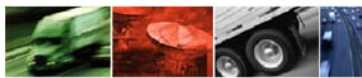




# In Print

from



Web based Vehicle Tracking & Mobile Data Solutions

ISSUE 4  
Spring '07

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## welcome

... to the spring edition of **Concepts-In Print**, the vehicle tracking newsletter from **Concepts-Online**. This issue we've been looking at the controversial topic of pay-as-you-drive that's received so much news coverage recently, and asking what the alternatives are? On a similar note our 'top five' looks at some of the imaginative claims our system has uncovered with mileage expenses, and our new concept this issue is a simple fleet management system that will help companies keep a close eye on how far and well their vehicles are running, and more importantly, when something needs to be done to maintain them. All in all, quite an orderly and consistent theme for the issue - a one off feat we're sure!



The procedural details of fleet management has never been one of those subjects that people have been desperately interested in, or followed with any real passion - its not for example going to win you any 'most interesting topic of the evening' awards at office parties. It is however something that's essential to any business that's supported by a fleet of vehicles, and as such has been a topic of particular interest of late to all here at **Concepts-Online**.

One of our aims when developing software has always been to create something that is intuitive and simple to use, and that can help make the jobs our customers do easier in any way possible. To this extent we've been paying close attention to fleet micro management. Anyone running their own vehicle will know that keeping track of service dates, vehicle mileages, MOT due dates and lease agree-

ments is a daunting task for just one vehicle, let

alone an entire fleet. Each regulation and agreement that must be kept in mind is like the cog of a machine (*hence the reason for the graphic!*), failure to look after one cog can result in that vehicle unexpectedly being put off the road, losing a valuable resource.

The **Concepts-Online** Fleet Management tool is a facility that constantly assesses the status of your vehicles. By determining the distance your vehicles have travelled and the date of previous payments, the system can calculate the proximity of each vehicle to its next service, MOT, road fund tax payment, and lease expiry.

Freely incorporated into our next program update, not only will you have all the information needed to manage your fleet available at the click of a button, but the system can be set to text and email you reminders of exactly what is forthcoming and when. The only thing we can't do is drive your wagon down the road to the garage - everything else we've got covered!

## new concepts

## CONTACTS:



Stamford House  
57 Liddon Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 2SR

Tel: 0871 750 3004  
Fax: 0871 750 3002

info@concepts-online.co.uk  
www.concepts-online.co.uk



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# case study:

## Buildbase CIVILS & LINTELS

**Buildbase Civils & Lintels is a specialist division of one of the UK's fastest growing builders merchants, Buildbase, the winner of the Best National Builders Merchant award 2006. The company formed as a union of long established local companies, experienced in serving the needs of local trades people, and has at its core a mission to offer exceptional reliability and customer service. As a customer of Concepts-Online we've been to the Erith branch to see how our software has helped Buildbase to achieve these goals.**

The Erith branch of Civils & Lintels provides a comprehensive range of drainage and heavyside building materials to the construction industry. With a dedicated fleet of crane off-loaders, the branch acquired tracking from **Concepts-Online** in an effort to maximise the cost effectiveness and efficiency of their vehicles when making deliveries to customer sites.

Lee Upton, Erith Transport Manager, uses the program everyday to manage his drivers, and told us how he has been taking advantage of the program. "We didn't really have a problem with our own drivers before, they accepted that vehicle tracking was coming without any trouble, because we explained that we were installing it to help make the most of the fleet, not to 'spy' on the drivers... if they were doing nothing wrong then they had nothing to fear". "Because we're so busy we've had to get in agency drivers to meet the demand. Where its really made a difference and benefited me is with the guys that I don't know and that are new to the job. There's been times when I've been sat looking at the map and had the driver on the phone guiding him right in to his drop. It means you know you can keep to the schedule even when you've brought someone in that doesn't know the area well".

The Erith base has recently started to use the driver logging function, so that they can tag a driver to a vehicle and then move him as and when he changes wagons. The branch can then evaluate the performance of the driver rather than the vehicle, and calculate whether employing additional agency staff has been profitable, or can identify where the shortcomings can be found. Branch Manager Clint Ormston was also full of praise for the system. "You know

exactly where your vehicles are all of the time, so you've got complete control over how you manage them. You're constantly informed of how closely you're sticking to the schedule - if you're going to be late to a customer site you can phone in advance or, where we can, if a driver's going to be delayed we send the nearest vehicle to cover the job. It all helps build a good reputation for customer service - something we're proud of at Buildbase.

**Buildbase  
CIVILS &  
LINTELS**



Clint was equally encouraging about the financial benefits of the system and its future use at Buildbase. "I know that some of the branches that are yet to have tracking installed are certainly taking note and looking into it. At the end of the day it costs us nothing to run the system... knowing exactly where our drivers are and where they can get to means we can take on jobs that previously we'd have had to pass on... even if a wagon was just round the corner, because we didn't know where they were. Now we get the benefit of making that extra delivery, easily covering the cost, and much more on top... so why wouldn't you consider tracking?" - so far evidence of a job well done by **Concepts-Online**.

[www.buildbase.co.uk](http://www.buildbase.co.uk) [www.civilsandlintels.co.uk](http://www.civilsandlintels.co.uk)

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# meet the team

...the issue by issue guide to our essential personnel.

## Dave Ward - Business Development Manager

**Biography:** Dave has been working in vehicle tracking since 2002, and at **Concepts-Online** since the summer of 2004. Prior to this Dave enjoyed a long career in sales management, allowing him to bring with him a wealth of knowledge and skills that have helped us to develop our customer base.

**Aim:** to provide the same high level of customer service and satisfaction that he would like to see replicated by companies in all walks of life.

**Personal:** Dave lives near St. Albans, where he spends his free time pursuing a love of music and cricket, playing golf, cycling and holidaying with his family anywhere that's hot. Dave very kindly provided a considerable amount of extra information for this section including favourite films, books, albums, modes of transport, shoes, beverages and types of tea, all of which can be made available to those interested on request!

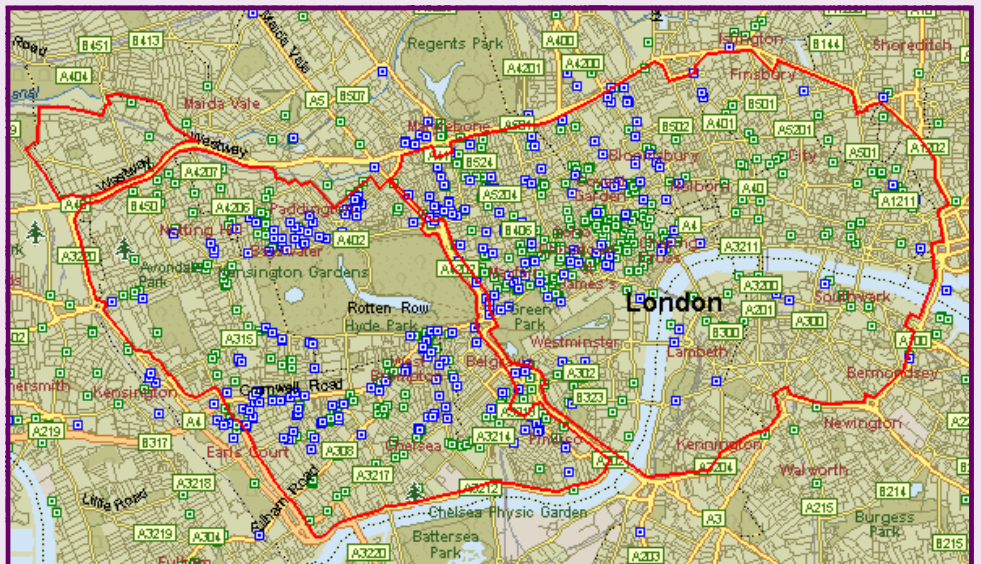


## system update - congestion zone expansion

Those travelling into London regularly will undoubtedly have noticed that, as of February 19th, the Congestion Zone has been extended west. Among others, areas now covered within the zone include Chelsea, Notting Hill, Knightsbridge, Waterloo and Mayfair.

The daily hours of operation have been shortened by 30 mins (now 7am - 6pm), and the zone also now incorporates a number of routes that enable vehicles to travel through the zone during charging hours without paying.

All of these updates have been programmed into the **Concepts-Online** software, and will have been automatically downloaded onto your PCs for no extra charge.



## new customers

We would like to welcome...



water for work

**KINGS COURIERS**

**D. ARMSTRONG LTD**

**BROCKWELL & SONS LTD**



...as some of the new members to join our growing community of **Concepts-Online** users since the last issue.

**contact us:** If you would like to comment on anything you've read in this issue, or wish to make a contribution towards future issues, please email: [adrian.hallam@concepts-online.co.uk](mailto:adrian.hallam@concepts-online.co.uk)

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## ...imaginative claims on mileage expenses.

**FIVE.** A number of drivers have been caught claiming for additional mileage when they've been on an appointment and made a quick detour to pop into the shops on the way home. - Not too many companies would have a problem with this minor infringement, however, the case of one driver adding 84 miles to his journey to go shopping did get bosses talking. May be the driver felt he should be entitled to claim for enough miles to pay for the shopping as well as the journey there!

**FOUR.** Taking the long way round. In the case of one driver adding 40 miles a day at 40p a mile to the most direct route. - Something quite difficult to detect until the advent of vehicle tracking. Liking the scenic route is always going to be a difficult corner to fight when you're up against a cost cutting boss!

**THREE.** Making up an appointment to claim the mileage. - Quite a brave scam this because you don't have to make up too many appointments before someone notices your average sales per appointment ratio is slipping. Making a few extra quid on the mileage doesn't get the ego going quite as much as being top of the leader board!

**TWO.** One company has observed that a certain driver has a particular interest in travelling to Baldock services for his lunch, regardless of where his daily schedule should take him, and then claiming the extra mileage to get there. - Obviously there's something on offer at Baldock we're not aware of, either the hotel or the range of food available is too good an opportunity to miss!

**ONE.** The most audacious mileage claim we've heard of is the case of two drivers meeting up and sharing a vehicle to work each morning and then each claiming the expenses, amounting to thousands of pounds over the years. This wouldn't have been noticed without the aid of vehicle tracking as both workers reported on site in the morning and put in a full days work. Certainly an ingenious scheme, and one the company has since adopted with just a slight change - the guys just get paid the once now and the company saves the cost!



## industry news

The most notable story of late in the transport industry must be the plans to introduce Pay As You Drive (PAYD) schemes to the UK, in an effort to reduce congestion and harmful emissions, by convincing us all to make more journeys using public transportation. Such a

scheme would raise approximately £28bn a year by charging up to £1.34 per mile travelled, with these funds then being pumped into bolstering the transport network.

The proposal, originally outlined by former Transport Secretary Alistair Darling in 2005, and since re-visited by current Secretary Douglas Alexander, has recently received a very public revolt as more than 1.5million signatures were gathered on a petition against the scheme - proving so popular that it crashed the Prime Minister's website! In light of this the government has pledged to review PAYD before any further action can be taken.

What is obvious, however, is that doing nothing to reduce the number of vehicles on our roads is not an option for the future. Congestion is expected to increase 25% by 2015 and 40% by 2025, so clearly something must be done to try and resolve the problem.

The question here then is which of the schemes on offer would the public put their support behind? Of the alternatives suggested to PAYD to date all present some form of monetary deterrent to us using our vehicles, whether it be an above inflation rise to fuel duty and road tax; a road toll system; or a network of London style congestion zones.

And if charging is the only solution we can think of, how will this ripple out and affect our quality of life elsewhere? Undoubtedly increased congestion will lead to problems with delayed deliveries, but then increasing the cost of transport drives the cost of goods upwards. Either way, its evident that we will all be paying more, by some means, for our road usage in the future.

Sources: BBC ICM DfT

