



NATIONAL RAIL ENQUIRIES

Online Journey Planner

“The new Online Journey Planner delivered by Transeo is fantastic. For the first time passengers are able to do a journey plan not just based on the scheduled service, but also taking into account and taking full account of any disruption. I cannot stress how significant this is from the passengers' point of view. Well done to the delivery team!”

Chris Scoggins CEO (National Rail Enquiries)

Context

The award winning National Rail Enquiries, 08457 48 49 50, is Britain's most dialled telephone number, providing a wide range of travel information to passengers. National Rail Enquiries is part of the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), which is the official voice of the passenger rail industry representing 21 train companies to the public, government and other opinion formers on transport policy issues.

ATOC manages joint activities for train operators including revenue allocation and settlement, impartial retailing, National Rail Enquiries, railcard marketing, staff travel arrangements, international products and travel agent licensing.

The Online Journey Planner

National Rail Enquiries responds to around 120 million customer contacts a year. They have expanded their services to make information available through a variety of new media, the most significant of these being the development of the National Rail Enquiries website www.nationalrail.co.uk.

This website provides a comprehensive suite of services including:

- Online Timetable Journey Planner, with links to on-line ticket retailing
- Live Departure Boards, also provided by Transeo, where customers can obtain a real time indication of the arrivals and departures at any of the 2500 National Rail stations
- Service disruption page, providing real time details of train service disruption across the National Rail network, planned and short notice alterations and engineering works
- Products and Promotions
- Station Information
- How to get to places of interest by rail
- How to access other self-services offerings

The growth in online journey planner users has exceeded expectations, with 60% of all customer contact now made via the site. More than 60,000 journey planning enquiries an hour are received at peak times. It is clear that improved service performance has contributed to the increased usage of the site, which now performs more quickly than ever before.

Customer Requirement

National Rail Enquiries asked Transeo to take responsibility for the development and operation of the Online Journey Planner for a 5 year period.

Why Transeo?

NRE chose Transeo because of its extensive rail experience, systems competence and proven ability to operate business critical IS applications.

Transeo's objectives include:

- Improved performance – to give a quicker response to journey plan requests
- Improved reliability – to improve the availability of the journey planning service
- Reduced running costs – to give better value-for-money to National Rail Enquiries on behalf of the Train Operating Companies (TOCs)
- Improved functionality – to make the journey planner easier to use and to provide new, easier to use functions

Transeo's Offers

- The hosting of servers at the Transeo data centre in Doncaster, using a dual-live 'high availability' configuration so that user demand is balanced across two sites. This provides both resilience to meet the 99.99% availability requirement and disaster recovery in the event of a failure of one communications route or catastrophic failure of one site
- A solution that offers a high level of security and integrity, with intrusion prevention measures and continuous monitoring of the performance of individual servers
- A site that handles in excess of 500,000 journey planning requests each day, with 60,000 per hour at peak times. The site has capacity to handle 150,000 requests in an hour without loss of performance and 300,000 requests at peak usage times.
- The provision of a 24 hour helpdesk

Transeo is now working with its partners to enhance the functionality of the site and improve usability. Following customer workshops, changes will be introduced as part of an enhancement programme. Transeo is responsible for providing the overall design, systems integration, operations and development of much of the application software.

System Architecture

Transeo has delivered a flexible and scalable solution based on reliable industry-standard components, an open systems architecture and open interfaces to ensure that the system can respond flexibly to future National Rail Enquiries needs and growth. In order to provide resilience and flexible growth, Transeo has designed a load balancing architecture comprising:

Web servers

- Combined Application and Report servers
- Resilient Database and Application Servers running the IPTIS Journey Planning engine from Jeppesen

Software is run on a combination of Linux and Microsoft Windows 2003 Server.

Benefits

The service has consistently met National Rail Enquiries target service levels since start-up at the end of August, 2006.

- The key objectives of improved performance, reliability and reduced costs, have been achieved in the first release
- User volumes have grown beyond expectations demonstrating customer confidence in the new system
- The Transeo delivered service now allows National Rail Enquiries to increase capacity to cope with demand, and to introduce innovative new services for the travelling customer
- System response times have been transformed, performing consistently to the demanding targets of 99.99% of enquiries responding within 2 seconds and an availability of greater than 99.99%
- The Online Journey Planner is now provided both from a technology and a service provider that can scale the volume and services to meet the growing range and quality of services targeted by NRE