

## Big Brother is watching you, but does it really make a difference?

For years, operators have heard about the potential cost and efficiency benefits of remotely monitoring their vehicles and staff, as well as their surrounding environments. Now an investigation has convincingly confirmed the technique's potential in the transportation sector.

On the back of a recent survey carried out by Google, involving 125 transport and logistics professionals, the internet company concluded that the transport and logistics industry is at the forefront of the adoption of mapping and associated technology, used to present and analyse geographical information in the cause of efficiency and customer service.

The research shows that nearly two-thirds of companies in the sector use mapping technology, with many reporting positive results. Some 67% are experiencing better customer engagement, 46% have improved productivity and efficiency, and 46% have seen reduced costs as a result.

DHL is one major operator to embrace the new technology, in a bid to keep track of its people and vehicles. Couriers' GPS coordinates are integrated into Google Maps and displayed on plasma screens in its service centres. At the logistics firm's head office, this mapping technology is then used to capture data about journeys, analyse them and train the despatchers on how to make further efficiencies.

"Google Maps has helped the DHL Same Day service to meet and exceed its customer service targets," says Steve Robinson, chief information officer at DHL Express UK and Ireland. "By improving the planning process and using live information on traffic conditions through Google Maps, we can provide customers with a consistent express service and reduce carbon by streamlining deliveries."

A big step forward then, and yet another example of how the adoption of some new communication technologies and techniques are to be applauded.

The key, as BlackBerry users are now well aware, is not to depend completely on them.



Transport Engineer's regular 'IRTE to IRTE' members' column: focusing on the issues, challenges and concerns that matter to transport engineers and fleet managers