



▲ The Omnibus team always stands out at the NEC

Come and say hello at Euro Bus Expo

Euro Bus Expo, NEC, 1st–3rd November 2016
Stand T144, Technology Zone

Visitors to our stand at Euro Bus Expo will have the first chance to fully explore the all-new version of our market-leading bus stop display software OmniSTOP. Our developers have completely re-written the software, giving users infinitely more freedom to create bespoke displays quickly, easily and with much more flexibility. Users can now do everything themselves, with total control over styles, fonts, graphics, colours and even paper size, meaning bus operators can dictate exactly how they wish to present their brand identity.

Our depot allocation system OmniDAS has new features, including the newly enhanced driver communication app myDAS Touch. The Omnibus team will also be on hand to talk about the possible data implications of the Bus Services Bill.

There will also be a new member of staff to introduce. Adam Stephenson recently joined the company as Business Development Manager from The TAS Partnership. His first project was to re-design the Omnibus website in time for the Show.

“As always, we are looking forward to greeting visitors to our stand this year – old friends as well as new – attracted by the various exciting software developments that we are showcasing.”

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus

More about the myDAS Touch

Since we launched the myDAS Touch app at last year's Coach & Bus Live, we have made some significant enhancements, which we are proud to showcase at Euro Bus Expo on stand T144 in the Technology Zone.

The app is an integral part of the OmniDAS driver self-service myDAS module, linking drivers directly with the OmniDAS depot allocation system. myDAS Touch allows drivers to access all their own details, including rota and holiday details, from their phone whilst out and about, or from other devices when at home. Drivers can use the myDAS Touch app, or the company intranet, to view their upcoming shifts,

as well as used and available holidays. They can also submit requests for holidays, shift swaps and overtime. The secure myDAS Touch app can be installed on all iPhone and Android smartphones.

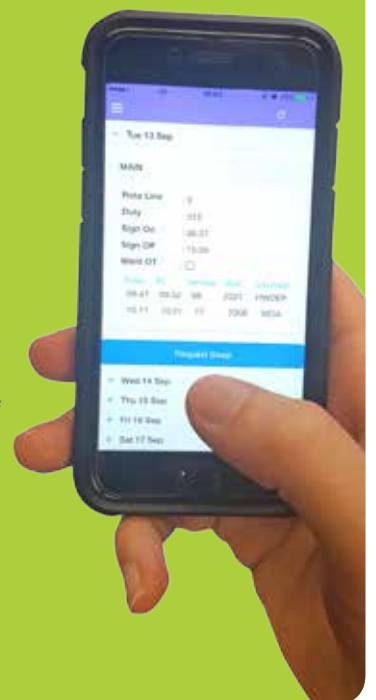
Over the last year we have worked closely with customers to develop the facility whereby staff use their operator's own intranet to access their information, which means current OmniDAS users now have the option to access myDAS via their own intranet or through the myDAS Touch app.

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus, comments: “Since the launch at the NEC last year we have enhanced myDAS Touch based on customer feedback.

These enhancements are making depot allocators' lives a whole lot easier and giving drivers a greater level of control over their own shifts and personal information.”

He continues: “myDAS Touch is giving drivers easier access to their own data and enabling them to communicate with their depot from wherever they are. The driver no longer needs to be at the depot to see what is going on at work; it is all there with one touch on their phone. myDAS Touch is releasing allocation staff from everyday questions and the administration of driver requests, enabling them to concentrate on getting drivers on buses.”

Omnibus has capitalised on the popularity of smartphones by developing the driver app myDAS Touch ▼



GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME WITH OPEN DATA



Although the exact content of the Bus Services Bill has yet to be finalised, it is certain to contain guidelines on the management of open data.

While for many operators the prospect may be daunting, one Omnibus client is already ahead of the game, even though they are a Welsh organisation and therefore not affected by the Bill.

Omnibus has developed a process for handling fare data and cross-referencing it with timetable data for Traveline Cymru. Working with Traveline and SilverRail, Omnibus developed additional functionality within OmniMAP which will benefit all operators looking to fulfil their legal obligations with regard to the provision of open fare data.

It is a widely acknowledged fact that handling fare data is highly complex for many reasons. Operators are understandably wary of publishing fare data electronically, as it can lead to use by third party apps that are beyond their control. Fares are frequently changed at short notice, in response to market conditions or competitor changes, meaning that data may be out of date.

An added complication is the wide variety of ticket machines in use that manage fare data, each one with its own data exchange format. To add to the complexities, fare data is often managed by different staff and not always cross-referenced to timetables, so different bus stop codes or names are used in the different systems.

Despite the challenges, Graham Walter, Managing Director of Traveline Cymru, was keen to be a “trailblazer” in this respect. Omnibus worked with him and his team to add fare data into the Traveline Cymru journey planner. To meet the needs of all types of ticket machine, Omnibus developers devised a “standard” spreadsheet format, and also built a software tool to assist the process through which the user can ensure that all geographic routes are associated with the correct fare stages.

The existing publishing mechanism will be adjusted as necessary in line with any secondary legislation to ensure that our customers are fully compliant. The software therefore will have been developed, tried and tested ready for customers when they need to start publishing fares as open data, as required by the Bus Services Bill.



“It has long been an important goal for us to provide our customers with precise bus fares for any journey, rather than just referring to Operator websites. We started work on this project in 2011, but it wasn’t until we joined forces with Omnibus in 2014 that we were able to really capitalise on available technologies. Omnibus really understood the challenges we faced as an organisation and have been tenacious and diligent throughout so that now we can quickly and accurately process new fares data and subsequent changes.”

▲ Graham Walter at Traveline Cymru was keen to be a “trailblazer” in the management of open data

The Bus Services Bill – are you ready?



Although the Bus Services Bill is still going through Parliament, one thing that everyone seems to be in agreement with is the release of open data on routes, timetables, punctuality and fares.

A timeline has been released for this process, with a deadline of Autumn 2017 for the registration of timetable and route data information, and for fares and punctuality to follow by 2020.

To help operators to navigate the Initial proposed requirements, of the Bus Services Bill, Omnibus is issuing a special edition of OmniNEWS purely on this subject.

It will contain an overview of the progress of the Bill so far, a timetable of key events and a case study of a client who is ahead of the game and how they have achieved the electronic management of their data.

Everyone who receives OmniNEWS will automatically receive a copy. Anyone not on our mailing list can pick up a copy at our stand at Euro Bus Expo or by registering via our website

www.omnibus.uk.com

Lost in translation?

Omnibus has conducted a 'refresher course' in the use of the company's software for Reading Buses, after the bus operator recruited additional resources for their scheduling team. Although the new staff were familiar with Omnibus software from their previous roles, it was felt that they would benefit from more training in how to use it most effectively to meet Reading Buses' needs.



▲ Omnibus is providing training at Reading that explores new, more efficient ways to use the software's full capabilities

Martijn Gilbert, Chief Executive Officer of Reading Buses, stresses the importance of continuous training: "It is a hugely worthwhile exercise because so often we are unaware of the full capabilities of software that we use every day. The training that Omnibus is providing actually goes beyond 'how we do things at Reading' and explores new, more efficient ways to use its full capabilities. An investment in a day or two of training is well worth it and reaps huge rewards."

The training is tailored to each user's current knowledge, the systems that are in place and the objectives of the operator.

Michael Meilton, Business Development Manager for Omnibus, comments: "Because Omnibus software is in such widespread use, many people in the industry have experience of using it in previous jobs but need a refresher course to apply their knowledge to their new position. Also, new members of staff may be given an overview of the system by someone who has used it for years but is not fully aware of exactly how powerful the software is, and often features can get lost in translation. There is always so much more that can be done, if users are aware of the full capabilities of our software packages. A good knowledge of how to use the tools is key to unlocking the potential in our software."

A HUGE THANK YOU...



▼ Cariad met Frozen's Elsa and Anna and a whole host of other Disney characters

Three years ago Omnibus issued an appeal to help raise money to send a very special young lady on the trip of a lifetime. Omnibus employees Michael Meilton and Jeremy Howat went on a fundraising trip from Land's End to John O'Groats (via Ipswich) by local bus services, supported by a very generous bus industry.

Jeremy's daughter Cariad wanted to raise money for Make A Wish Foundation to give desperately ill children and their families memories to treasure forever. Cariad has Spinal Muscular Atrophy, a challenging and life limiting condition. So, the team at Omnibus wanted to grant her a second wish – to go on holiday with her parents to Disney World.

In August this year, both of Cariad's wishes finally came true, although things didn't quite go according to plan. Because Cariad is unable to sit up, flying presented a genuine risk to her. So a new plan was hatched – to go to Disneyland Paris by car via Eurotunnel.

It was Cariad's dream to meet Anna and Elsa from Frozen. Due to their popularity they don't usually do 'meet and greet' events, but suffice to say, strings were pulled and through the generosity of certain Disney people something magical happened and not only did Cariad meet Elsa and Anna but a whole host of Disney Princesses came to say hello.

Jeremy comments: "Cariad's trip went far beyond anyone's expectations. Everyone we met went out of their way to help, both during our epic fundraising voyage and in getting Cariad to Disneyland. On behalf of Cariad and Make A Wish I want to say a big thank you to everyone who helped make it happen."

Because more money was raised than that which was needed to cover the cost of Cariad's trip, the Howat family are making preparations for Cariad to present Make a Wish with a cheque for over £3,000.

The Omnibus ethos translates to OmniDAS for Preston Bus

Preston Bus has been using Omnibus scheduling software for many years to manage its fleet of 93 buses and 200 drivers. So it was a natural step to have the data feeding from OmniROTA directly into OmniDAS.

The operator had been using Excel spreadsheets but, as John Asquith, Regional Operations Manager for Preston Bus, explains, adding OmniDAS immediately freed up time for operational matters. "We now have all our time and attendance data in one place and drivers simply sign in with everything there ready," says John, "so the supervisor is then free to deal with day to day operations."

OmniDAS was a straightforward choice for Preston Bus, because the company liked the way Omnibus looked after its customers. John explains: "We feel valued as a customer. They develop long term relationships and whenever we need their assistance they act in a timely and totally professional manner."

Preston Bus drivers are also now benefitting from having direct access to their personnel files and are able to log holiday and shift change requests through OmniDAS. "It's another bonus of using the Omnibus software" says John.



▲ Preston Bus is now feeding data from OmniROTA directly into OmniDAS

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