

**March 2008**

**What's the best way to travel in London and York? An innovative new project will help show the way to go.**

The Technology Strategy Board, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and the Department for Transport have contributed £3.1m towards funding project "Freeflow".

Over the next three years, Freeflow's team of industry experts, academic researchers and transport network operators will be changing travel, by turning traffic data into transport intelligence. Freeflow comprises Transport for London and City of York Council, as demonstrators of the innovation provided from ACIS, Kizoom, Mindsheet, QinetiQ, Trakm8, Imperial College London, Loughborough University and the University of York. Together these partners have contributed £2m of their own funds.

Freeflow is a pioneering initiative aiming to develop tools for managing and optimising road networks and, at the same time, informing and guiding travellers around these networks. Existing techniques for handling data are not capable of managing the whole network proactively. A key element of Freeflow is therefore to allow traffic managers to develop intelligent "situational awareness" of all aspects of their networks.

By actively sharing this newly-developed awareness with travellers using new services such as Travel Angels and in-vehicle systems, Freeflow gives a powerful tool for managing transport by influencing demand directly.

Situational awareness is not just a transport problem: telecommunications, the military and stock market companies already use new tools to build better awareness of situations from their data and make valuable and informed decisions from it.

Freeflow's specific objectives are therefore to:

- Understand what traffic managers want from "intelligent decision support" and how the public can then benefit;
- Develop new data from currently under-used sensors like CCTV;
- Uniquely, bring military "situational awareness" tools that go far beyond "data" we collect now;
- Measure effects on network performance in York and London;
- Understand and solve the technical requirements for new services;

For road users specifically, Freeflow aims to assist them in knowing what is happening, why it is happening, what will happen next and what action they can take to make things better for them.

Iain Gray, Chief Executive Officer of the Technology Strategy Board said, "The goal of efficient and cost effective transport is an important for our society. This combination of technologies and capabilities is a truly novel way to address a problem that affects all of us."

ACIS is one of the leading providers of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) solutions within the Transport Industry with a wealth of experience in the intelligent transport technology sector. ACIS is proud to be an innovative partner in providing the intelligence and delivery of UTM compliant data for FREEFLOW.

Professor John Polak, Director of the Centre for Transport Studies Imperial College London says "We are delighted to be part of this exciting consortium, which will be working at the leading edge of transport network management. It gives us the opportunity extend our work in network state estimation and prediction into real time control and to evaluate its benefit operationally."

Kizoom, a leading provider of advanced transport information delivery systems, will be using Freeflow to enhance its next generation Travel Angel platform, "Freeflow brings together key academic and industrial expertise to break new ground in real-time travel information" says CTO Nick Knowles

Loughborough University's team led by Prof. Sameer Singh at the Research School of Informatics brings expertise in computer vision and fusion based tools to develop software for generating intelligence from video content. This will provide traffic managers with further real-time information on traffic status.

Mindsheet specialises in helping organisations develop breakthrough solutions in highly complex environments. We will focus on new ways to influence transport by providing situation information to travellers. Raglan Tribe, MD of Mindsheet Ltd said, "We are delighted to make a difference by addressing some of the most challenging congestion spots around the UK."

QinetiQ is a leading international defence and security technology company. Within Freeflow, QinetiQ will be developing its Decision Desktop technology to enable traffic managers to achieve situational awareness of urban transport. Peter Baynham, MD of QinetiQ's Command & Intelligence Systems Division said: "QinetiQ is delighted to be a key partner in Freeflow and to demonstrate how technology originally developed for the military domain can be successfully transferred to the civil sector and transport in particular."

Trakm8 Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Trakm8 Holding PLC based in the UK and operating in the vehicle Time / Distance / Place market sector.

Trakm8 supplies and licenses its GPRS based GPS vehicle hardware, enabling software and information management platforms both directly to end road user customers and through selected distribution partners.

Alan Bristow director of traffic operations at Transport for London said "We are delighted to play a leading role in the project, TfL see this as a key step in making the most of our existing technology investment and offering joined up services to travellers in London"

Professor Jim Austin, of the University of York's Department of Computer Science, said: "We are proud to be involved in such a visionary project. It will enable our pattern analysis technology, Signal Data Explorer, to find events in traffic data and suggest new traffic control patterns. This is a major opportunity to work in a new field with potentially high impact and use."

City of York Council's UTMC Project Manager, Darren Capes, said: "Freeflow represents an exciting opportunity for the City, and by building on our successful UTMC system will help us meet our vision of using intelligent transport systems to deliver an improved travel experience to residents and visitors to the City.

#### Notes to Editors

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the government. Its mission is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).