Charity news from the Transport Benevolent Fund CIO
INIT makes generous donation to TBF

Every Christmas, worldwide subsidiaries of INIT's parent company, INIT AG Karlsruhe/ Germany, each make a donation to charity, with TBF the chosen recipient for 2015.

Our photograph shows the £3,000 cheque being presented to TBF development director Ian Barlex (right) and TBF regional organiser Michael Gibson (left), by Jens Mullak (centre), managing director of INIT Ltd, at the company's offices in Nottingham, in December.

Ian Barlex said TBF was grateful that INIT had selected the Fund to be its beneficiary charity this Christmas.

He added: "This generous donation will assist us in our work, supporting public transport workers and their families at difficult times. The continuing relevance of the Fund's work is best illustrated by the volume of awards to members, which has exceeded £500,000 in each of the last two quarters."

Jens Mullak said that as a socially responsible company active in the public transport industry, INIT highly appreciated TBF's work and was pleased to support it.

INIT Innovations in Transport Ltd is the UK subsidiary of INIT AG, the worldwide leading supplier of integrated ITS, planning, dispatching and ticketing systems for buses and trains.

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At INIT we have brilliant developers, but rather than evolving five different interfaces it's far more intelligent for them to focus on just one, and make it work really well. This in turn frees them up to concentrate more on innovation – for the benefit of ourselves at t, our customers, transport operators, and even the end-users, the passengers themselves.

THE KEY FUNCTION OF ITXPT IS TO ACT AS A TECHNICAL PLATFORM FOR TESTING & VALIDATING THE PLUG-AND-PLAY IT SYSTEMS DEVELOPED? WHY IS PLUG-AND-PLAY SO ESSENTIAL?

It's all about making time and cost savings by removing the need to configure new systems when adding them to a vehicle, i.e. along the same principle as slotting a memory stick into a computer to instantly access its content. Plug-and-play systems integrate public transport, and share information sent by all stakeholders involved in the bus journey.

At INIT, when we have a new customer, a new project, our first step is to check all the existing hardware, to examine the plugs and cabling on board to find out if we can use them as they are, what we will have to adjust, etc. And the hardware is never plug-and-play. In other words we have to develop, install, test, adjust, and so forth. This process takes a lot of time, effort, and, of course, costs money.

WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING IN ITS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORLD AT LARGE?

In everyday life, outside of public transport, IT systems are becoming increasingly the norm. For

example, a decade ago, touch interfaces were very rare, or unusual, as were smartphones. Then came the iPhone, since when the touch interface has become a must-have. However in public transport, touch screens and smartphones, for example, are developing more for passenger-orientated applications, e.g. information, ticketing, etc. They serve to create points of contact with passengers, to align the sector with their everyday habits as citizens of today's digital world.

Having said that, at the professional end of public transport, i.e. back offices, management and operations, the traditional way of doing things with a 'normal' desktop computer and keyboard still exist, simply because the interface is more practical, e.g. for filing a report on a traffic incident, and so forth.

However for our customers, modularity of on-board equipment is very important. What they want is easy integration of equipment from supplier A, supplier B, and supplier C.

HOW IS BUSINESS FOR INIT? HAS THE RECESSION MADE AN IMPACT?

Overall, I would say the economic downturn hasn't had a marked effect on the company because we are active across the globe, e.g. from Nottingham (U.K.) and Avignon (France) to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). There are always ups and downs in markets at any given time.

A new development for us in recent years has been the ticketing segment for public transport in North America. This is quite surprising because the systems used to be rudimentary. But for some reason they are now adopting

e- and mobile ticketing. So this market is really growing for us, as is Asia, where we are interested in developing business ●

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