

Date
4th November 2010

Our ref. ORR-FWIT 01
Your ref.

Mr Michael Lee
Director, Railway Planning and Performance
Office of Rail Regulation
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Copy: Mr Robin Gisby
Director, Operations & Customer Services
Kings Place
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Dear Sir,

ORR Investigation of Network Rail's Introduction of a Train Planning System

We are writing to clarify a number of points about TrainPlan, one of the legacy systems referenced both in the Network Rail letter of 26 July 2010 to you (ITPS-NR-letter-260710) and in your report (ITPS-ORR-report) both of which are available for public download from your website. We feel that the references to TrainPlan in the relevant document create an unfortunate impression which has already caused some concern with our client base, and would like to put our concerns on record.

Our company, Funkwerk Information Technologies York Limited ("Funkwerk"), actively markets the very successful TrainPlan product worldwide. Network Rail states "In short, the legacy systems were old, expensive to maintain, cumbersome to use and prone to error" and then go on to identify TrainPlan as "the legacy train planning tool". This creates the misleading impression that TrainPlan is obsolete and not fit for purpose in a modern train planning environment (a point actually stated by Network Rail on page 8 of their letter to you: "As we have already stated, it is clear that the legacy train planning systems were no longer fit for purpose"), which causes damage to our business.

The version of TrainPlan in use by Network Rail was indeed an old one, originally supplied to Railtrack by Funkwerk under its previous name of Comreco Rail Limited, and subsequently developed within that organisation and subsequently within Network Rail. However, its implementation was handicapped by many of the same issues of communication and conflicting priorities which appear (from your report) to have dogged the implementation of the new system, ITPS. However, notwithstanding problems in the environment in which it operated, including the need to interface with other disparate systems that did not have TrainPlan's inherent robustness, it did operate successfully for a considerable time.

What Network Rail fails to make clear in their letter to you is that they chose to cease taking upgrades and enhancements to TrainPlan with effect from 2006, that is, at the outset of the ITPS implementation process. As your independent expert has highlighted, the timetables selected by Network Rail for implementation of the new system were ambitious to put it mildly but, even so, contemplated that the existing systems would have to support the planning process for some years. In the circumstances the decision to allow TrainPlan to become essentially unsupported was entirely a choice made by Network Rail which must have compounded their problems and which is not an inherent fault in the software.

As a result, we would like you to be aware that TrainPlan in and of itself is an entirely suitable train planning tool for modern rail environments. TrainPlan can already provide functionality and features that were originally cited as the justification for moving to ITPS and they have been successfully deployed in numerous organisations around the world in recent years. The choices made with respect to the version of TrainPlan implemented by Network Rail and their characterisation of those choices in documentation which is now open to public scrutiny gives a partial and misleading impression of this software, and we would be grateful if you could allow this correction to set the record straight on these points on your website.

Yours Sincerely,

Funkwerk Information Technologies York Ltd

Ian Brown
Managing Director