

# Technician time

When Iveco launched its award-winning Stralis Hi-Way tractor unit last year, it wasn't just the truck that was special. Keith Read looks at its diagnostics

When Iveco's impressive new Stralis Hi-Way heavy-duty truck hit the headlines last September for scooping the International Truck of the Year award 2013, jurors said it made the greatest contribution to road transport efficiency from several perspectives. Citing fuel economy, safety, driveability, comfort and a low-environmental footprint, they could well have added lower total cost of ownership – one of the design drivers for Iveco, from New Daily to Stralis.

Part of that money-saving ethos is about cutting maintenance and repair times by simplifying both fault-finding and routine servicing. "Time is money," explains Iveco UK product affairs manager Nick Santon. And making that work for technicians is its new diagnostics system – although the company doesn't shout very loudly about its appropriately named Easy (Electronic Advanced System) maintenance technician time-saver.

Easy is Iveco's third-generation diagnostics system, superseding Modus, which was a desktop PC-based system and so tied to the workshop. Because Easy operates via a rugged Panasonic Toughbook, it is portable, so can be used anywhere. Further, it can be hooked up directly to the vehicle or operated remotely via Bluetooth – useful, if diagnosis is being carried out on the hard shoulder.

## Days faster

John Britton, one of the technicians at Iveco's Dunstable vehicle preparation base within the local Stormont Truck and Van complex, reckons Easy can save days, not just hours, when it comes to identifying faults flagged by dashboard warning lights. "Take the example of an ABS warning light. If you set about checking the sensors with a circuit-tester, Murphy's Law says it'll be the last one that's faulty. And what happens when the manual check shows that all the sensors are okay?

"With Easy, I can run through the menu, call up the appropriate page for ABS sensors and it will show me – in a matter of minutes from the vehicle arriving in the workshop – which sensor is suspect. What's more, if the sensor turns out to be okay – indicating a connection problem – it'll give me the wiring diagram, complete with colours, which I can print, if necessary. When the fault is fixed, I can clear the warning light on the dash and Easy retains a record of that fault against the vehicle's history."

"I had a vehicle recently with an ABS warning light showing," adds Stormont's Dunstable service workshop



foreman Cliff Green. "But Easy told me immediately that it was a blown fuse. Not everyone would think of checking a fuse before testing the sensors, so the system potentially saved a considerable amount of time and cost."

Iveco's diagnostic system can also be used to update ECUs and other systems on the truck. But, if a customer buys Easy – for which Iveco provides training – the reprogramming element is disabled. They can still use the online link to Iveco in Turin, though, for engineering assistance. However, the next big time and money saver is likely to be predictive servicing.

"Just as with cars, I think predictive servicing will come to the top end of the range first," forecasts Santon. "These are the most complex for determining service schedules, because of the effects of different duty cycles. To Spain and back twice a week might clock up a lot of miles, but it's mostly at constant speeds and loads. Hence, service intervals can be longer than for a truck running in and out of London and the M25 all week."

Santon believes that on-board analysis of each truck's mission profile will enable Easy to flag up when maintenance is due, thereby saving operators from under-servicing – which can have serious consequences – or over-servicing, which is wasteful.

Meanwhile, other new technologies – such as automated manual transmissions (AMTs), now almost standard across HGVs – are also quietly saving operators time and money. "We hardly see any clutch problems these days," comments Santon. "AMTs don't do a lot for a really good driver, but they do wonders for the less skilled." **TE**