

Rail Delivery Group moves to industry-first cloud-based system to improve the smart ticketing infrastructure for rail

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Rail Delivery Group (RDG) has completed its back office migration to the **Unicard** HOPS (Host or Operator Processing System) solution that will support smart ticketing for all train operators in Britain. RDG back-office delivers smartcard services for the wider rail industry. The RDG says transition to digital ticketing is important for the rail industry, with more and more customers opting to use them over traditional paper tickets.

The innovative solution offered by Unicard is described as a highly resilient system with transaction processing and reporting capabilities. It is a cloud-based platform that supports smart-ticketing solutions for multiple train operators rather than a traditionally hosted of the power used being renewable and is the first of its kind in the rail sector.

The new system will allow operators to streamline the processing of smart tickets and transactions, and monitor passenger journeys and customer behaviour.

Simon Moorhead, Chief Information Officer at Rail Delivery Group, said: “The rail industry is committed to driving innovation and improving customer experience. By providing more robust and reliable supporting systems, we’ll be able to ensure that the ongoing transition to digital ticketing is smooth and seamless for our customers.

“Flexible smart ticketing infrastructure provided by Unicard not only enables us to meet present customer demands with agility but also has the potential to accommodate other forms of smart ticketing in the future.”

Sean Dickinson, CEO of Unicard, said: “The migration to a cloud-based HOPS marks a significant milestone in our ongoing relationship with RDG to modernise the GB rail sector’s smart ticketing infrastructure. We’re looking forward to working closely with RDG, train operators, and other ticketing providers to improve service delivery and the passenger experience. Unicard’s heritage in ITSO and working with transport operators and local authorities throughout the UK will allow us to support a more joined up approach to public transport across rail and multi-modal services. As well as the ability to make continuous improvements to the passenger experience of ITSO ticketing. Unicard supports RDG’s commitment to driving innovation, creating a set of common standards and making rail travel easier.”

The Unicard HOPS is a centralised system instead of a traditional on-premises data centre that had 16 individual back offices for each train operator. The multi-tenanted HOPS makes it quicker and easier to set-up new configurations, onboard new train operators, and track smart ticket data and transactions.

The new HOPS is designed to be more efficient and auto-scaleable, which means it can handle the increased workload during peak times and will deliver a more reliable smart ticketing infrastructure for . With scalability built in, train operators will be better equipped to accommodate future growth and customer shift to digital ticketing. It is also future proofed for third party retailing and mobile based ticketing.

The standardised solution makes it quicker and easier to set-up new configurations and, if required, onboard additional train operators. It is also a secure solution that tracks smart ticketing data and transactions, providing full visibility of all activities via a single user interface helping the industry tackle fraud on the rail network.

The HOPS migration is part of the wider RDG Smart Ticketing Hub (STH) programme, the focus of which is to support the rail industry with its shift towards digital ticketing. Other parts of the STH programme include projects to enable contactless bank card acceptance on rail, the Pay As You Go tap converter service and smartphone-based ticketing.