

ITS: putting the consumer first

Since the 1980s when the UK's infrastructure began to struggle with heavy road use and pollution, and increased urbanisation meant new highway constructions were less viable, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) have been developed and implemented across the country to provide solutions on both a national and local level.

Whilst the benefits of ITS are clear – more efficient travel, less pollution and fewer accidents – high front end capital expenditure often needed for deployment can mean a long wait for the green light, as authorities debate the budget expenditure. Major infrastructure schemes can be delayed by lobbying as consumers fail to understand the medium or long term benefits. Another common misconception is that implementing ITS is extremely costly.

In fact, the use of existing infrastructure makes initial set up and subsequent management costs surprisingly low but to win fans, the ITS industry needs to focus on developing consumer-friendly technology, ensuring the schemes introduced improve the daily lives of



commuters. For example, Payzone's mParking system, removes the need to carry change, allowing consumers instead to pay on-street parking fees via their mobile phone and a pre-registered credit or debit card. A text reminder of when the parking ticket is due to expire can be requested to help prevent penalty fares.

Providing a range of purchase and payment options also helps ITS appeal to different groups of society. Payzone offers a wide range of ticketing options including e-vouchers, mobile phone ticketing, travel cards, and web ticketing. For many of these new transaction processes, building familiarity on a local level helps introduce similar schemes on a larger or national level.

Convenience and accessibility are also important factors in making ITS acceptable

to consumers. Prepaid networks like Payzone are now offering consumers the option of buying prepaid tickets, paying congestion charges or declamping cars at local convenience stores across the UK and Ireland.

Finally, whilst the benefits of ITS may seem clear, it is important to ensure they are conveyed to the general public. For consumer-driven ITS to be successful, public communication needs to be at the forefront of schemes to create positive opinion, build momentum and help the successful and seamless introduction of new services.

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