

For immediate release

New dimensions of support for public transport presented at INIT User Group Meeting

Conference and anniversary celebration attracted customers from all over the world

Karlsruhe / Germany, 18 October 2023

A three-day international user group meeting and an anniversary celebration: good reasons for around 150 INIT customers from 11 countries to travel to the telematics provider's headquarters in Karlsruhe from 26 to 28 September where INIT's latest system developments were presented. The user group meeting with the motto "new dimensions" focused on the solutions with which INIT supports public transport companies to overcome current challenges.

From falling revenues and higher (energy) costs to an alarming shortage of skilled workers and the switch to electromobility: the tasks facing public transport today are numerous. However, INIT systems offer expert support in five fields of action which were presented at the user group meeting. Participants learned how they can increase service quality, reduce access barriers, lower energy costs, increase efficiency and relieve their employees.

Product exhibition and expert presentations

On the first day, at its headquarters, INIT presented a wide range of products which allowed customers to experience many of the systems and to talk to INIT experts. Two days of presentations and best practice customer reports then provided deeper insight into topics such as incident management and passenger information, occupancy rate predictions, ticketing, interoperability and electromobility.

Digitalization as a model for the future

Best practice customer reports have always been an important element of INIT user conferences. Christian Höglmeier, CTO of co-host Verkehrsbetriebe

Karlsruhe GmbH and Albtal-Verkehrs-Gesellschaft mbH, spoke about digital transformation at the Karlsruhe transport association KVV. In his presentation, he showed how VBK and AVG are shaping digitalization and what advantages this has for passengers, but also for the increased efficiency of transport operations.

New support for control center and driving personnel

INIT's system RESPONSEassist also offers advantages for passengers and the efficiency of transport companies. Frank Bergmann, Quality Assurance and Training Officer at WSW mobil GmbH in Wuppertal, spoke about this when he explained how – with a few clicks – dispatchers in Wuppertal can process incidents, inform passengers simultaneously via several channels in vehicles, at stops and online, as well as document operational events.

RESPONSEassist will also be used by Magdeburger Verkehrsbetriebe GmbH & Co. KG. Robert Tecklenburg, Head of IT Core Systems, reported on this outlook as well as on the migration of on-board computers to the latest generation. With the COPILOTapp on-board computer app, which has also been introduced, subcontractor vehicles in rail replacement services, among others, can now obtain smart devices as on-board computers and therefore be integrated into the ITCS.

Of course, not every project runs smoothly from the very beginning. Stefan Glinschert, Head of Operations and Operations Manager (Betriebsleiter BoKraft) at Verkehrsgesellschaft Hameln-Pyrmont (VHP) mbH, spoke about the insights and experiences that VHP gained during the tendering process and how the project became a success with the rapid implementation of INIT's Intermodal Transport Control System MOBILE-ITCS nextGen after the contract had been awarded to INIT.

Better service quality for passengers

Verkehr und Wasser GmbH (VWG) in Oldenburg has become a pioneer in the field of occupancy predictions with the introduction of the MOBILEguide system, which Morell Predoehl, Head of Marketing and Sales, spoke about. He explained how passengers and the transport company itself can benefit from knowing passenger occupancy levels.

The trendsetter in ticketing is the public transport system Föli in the Finnish city of Turku. Here, passengers can pay with the company's own closed-loop Föli Card, with a credit card or smartphone and are guaranteed to pay the lowest fare. This system was presented by Topias Pihlava, Development Manager at the City of Turku.

In addition to ticketing, another important topic in public transport is the introduction of electromobility. Managing Director Thorsten Schwarz reported on how Verkehrsbetriebe Nordhausen GmbH managed the changeover, what adjustments were made in the depot and what decisions were made regarding charging infrastructures and IT systems.

40 years of innovations for public transport

The user group meeting was followed by an impressive anniversary celebration in Karlsruhe's Palazzo Halle. Among the official well-wishers were Karlsruhe's Lord Mayor Dr Frank Mentrup, Vice President Transfer and International Affairs of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology Prof. Dr Thomas Hirth, Vice President Chamber of Commerce Karlsruhe Daniela Bechtold, CRO of AVG and VBK Christian Höglmeier, Vice President of the Association of German Transport Companies (VDV) and Spokesman of the Board of VAG Nuremberg Tim Dahlmann-Resing as well as UITP Secretary General Mohamed Mezghani. He emphasized that public transport is also dependent on efficient industry partners: "Thanks to INIT for its contribution in making public transport more efficient and more people-friendly. At UITP, we are proud of INIT's long-lasting involvement in the Association, and to count on your expertise and support. Keep up the great work. Happy 40th birthday!" The state government of Baden-Württemberg was also represented at the event by State Secretary Dr. Elke Zimmer, and Michael Theurer (MdB), Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Digital Affairs and Transport, sent his congratulations via video.

Outlook for the future

In addition to looking back on the past 40 years, during which INIT has developed from a university spin-off to a successful internationally operating group of companies, INIT looked ahead to the future. In a spectacular hologram

show, presenter Markus Brock travelled virtually 10 years into the future, where, with the help of an AI-based dialogue system, he learned why INIT's development will continue to be successful in the next decade:

INIT launched the innovation campaign nextGen in 2022. Thanks to these strategic decisions, the company will continue to drive forward the digital transformation of public transport, together with its customers and will therefore ensure that mobility becomes even easier in the future - ecologically, efficiently and comfortably.

Company founder and CEO Dr Gottfried Greschner explains: "Taking mobility into a new dimension through digitalization – that has been our vision for 40 years now. We work passionately towards this goal: always with the clear aim of using our digital solutions to support transport companies in all their tasks."

Fig. 1: The participants listened to experts' presentations. Thanks to simultaneous translation, even the non-German-speaking audience was always well informed.

Fig. 2: Speakers at the official celebration of INIT's fortieth anniversary together with init SE management board and INIT GmbH managing directors.

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About INIT

As a worldwide leading supplier of integrated planning, dispatching, telematics and ticketing systems for buses and trains, INIT has been assisting transport companies in making public transport more attractive, reliable and more efficient for more than 40 years. Today, more than 1,100 transport providers rely on INIT's innovative hard- and software solutions.

The unique selling proposition of INIT's integrated telematics system MOBILE is that it comprises all of the daily tasks of public transport providers:

- Planning & Dispatching
- Ticketing & Fare Management
- Operations Control & Real-Time Passenger Information
- Analysing & Optimising

With INIT's integrated solutions, transport companies can master all requirements of electromobility and strengthen their role as mobility broker of their region by establishing a mobility platform. Third-party systems can also be easily integrated thanks to the open and standardized interfaces. An excellent package of operational services completes the INIT offering.

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