

Transport Systems Catapult Media Release PR06-14

FAO: NEWS & TRANSPORT EDITORS

Transport Systems Catapult Press Release 27th November 2014:
Response to Intercity East Coast Rail Franchise Award

For immediate use

Transport innovation chief welcomes innovation boost for rail franchise

As the Government announces its intention to award the Intercity East Coast rail franchise, the Transport Systems Catapult today highlighted the importance of investing in technology and innovation to significantly improve the passenger experience.

The Transport Systems Catapult – the UK technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility – welcomed the increased commitment to innovation the companies had to make in their franchise bids.

Steve Yianni, chief executive of the Transport Systems Catapult and former Technical Director for Network Rail said:

“If we are serious about improving people’s experience of train travel, we need to harness emerging technology to make journeys easier, faster, and cheaper. We are delighted that innovation is now an essential part of what companies include in bids to win rail franchises.”

“Imagine a smartphone app which tells you where vacant seats are on a train before you board, or an app which scours social media to identify potential delays and gives you options to avoid them before they happen. This kind of technology will transform how we travel.”

“We’re working with the Department for Transport to pioneer innovative new ways of using technology to make journeys much better for passengers – improving the availability of train information, using social media to understand their concerns, and designing smarter stations.”

The Transport Systems Catapult (TSC) is supporting the Department for Transport (DfT) Rail Executive to increase the levels of innovation and intelligent mobility within the franchising system. This includes developing specific innovation requirements for prospective franchisees and creating a new Innovation Strategy to ensure that innovation remains a permanent priority within the franchise system.

Overall, the ‘Innovation in Rail Franchising programme’ aims to stimulate world-class innovation and promote the adoption of intelligent mobility within the rail industry.

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Notes to editors:

Transport Systems Catapult

The Transport Systems Catapult is the UK's technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility, harnessing emerging technologies to improve the movement of people and goods around the world. We are here to support business growth, increase the UK's share of the global Intelligent Mobility market, and attract investment – creating jobs and generating long-term economic growth.

We will help sell UK capability on the global stage, while also promoting the UK as a superb test bed for the transportation industry. With a clear emphasis on collaboration, we are bringing together diverse organisations across different modes of transport, breaking down barriers and providing a unique platform for meeting the world's most pressing transport challenges.

The Transport Systems Catapult is one of an elite network of not-for-profit technology and innovation centres established and overseen by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK. All Catapults obtain their funds from a combination of core Innovate UK support and competitively won business and public sector funding. In addition, the Transport Systems Catapult is receiving substantial funding from the UK's Department for Transport.

For more information, please visit www.ts.catapult.org.uk

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