

Concepts-

In Print

welcome...

to the summer edition of **Concepts-In Print**. This issue we're looking at how we've been teaming up with other software providers to offer links into our program that should make your life easier, we're taking a look at the skip hire industry, and we've been talking to our engineers to find out exactly what's involved with swapping equipment from vehicle to vehicle. We've also got our regular introduction to a team member, our take on the recent fuel crisis, and our new employee of the month feature. A reasonably full issue then, and yet we managed to get it to the printers before the summer sun starts - mind you given the British summer we could be waiting for September before the sunshine makes a guest appearance!

new concepts - software links

Here at **Concepts-Online** we're always looking for new ways to improve our software to benefit you. In the past this has involved adding new features to our software, such as text messaging, fleet management and the journey timeline. This time we've tried a new approach: linking our program into other software applications running on your desktop.

A considerable portion of our customers will be familiar with a program called bisTrack. For those of you that don't know it, bisTrack is a program from Progressive Solutions designed to aid building industry suppliers. The software helps distributors to manage sales, control inventory levels and monitor business transactions. And now it tells users exactly where their vehicles are, thanks to a link with our tracking data.

For sales teams using bisTrack it means that logging in to an order, and seeing which vehicle the order is on is no longer a separate process from finding out where a vehicle is. Now users can view

the progress a vehicle has made in completing that days job manifest, in the same window as the bisTrack system information. A handy feature for keeping customers up-to-date with pending delivery times, identifying spare capacity to fit in an extra delivery, and ensuring the smooth running of the delivery fleet.

With a bit of work we've been able to make a fantastic product from progressive that little bit better, by linking our two services.

So what's next? At the moment we're looking into linking with a device from Redforge, a company that weighs the load on a vehicle's axels. And after that? Well as ever we're open to suggestions, so let us know what you think we could do to make your day at the office easier.

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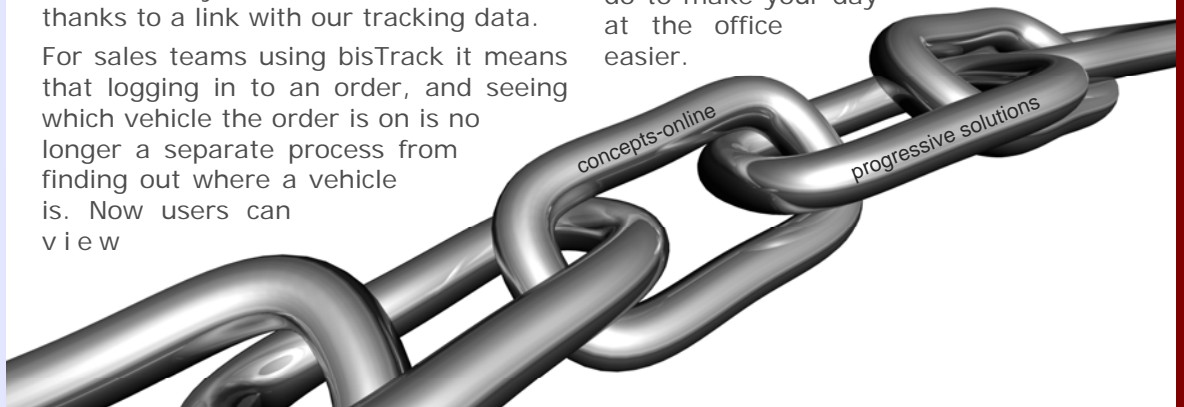
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indu stry in focus

SKIP HIRE

A new feature to our newsletter is the industry in focus segment. In previous issues we've concentrated on one customer to see how they make the most from our software. The 'industry in focus' segment will look at some of the features that a number of different companies from the same industry use, to give us an idea of what works well for them, and what could work well for you.

At Concepts we have a number of different skip hire companies as customers, putting our vehicle tracking solution to good effect. Here are some of the features that make a difference to their business:

PTO Monitoring - Several skip hire companies have opted to monitor power take off devices as part of their tracking solution. This enables users to observe when devices such as skip lifts are being activated, and monitoring the number of skips delivered and emptied. Reporting activity here has proven most useful in cutting out 'extra-curricular activities' where employees have been performing a little extra work on the side - if your manifest says 10 jobs and you see the lift operating 12 times, you know that someone is out making money, but not necessarily you!



- Increase vehicle efficiency
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Maximise profit
- Reduce unauthorised work
- Minimise carbon emissions
- Make the most of **Concepts-Online**

ZOI Alerts - A number of companies have reported the benefits of using ZOI alerts as text messages. Not only does this let you keep an eye on progress, and keep customers apprised of their ETA, but if you can squeeze in one more job a week, you won't be hearing any complaints from the accountant.

There's also the peace of mind from knowing that when workers are on a job and you're not in the office, receiving a text message to say all vehicles are home safe and sound can be most reassuring.

Idling Reports - One of the most useful features to the skip hire trade is the idling report. We know of a number of companies that use the results of this report as a competition amongst employees to see who can have their vehicle idling the least amount of time. If one hour idling equates to 1 gallon of fuel, there's plenty of incentive to cut back on fuel wasted, and helping reduce CO2 emissions is never a bad thing.



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Browser History

Whether you use the **Concepts-Online** browser or Internet Explorer, the web has a host of information that can make running your transport department more productive, more efficient and less costly. Every issue we'd like to recommend a website that might help your business, and this time its www.petrolprices.com. The site allows you to find the nearest source of cheap petrol to your postcode, which could end up saving you a pretty penny or two off the price of a litre.

Its also worth taking a look at our website www.concepts-online.co.uk. We've just added a customer link page, which, as the name suggests, links you to our customers, so you can see who is using our software, and what they do to earn a living. If we've missed you off the list, or if you'd be willing to link to us from your website, please get in touch.

Vehicle De/Re-Installations

As time goes on transport fleets change, cars and wagons are replaced, and vehicles are damaged in accidents. All of which results in you needing to have a new vehicle fitted with a tracking unit, most of the time this entails removing one of your existing units and re-installing it in a new vehicle.

So what's involved? Our engineers travel nationwide visiting customer sites and vehicle manufacturers to recover equipment from existing vehicles, and then re-install that equipment into new vehicles.

Is all of the equipment re-used? This largely depends on the vehicle type and where the equipment is fitted in the vehicle. It can sometimes be more cost effective to fit a new antenna and leave the old one in place, rather than spending hours of intricate work retrieving a relatively inexpensive piece of kit.

What are the costs? The costs of a 'de and re' vary from vehicle to vehicle, due to the nature of how the equipment was installed and how much of the equipment can be retained for future use. The mitigating factor for cost, however, is the amount of notice we receive to schedule the work. With plenty of notice we can plan well in advance and limit costs. With little notice, for example letting us know after the vehicle has been sold, we have to pull engineers off planned jobs and redirect them to your location, with obvious cost implications. The moral of the story? - the more notice we get, the cheaper the cost to you.

Is it a dangerous process? No, not to a trained engineer. But to anyone that doesn't know exactly what to do there are dangers - the process involves tinkering with the ignition after all, so perhaps best its left to the experts!

Engineer's Report



meet the team

Adrian Hallam -
Customer Support Manager

Biography: Adrian joined Concepts shortly over 2 years ago, after graduating from Lancaster University. It is his responsibility to monitor customer accounts, provide training, and offer advice on how you can best use our software.

Aims: to respond quickly and purposefully to any customer needs, ensuring our high level of service and satisfaction is maintained.

Personal: Adrian is not an active sportsman, preferring to spend his spare time with a pint glass rather than a golf bat. He is currently attempting to better himself by learning to play the piano, where he frequently gets a Sponge Bob Square Pants sticker from his teacher to show improvement - clearly his teacher cannot see he is 25 and not a fan!

new customers

We would like to welcome...

PJ Thory Ltd

Atkins Global

AMD Electricals Ltd.

Scofield Specialist Services

Skyline Roofing Services Ltd.

Gemmix 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: info@concepts-online.co.uk



INDUSTRY NEWS BULLETIN



Unless you're just waking up from a winter of hibernation, then the current fuel crisis can't have failed to have caught your attention. In fact there's a pretty good chance that its been playing on your mind recently. Whether its filling up your car to get to work, or its your responsibility to fill the fleet, or if you happen to be the one that pays the company fuel bill, its clear that the price of filling the tank has risen quite dramatically in the last year or so. But who really knows why the cost has gone up so much, and how long high prices are likely to stick around?

So why are oil prices so high?

Well, anyone with an economics degree will tell you that it's the theory of supply and demand that affects the price of a barrel of oil. As China and India experience massive growth in their economies, they require increasing amounts of oil to fuel further growth, raising global demand for the limited supply of oil, and increasing price.

But that's not the whole story. OPEC

(the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) has the world pretty much over a barrel, so to



The results of a recent Shell driver strike, resulting in inflated prices and limited supplies.

speak. The cartel controls approx. 55% of the worlds supply of oil, and are able to set prices as they see fit, often raising or lowering supplies on a whim, which doesn't give rise to a free market situation.

Add to that the fact that most of our oil comes from countries we'd optimistically call 'unstable', where incidents such as Nigerian workers

being attacked, or Iraqi oil fields being sabotaged, can have lasting impact on your wallet. So its not quite as straight forward as a trade off between supply and demand, particularly when you consider that no-one knows how much that supply may be, and when it might run out.

And what can be done about it?

Fuel protests seem to be the prevalent course of action in this country. Incidents involving hundreds of protesters gathering to disrupt sections of motorways, or blockade parliament are becoming more common place. With fuel tax in the UK the highest in the EU, competing against foreign hauliers is becoming ever more difficult. Which is why they are demanding an 'essential user rebate' of 25p. Now this may not affect Joe Public, but as transport costs are passed on to everything from the clothes we wear to the food we eat, sitting in traffic behind a protest may not be the worst use of your time this summer.

Sources: BBC, www.fuel-crisis.org.uk

Not the **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

awarded to

Mr. A.N.Onymous

for

showing ingenuity and resourcefulness in attracting new business to the skip hire firm he worked for.

and not for

the bare-faced cheek and testicular fortitude required to keep additional jobs quiet, and pocketing a nice little extra on the side.

He must be thanking his lucky stars (from the dole queue) that vehicle tracking highlighted his exceptional productivity, just a shame it showed his questionable work ethic - something he'll have time to mull over whilst watching Jeremy Kyle we guess!



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