

THE INFORMED TRAVELLER

The one overriding mandatory condition imposed in the planning of timetables for the whole of the rail industry is the demands made by the Informed Traveller initiative.

This is a licence obligation imposed on the industry and is very keenly overseen by the Rail Regulator.

In March 1995 the Secretary of State for Transport Dr Brian Malwhinney (at the time, he was also MP for Peterborough East) wrote to the chairmen of the British Railways Board (as it was then) and Railtrack expressing concern at the quality of the timetable data and the late availability of it, particularly at weekends when there is a lot of engineering work.

He looked for urgent action on monitoring data quality provided to passengers at stations, through Telephone Enquiry Bureaux (TEBs) etc., etc., and demanded that data MUST be available TWELVE weeks in advance.

Secondly, he demanded better presentation of information and clearer signing at stations, better PA systems and, thirdly, distribution of all data to all interested parties on time and at minimal cost to external bodies (i.e. free of profit margins!).

For Operational Planning this means: -

- ROBUST data to be available 12 weeks prior to date of travel to customers. This means that all retail systems used by NRES and Train Operators' staff must be up to date.
- EVERY train schedule to be in TSDB on EVERY occasion. If all the data is in TSDB then all the extracting systems get the same data (consistency!).
- ROBUST data in TSDB all the times. Remember G.I.G.O - Garbage In = Garbage Out.
- All timetable data to be available for dissemination by ELECTRONIC means e.g. internet timetables.

To meet the needs of Informed Traveller is relatively easy in the production of the permanent timetable plan because it falls nicely within the production schedule for the NRT, WTTs etc., but there is a need to ensure that the target is met for those passenger trains affected by Bank Holidays and Weekend Engineering.

Engineering Planning and the Informed Traveller

- Condition **A3** of the “**Network Licence**” requires Network Rail to provide access to information . . . all such changes to the national timetable . . . 12 weeks prior to the date such changes is to have effect. Amended train details are passed to Retail and Customer information services at T-10 to enable seat reservations

Informed Traveller Process

- T-26 weeks is the confirmation of the disruptive possession plan. (in 4 weekly chunks as the Confirmed Period Possession Plan).
- T-18 Bids from Train Operators.
- T-14 Offers back to Train Operators.
- T-12 Upload to TSDB.



