RailBusinessDaily

Be better informed this winter

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KeTech has written an article on its Passenger Information System. More details here:

“Ah, the British weather. The nation’s famous obsession, kickstarting most conversations here in the UK. Research shows that Britons spend around 4 months moaning about the elements (hot or cold), but can you blame us? The unpredictable nature of the weather in the UK regularly disrupts our lives and with winter on its way, its only about to get worse.

The winter months bring with them the magic of Christmas and New Year, however delayed trains and overcrowded stations can put a bit of a dampener on it. Unfortunately, the clever people here at KeTech can’t control the weather – we’re not that good. However, we can control the communication between Train Operators and passengers during disruption. KeTech’s Passenger Information System isn’t your run of the mill system.

It’s really important to understand the effects the winter weather has on trains and the tracks they run on. The transition from Summer to Autumn is one many people enjoy. Falling leaves are serious business for Operators though, and leaves on the line are not a flimsy excuse for your delay, a build-up of leaves on the tracks create a barrier between the train wheels and the track which isolates the train from the signalling system that help pin-point where trains are, causing delays for the trains behind. Leaves on the line also

make the tracks very slippery, comparable to black ice on the roads. Network Rail prepare for this season all year round and spend millions trying to minimise delays for passengers, however a lack of education or communication around the subject can make passengers feel frustrated when they experience delays.

Leaves on the line aren't the only thing that can cause delays, as winter progresses throw in some strong winds, heavy rainfall, debris, power cuts and flooding – all of which can take weeks to resolve and all of which result in the same outcome, delays.

It is not unusual for trains to be delayed and for passengers to have no insight as to why. This can cause frustration, confusion or even panic amongst passengers. Transport Focus reported (2019) that only 44% of passengers are satisfied with how TOC's deal with delays. This issue is reported to be a key driver for customer dissatisfaction, along with reliability being a key driver for customer satisfaction. Passengers often receive conflicting information from different media sources regarding delays and disruption. This causes passenger irritation towards TOC's poor performance and erodes their most basic trust in the industry. To maintain satisfaction, passengers want to be kept informed, reliably. KeTech know that the industry as a whole can achieve better through working collaboratively towards a collective goal.

The UK rail industry often receives publicity for all the wrong reasons. Industrial action, signal failures, delays and overcrowding etc. Although it can seem that the rail industry is lagging behind other sectors in terms of innovation; some TOC's are being proactive and are fast adopting digital technology in order to streamline customer experience.

On the 9th of August 2019, nearly one million people across England and Wales were affected by a power cut. The outage was caused by two failed power stations, resulting in disruption on most of the UK's rail network and leaving many train passengers stranded. One TOC, however; received praise for their handling of the situation; LNER's InterCity 225 Trains delivered contextual and live journey information, providing passengers with clear, consistent and meaningful, advice, which was updated, even during the power outage. It may not have been good news, but it was news which kept the passengers aware of the duration of the delays and the impact on their journeys. These trains are fitted with KeTech's Passenger Information System.

KeTech's cloud-based Passenger Information System aggregates real-time data and delivers live updates to passengers via on-train displays every few seconds, displaying dynamic journey information, journey progress, calling points, Darwin delay reasons with estimated durations, along with live departures at the approaching station, intermodal travel information, short platform information, passenger loading information, automatic Delay/Repay Compensation Information, scheduled Future Engineering Work or Events Notices, Marketing Information, the very latest news and local weather – in multiple languages and much more. It is the only system in the UK proven to use a secret blend of full Darwin[1] data for sourcing real-time train running information and delay reasons with estimations, alongside other real-time location data sources.

LNER passengers praised the KeTech's Passenger Information System on Twitter, as the system provided real-time, contextually aware updates and information about the delay i.e. 'This train is delayed by approximately 286 minutes due to electrical supply problems.'

Delays from things we cannot control are not just prevalent in the UK. In Australia, frequent electrical storms, flooding and bushfires, delay hundreds of passengers and damage infrastructure each year. Here at KeTech we can help, through working collaboratively with our Australian partners, Omada Rail Systems. Omada are experts in Rail Signalling and Telecommunications systems, with extensive knowledge of the rail infrastructure in Australia. Together with KeTech's leading real-time Information Systems, we can bring communication and customer experience to the next level and improve the Journeys for millions of Australia's traveling public.

With an increasing amount of conflicting and incongruous information available through differing media platforms, KeTech's Passenger Information System truly stands out with its precision and clarity. The Passenger Information System facilitates passenger empowerment, allowing them to make informed decisions. Transport Focus reported the highest customer satisfaction rates derived from a number of TOC's that depend on KeTech's Information Systems. Most notably, LNER saw an increase of 10% for National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) results: Train Facilities – Provision of Information During the Journey within a year of installing KeTech's Passenger Information System onboard their fleet.

KeTech's Passenger Information System is different. It's intelligent. It goes one step further. KeTech's Passenger Information System knows what to display and when to display it – even when diverted, running fast or calling short, it allows for remote announcements without the need for GSMR. TOCs can now further supplement automated Delay Information, by sending ad hoc messaging such as alternative travel advice or disruption images, only to those services affected, in real-time.

KeTech's Passenger Information System can be provided in a number of different variants. A "light touch" system comprising cloud-based Passenger Information System software with 21.5" Digital on-train Displays, which only require power and ethernet for connectivity; a semi-integrated system, which extends the light touch version by interfacing with train doors and the Public Address System; and a fully integrated version, comprising cloud-based Passenger Information System software and on-train software for integration into third-party Passenger Information System hardware, onboard legacy or new fleets.

KeTech's pay-as-you-grow philosophy also enables TOCs to deploy one cloud-based Passenger Information System and connect existing infrastructure and new fleets as required.

Why not better inform your customers and improve their experience during disruption today?"

Click here for more details.

[1] Darwin is the Great Britain rail industry's official train running information engine, providing real-time arrival and departure predictions, platform numbers, delay estimates, schedule changes and cancellations. It is the only system in the UK to take feeds directly from every TOC customer information system (CIS), combining it with train location data provided by the railway infrastructure manager, Network Rail.

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