

The power of 'Quartz' to help Greater Anglia reduce delays

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A new rail industry tool will help Greater Anglia to ensure more trains depart on time at stations across its network.

The train operator is using a new piece of software called Quartz – an online programme, commissioned by Network Rail, which helps train operators and their staff to better understand the performance of trains at individual stations and even at individual platforms.

The system filters through thousands of streams of data to quickly and simply present to-the-second punctuality of trains at any chosen station or any chosen platform.

It can even flag to staff when and where issues are occurring – such as a train regularly spending too long at a platform – so that they can take steps to find a solution.

The system uses data that is already being gathered from monitoring points that have long been installed in the railway infrastructure to tell train operators how trains are performing.

The new Quartz software then makes this easily accessible and understandable for anyone and provides a level of detail – down to individual platforms and / or the time of the day – that was not previously possible.

Keith Palmer, Greater Anglia's Head of Performance and Planning, said, "At Greater Anglia our performance team has over 50,000 lines of data coming in from the monitoring system about train performance every single day, with punctuality being reported for every station a train arrives at, passes or leaves, which is built into reports so that the business can see where improvements need to be made.

"Quartz will help us to take this to a new level – making information instantly available in an easy to understand dashboard format so that any member of staff can simply log in and get all the information they need, when they want it, to make meaningful changes at their stations to improve punctuality for the benefit of our passengers."

Greater Anglia has just started to get to grips with the new system but hopes that they will soon see successes in identifying and resolving problem areas to reduce the number of delay minutes experienced by passengers.

The software developers – Amey Consulting – have already used the system to improve performance elsewhere.

At East Croydon station Quartz identified that platforms 3 and 4 were the main causes of delay. Upon further investigation it was found that this was a result of staff being overstretched during the very busy peak hours.

As a result, six additional full-time staff were added, resulting in a 40% decrease in daily delay minutes.

Teddy Chadd a Senior Consultant at Amey Consulting said: "I have visited stations all across Greater Anglia's network and I have been hugely impressed with the station staff I have met and their wish to improve their railway and get customers home on time. Everyone I have met is thrilled about the information that Quartz gives them and I am excited to see how Greater Anglia use this tool to reduce delays across their services.

"In the last four weeks alone Quartz has provided a huge wealth of information for performance analysts and station managers alike to delve into and generate improvement ideas. We have seen this type of station-focused performance really make a difference to the way that stations are managed for the passengers elsewhere on the rail network."

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "We all know that a second here and a second there can very quickly add up to a long delay on the rail network. That's why we're using Quartz to identify where time is being lost, second by second, so we can fix these issues and ultimately keep trains on schedule."

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