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Paul Oakley, Manager - Information Services Division, Merseytravel



Customer's Challenge

Merseytravel is the operating name of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and Executive - a public sector body responsible for co-ordinating public transport in Merseyside through partnership initiatives with private bus and rail operators. Its aim is to deliver a fully integrated, high quality and environmentally friendly public transport network that meets the needs of Merseyside's travelling public, while also providing value for money for its local tax payers.

As far back as 1995 Merseytravel was exploring the opportunities to incorporate “smartcard” technology into its services as a means of delivering a seamless travel experience for passengers. Paul Oakley, Manager - Information Services Division, Merseytravel, explains, *“We had taken a keen interest in the development of smartcard technology, but a number of factors converged at one time that gave us a strong driver to exploit its advantages. In particular, we needed to update our database of elderly and concessionary travel pass holders and we were also due to review the security features of our 'flash' passes to address known security issues.”*

Fujitsu's Solution

Following an extensive competitive evaluation Merseytravel awarded Fujitsu a four year contract to develop, implement and manage a Smart Enabled Ticketing (SET) system that could be used by local elderly and disabled citizens to travel on any trains, buses and ferries in the Merseyside area.

“We were buying a technically complex array of products and services, so we wanted one organisation that had the necessary project management and integration skills to take responsibility for the delivery of all of the solution's components,” explains Paul Oakley. *“We chose Fujitsu because it clearly demonstrated an ability to pull together and shepherd some market leaders and important players in the smartcard arena. It also has significant expertise and a proven capability to host and manage the service.”*

As Merseytravel's prime contractor Fujitsu is providing a range of services, including system integration, application and database hosting and management, and support services, including a helpdesk. The solution also includes the provision of smart ticket media from Magnadata, bureau services for the personalisation and mailing of new smart tickets provided by ESP Systex, and a Card Management System (CMS) developed by Applied Card Technologies to track transactional usage of card data.

The smart tickets have a chip inlaid that will make journeys on public transport much quicker and easier. For example, where travel gates are installed at stations on the Merseyside underground the chip will eventually allow citizens to open them automatically without needing to request assistance.

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation
Merseytravel

Service/s delivered
The development, implementation and management of a Smart Enabled Ticketing (SET) system for use by elderly and disabled citizens to travel on any trains, buses and ferries in the Merseyside area

Key Metrics
250,000 elderly and disabled citizens

- Benefits**
- **Improved customer service** - the entire ticket issuing process has been re-engineered to meet passenger needs
 - **Increased efficiency** - new travel tickets can be produced automatically using a modern database of pass holders
 - **Enhanced security** - travel tickets combine traditional “flash” pass and smartcard security features
 - **Greater flexibility** - the system can be easily scaled-up or extended to incorporate more users or new services
 - **Less risk** - Fujitsu's centralised management ensures performance targets are consistently achieved
 - **Improved cost effectiveness** - costs are minimised by the sharing of resources and are entirely visible and predictable
 - **Complete protection** - all smartcard systems and customer data is fully protected by stringent security.

Paul Oakley continues, *“The scale and quality of the resources Fujitsu brought to bear were impressive and it managed them extremely effectively. The suppliers working with it are best of breed, but in size, track record and experience they simply don't match Fujitsu. So, an important part of Fujitsu's stewardship was providing an umbrella of stability. If we'd had to manage several different contracts the risks of things falling between suppliers would have been very high.”*

In the first six months of operation over 70,000 smart tickets have already been issued, and so the project is firmly on target to have new tickets issued to all of Merseytravel's 250,000 elderly and disabled customers by the end of the second year. Within four years a second issue of the tickets will have been completed, with a total of 500,000 smart tickets being distributed to local citizens.

“Our concessionary customers find change particularly daunting,” explains Paul Oakley, *“so we deliberately avoided a 'big bang' launch. Instead, using Merseytravel and Fujitsu's expertise, we very carefully designed a process by which each person now receives a new smart ticket when their old travel pass expires on their birthday. This has proved to be a very successful strategy as it is perceived as a very positive change by our customers.”*

“The fact that we have successfully delivered well over 70,000 passes without incident is a validation of the design and preparation that went into the solution. Our clearly expressed requirements were addressed robustly by Fujitsu. Within 18 months we will have a critical mass of smart-enabled cards, which will provide a firm basis for moving forward and helping to achieve Merseytravel's vision of an efficient and integrated public transport network that is accessible to everyone.”

Benefits to our Customer

The Smartcard solution provided by Fujitsu is providing Merseytravel with a number of major benefits:

- **Improved customer service** - the entire ticket issuing process has been re-engineered to meet passenger needs
- **Increased efficiency** - Merseytravel now has a modern database of travel pass holders, including photographs, so that new travel tickets can be produced automatically
- **Enhanced security** - new travel tickets incorporate both the built-in security features of traditional “flash” passes, such as holograms and heat sensitive spots, and the inherent security of smartcard technology
- **Greater flexibility** - compliance with ITSO standards means the system can be easily scaled-up or extended to incorporate more users or new services
- **Less risk** - Fujitsu's centralised management and use of proven processes and procedures ensure performance targets are consistently achieved
- **Improved cost effectiveness** - operational and maintenance costs are minimised through the sharing of resources and infrastructure and service delivery costs are also entirely visible and predictable
- **Complete protection** - all smartcard systems and customer data is fully protected by stringent security.

In the future Merseytravel could reap a number of other benefits including:

- **Improved resource allocation** - with more accurate and timely recording of transport usage by citizens

- **Faster revenue distribution** - payments to private bus, rail and ferry operators can be rapidly verified and distributed, based on recorded service usage
- **New service opportunities** - the solution has the scalability and flexibility to be extended to other groups of users, such as students, or to incorporate other value-adding services.

Neil Scales OBE, Chief Executive and Director General, Merseytravel, says, *“We're working with Fujitsu to ensure our citizens receive the best possible service, while also contributing to the efficient, cost-effective operation of Merseytravel. Not only will this new smart card technology help attract people to public transport, it can also support a variety of other types of applications. It may help reduce the number of cards in peoples' purses or wallets and provide them with a secure, mobile identity that they can use to access to a variety of different services.”*

Our Approach

Fujitsu has created a unique Hosted Smartcard Service that allows authorities to operate any kind of smartcard application for any size of population - without investing in hardware, software or technical specialists. The service is based on ITSO standards for interoperable smartcard ticketing across local authorities, transport operators and government and so can be used across different transport applications, as well as other card applications, such as leisure, parking and libraries.

At the heart of any ITSO installation is a Host Operator Processing System (HOPS) that processes card transactions and manages the assets of the scheme. The Fujitsu solution provides a fully compliant ITSO-registered HOPS service in a secure Datacentre that has capacity to accommodate other schemes, enabling any authority to quickly create its own highly responsive, secure and reliable smartcard scheme, without the cost and risk of creating a dedicated HOPS environment.

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council has already signed up for this service with Fujitsu. Wendy Reddington, Smartcard Project Manager, Bolton Council, says, *“Fujitsu's offer was completely transparent, with a guaranteed price and no hidden costs. We knew exactly what they were promising to deliver, and they have delivered it.”*

The Expertise

With over 30 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

“We saw it as important to be working with a partner that was shaping the future of smartcard solutions and Fujitsu has lived up to our expectations,” says Paul Oakley. *“It is a major player in smartcard technology with considerable technical resources and a particular ability to field and proactively manage a team of innovative, best of breed suppliers.”*

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