

Austraffic Reviews Bluetooth Tracking Systems

Data integrity is one of the major issues facing the transport planning professionals who invest millions of dollars on traffic research every year to allow them to make decisions that will affect thousands of motorists.

But their decision making can only be as good as the quality of the data their surveys generate. Australian traffic and transport survey specialists Austraffic has tested some of the latest data gathering tools that harness Bluetooth and WiFi technology in an Australian-first best of breed technology review.

"Matching the most efficient systems to a particular survey is an important first step in data gathering. Austraffic wanted to look at how existing and emerging technologies performed and understand in what scenarios they produced the most reliable results," said John Reid Managing Director of Austraffic.

"After extensive trials, there is no doubt that these technologies have something to offer. However, as with any technology, there is also the potential to be a random number generator if incorrectly deployed, or if used unchecked and un-validated. We found significant differences in the sampling rate of the different products and more importantly, significant differences in the repeatability of the measurements taken. This last point is critical if assessing the practicality and value of using any survey product and it is absolutely vital to consider for Origin-Destination (O-D) surveys where secondary forms of measurement to validate and understand the sample captured are a necessity. If the product is not providing repeatable results we simply can't use it for O-D surveys.

"Austraffic's review has identified a product, BlipTrack, which showed high sample rates and high levels of repeatability on local roads, arterials and freeways. Austraffic has formed a strategic partnership with its European Supplier (BLIP Systems) to be the sole distributor of this traffic solution product in Australia."

BlipTrack is an innovation from Danish wireless technology company BLIP Systems founded in 2003 as a management buyout of the Bluetooth activities within Ericsson (the creator of Bluetooth). BlipTrack is today used in 15 of the largest cities in Denmark and has expanded globally to include with over 5,000 sensors installed in countries such as Canada, USA, Germany,

transport authorities optimise traffic, reduce fuel consumption and lower CO2 emissions in a cost efficient and effective manner. Austraffic has seen the potential and the possibilities in BLIP Systems traffic solution and has started working with national and state regulatory, policy and advisory bodies to establish the necessary regulatory regime under which BlipTrack can operate in all states.

"We have taken a variety of operational, logistic and reliability factors into consideration in the review before choosing to partner with BLIP Systems and are already seeing some great opportunities to provide new data solutions for a range of clients," said John Reid.

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Switzerland, UK, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand and now Australia. This has provided a great opportunity to understand real world application of the technology for a wide variety of client needs.

Today's conventional methods of collecting traffic data can be expensive and the camera based alternatives require constant maintenance. The combination of Bluetooth and Wi-Fi technology with other tried and tested methods provides new opportunities to help traffic and

"Access to reliable and credible data has never been more important for the Australian traffic and transport industry as we watch the increased attention and public scrutiny their decisions are given. Blip Track is already helping us deliver the right data solutions and that will help deliver the right decisions." ■

For further information see <http://youtu.be/HktDQe6Bdtg>