

Simon Beasley, RBC, talks about the benefits of interoperability

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RBC is a good practice site in the POLITE project. Can you tell us about the UK initiative UTMC (Urban Traffic Management and Control) and how RBC has benefitted from it?

Urban Traffic Management and Control was a UK central Government initiative started in the late 1990's with the objective of making traffic control systems 'plug and play'. Reading became involved in year 2000 when they became one of four UK demonstrator sites for UTMC and has since then retained a role in UTMC development. UTMC has been widely adopted by over 100 authorities across the UK and it has achieved its objectives in delivering interoperability between systems. Reading has directly benefited from UTMC and is now operating integrated network management strategies using the full range of network management tools available, such as for major event management. A key element of Reading's UTMC system relates to public transport including the integration of bus and rail. Reading uses highway network and public transport data to inform travelers through internet based facilities.

Four other partners from across Europe are going to learn from the policies and practices of RBC within the POLITE project. What chances do you see for transferability of RBC's best practices and in what areas do you think they will be most needed?

We see the lessons learnt in the development of open systems and standards being very transferable particularly in delivering public transport information. There are real opportunities for the benefits of open systems such as UTMC standards to be shared if the take-up sites see this as a way forward. We see that a key area is the ability to use the otherwise separate management systems in a more integrated way to cost effectively improve the level of service given by transport authorities for the travelling public and for more efficient movement.

Are there still some challenges remaining in front of RBC and do you think the cooperation within POLITE with external to the partnership regions will help RBC to solve them?

Technology is always changing and there are significant developments on the horizon such as cooperative vehicle highway networks which UTMC standards will need to evolve to encompass. This project represents an excellent opportunity to work with partners from across Europe to explore the future of public transport and help guide the continuing development of open standards and specifications across the EU.

What is the expected added value of the POLITE project for the citizens?

We see that the POLITE project will directly lead to improving Reading's public transport policies which in turn will lead to an improved public transport experience with improved journey time reliability and traveler information.