-time information (how the service is currently performing), the ease of booking, and destination information such as tourist sites, hotels and restaurants. Considering the priorities of all parties, overall feasibility, and associated technical issues, we suggest that provision of this information might be divided into

three areas, with a **Core** Transport Direct service, **integrated** with booking services provided by others, and scope for **non-core** services provided by third parties.



4. The **Core** Transport Direct service is likely to include times and fares for journeys, both public and private, and limited real time information about the roads (e.g. planned roadworks and current delays) and current performance of public transport services.

5. This will be **integrated** with booking services. The market is already providing these despite technical challenges, and such services, together with new entrants, will be used.

6. Information related to a destination, such as tourist attractions, and personalised services to travellers, such as receiving updates before and during the journey, will be **Non-Core** services. These services may use data bought or provided free from Transport Direct, but will be developed outside of the Transport Direct framework.

7. It is intended that the Core Service should be available though the Internet, and via the *traveline* call centres, in the first instance. Later development of the service should concentrate on delivering information through mobile phones and Digital TV, both of which are likely to develop into important sources of information.

### **Why Government action is required**

8. There are a large number of current projects being undertaken by the market. Travel retailing on the Internet, for trains through TheTrainline.com, for coaches through GoByCoach.com, and air through a number of retailers, is now a reality. Limited integration of major services has happened through a service called TravelFusion.

9. However, we consider it unlikely that the market will develop the Core Service without Government assistance. The cost of collecting data on the scale required will be high, the large number of companies involved means disputes would be likely, particularly in the absence of a shared vision, and the commercial models associated with the sector are immature. Equally, it is important that existing initiatives are not disadvantaged through Government action, indeed the model adopted should encourage the private sector to invest further in this area.

### **Should the Government run Transport Direct?**

10. The nature of government involvement could vary from minimal through to running the service either directly, via subcontractors or through some form of Public Private Partnership. The minimal approach is unlikely to achieve policy objectives as the market in itself is unlikely to combine the current disparate initiatives into one integrated whole. Equally, Government is not best placed directly or indirectly to run this service and such an approach may run the risk of stifling the necessary private sector initiatives. Rather, we recommend that Government should adopt an influencing role, engaging the private sector and encouraging it to invest in the service.

### **Transport Direct Delivery Model**

11. Transport Direct will be built on elements of the structure that are delivering *traveline*. Ten regions, consisting of local authorities and local transport operators, have organised the collection and integration of local data, and the provision of call centres, with capital funding to cover set-up costs from the Government and ongoing costs to be met by local operators. The scale of local data, for example the fact that Greater Manchester has more bus stops than there are rail stations across the whole country, suggests that the regions should continue with their current role of organising and managing local data close to its source. There are also advantages in providing a local service. However, there will be a need for further development, by adding Northern Ireland, possibly by linking to regional structures, and provision of capital for further developments through the Local Transport Plan process.

12. Central direction for *traveline* has largely come through the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), representing the bus and coach industry, and the Government, although other parties have been involved on a Steering Group. The scale of Transport Direct is much wider, and although elements may be retained, we believe it is not appropriate for CPT to continue to play such a pre-eminent role.

13. We envisage that the Government would convene a 'summit' to which stakeholders involved in the provision of public transport information would be invited, including national data providers, national representative bodies for groups such as rail, bus, and air operators, and user representatives. This summit would consider the government's plans, discuss key issues, appoint a Steering Group to take responsibility for delivery of Transport Direct at a national level, and be reconvened on a regular basis to monitor delivery. A suitable individual, ideally with a strong consumer background and respected by the broad transport industry, would act as the Transport Direct 'Champion' and chair the Steering Group. They would be supported by a team of experts, including civil servants and industry experts, possibly seconded from stakeholders, who would take responsibility for delivery of elements of the whole service. The 'Champion' would take responsibility for reporting directly back to Government regarding progress and obstacles.

14. We expect that the Steering Group will need to form a company in order to develop and implement the Transport Direct Core Service, and that this may be a Joint Venture Company. This will help to encourage operators to provide their data for free, overcoming potential problems with Intellectual Property Rights. We believe that selling accumulated data to third parties to develop new and more sophisticated non-core services to consumers could provide some ongoing funding for the Core Service, as could integration with retailing services. However, the Government is likely to be required to provide start-up costs, and further work is required to develop the commercial model. The Government may also want to consider whether it should take a stake in any Joint Venture company.

### **Government Actions**

15. In addition to the specific actions mentioned above, there is a wide range of actions that can be taken by the Government to help shape and deliver Transport Direct. These can be subdivided into **enabling**, **sustaining**, **promoting**, and **regulating** Transport Direct.

16. **Enabling** actions include convening and supporting the summit, and the provision of some funding particularly in the initial stages. Use of the research budget for specific areas such as developing agreed standards, and work around the wider area of public transport, such as the development of journey guarantees, should also be undertaken. In terms of the latter area, uncertainty is one of the main factors that prevent more passengers from using public transport. If a train, bus, or plane does not run to schedule, the traveller does not know how this will affect their service, what the operator will do to guarantee their journey, and whether they will meet any deadlines they may have. The rail industry is already working on a code of practice, intended for publication in the autumn, to cover some of these points. We believe that the Government should work with the wider transport industry to encourage them to follow this lead in producing and publishing codes of practice. On top of a basic provision, the provision of insurance, for example to give guarantees for time conscious travellers, should be encouraged.

17. It is intended that the Transport Direct service should become significantly self-financing within 5 years, but even after this we believe the Government is likely to have a **sustaining** role in terms of monitoring the service. Prior to this, recurrence of summits and careful monitoring of costs will be required.

18. The Government will have a key role in **promoting** the service, initially within the transport industry to sell the idea. In terms of promoting the initiative directly to consumers, we believe that Government should work with the Steering Group to develop a marketing strategy that will allow both parties to use their strengths. Government actions should include the establishment of the brand, with early consideration as to whether the name 'Transport Direct' should be used, and the use of Government machinery, including ministerial announcements. A dedicated marketing team with a budget should work for the Steering Group to establish the brand with the public, a process that is usually, however, neither quick nor cheap.

19. Where possible, Government actions in **regulating** the service should be informal, as legislation will imply the failure of co-operation. There are gaps in the requirements of service operators to provide information, but these are likely to be plugged through the inclusive process of building the Steering Group, and the interests of the operators of having their data in a national service. The UK Online portal, currently being developed as part of the e-government initiative, will have a travel related Life Event called 'Going Away' to which Transport Direct should be an important contributor. The rules for inclusion on this are currently being developed, but should provide some level of regulation. Particularly important will be the rules on impartiality between service providers. Another element of regulation will be reports on the accuracy and efficiency of the provided service. We recommend that targets around these areas be adopted, though they should be framed to take account of demand peaks and the need to fully establish the service.

20. Transport Direct is well-aligned with the principles behind **e-government**, namely building services around citizen's choices, making Government and its services more accessible, ensuring social inclusion, and using information better. Indeed, although Transport Direct deals with information that is not predominantly owned by Government, it could provide a useful test-bed for e-government.

## **Outline Timetable**

21. The table below provides a provisional timetable for the development of Transport Direct, in terms of what will be delivered and the main actions of the Government, covering the first half of the Ten Year Plan period. Such a timetable must be regarded as provisional, pending further discussion with stakeholders. Although there are specific issues with the provision of some parts of the service, such as fares, technology in general is not a barrier and the pace of development means that the targets should be regularly reviewed.

Year	Delivery	Government Actions
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Times for rail, coach, bus services through call centres (<i>traveline</i>) in England, Scotland Wales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of Transport Direct within industry</li> <li>• Appoint 'Champion'</li> <li>• Summit of stakeholders</li> <li>• Further work on commercial model</li> </ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>traveline</i> on the Internet</li> <li>• Links to existing retail sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources, money and personnel</li> <li>• Develop brand</li> <li>• Monitor <i>traveline</i> costs</li> <li>• Overcome obstacles</li> <li>• Development of relevant standards / Pilot demonstration projects</li> </ul>
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information available, for example air times, real time information</li> <li>• Integration with Retail sites</li> <li>• Service available on mobile phones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued resources</li> <li>• Monitor progress</li> <li>• Marketing strategy</li> </ul>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service extended to include maps, post codes, fares</li> <li>• Service available on Digital TV</li> <li>• Integrated ticketing starting to develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion to public through ministerial announcements</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Resource commitment starting to dwindle</li> </ul>
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature, comprehensive and comparative service for all modes</li> <li>• Private sector using data to provide additional services to public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul>

### **Achieving Integration**

22. The biggest risk to the success of Transport Direct is that of the scale of the initiative. There are a large number of players in the market, each of whom will need to co-operate. It may not be immediately apparent to some stakeholders what they have in common with others. A significant part of the Government's actions in the early days of the initiative must be to promote the idea, and gauge the views of the private sector. Another key task will be to identify the 'Champion', will need to work hard to maintain commitment once appointed.

23. We believe that this key risk can be overcome, and Transport Direct as described achieved through a combination of private sector and Government actions. In this, and in the development of improved transport information, it will be a logical follow-up to traveline, and an important part of wider transport policy encouraging modal shift.