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# On the threshold of a perfect transport storm

Most of us have a love-hate relationship with deadlines: meeting them can be stressful, even costly, but beating them brings that sense of achievement. So it might be with Driver CPC (certificate of professional competence): with the vast majority of drivers qualified by the 10 September due date, we can relax. Ditto, perhaps, Euro 6: manufacturers met compliance targets and operators are running the trucks. So, again, job done.

Well not quite – on either count. Driver CPC now starts the next five-year term so transport managers will need to ensure their drivers record the next 35 hours' training ready for 2019. Just as important, five years is a long time and we might reasonably expect considerable political, but also environmental and technical, change over that period. So, on the one hand, the requirements for that driver training may well evolve, and on the other, designers and technicians at either end of the engineering spectrum should expect to be working way beyond Euro 6.

The point: the future is fickle and the reality of deadlines is that they are merely milestones on a relentless, only partially predictable, journey. That's one of the reasons why the IRTE (Institute of Road Transport Engineers) has such important roles to play, both in its heartland of encouraging, sustaining and ensuring engineering competence, but also in providing guidance around the ever-changing picture of operator compliance. As IRTE president Gerry Fleming said at last month's inspiring annual conference, the exchange of knowledge, rather than its protection, has got to be the way forward – obviously, provided commercial confidentialities aren't breached. What better than our independent professional institute to be the conduit for sharing lessons and expertise?

But there's more. The IRTE conference at St George's, near Burton upon Trent, proved that the institute can also be the natural home for those interested in sensibly calibrated and qualified future-gazing. It's not about idle curiosity. Drawing on technical, commercial and geopolitical developments and trends, from across industries worldwide, should be a key component for shaping organisations' long-term operations and shorter-term purchasing strategies.

And with the current rate of change, that matters. This month alone, Transport Engineer reports on developments here and now ranging from new fuel emulsion technology to fuel-saving lubricant additives for entire vehicle drivetrains (page 5). We also cover the new pan-European trailer EBS data protocol (page 8) and government funding set to accelerate developments with fuel cells, batteries and alternative fuels aimed at ultra-low emissions transport (page 6).

As Cenex chief executive Robert Evans observed in his IRTE Conference keynote, the looming decline of oil (and hence diesel fuel) is already impacting rail and marine propulsion, where assets are designed for circa 30 years' operation. The immediate future for trucks, he says, is dual-fuel, harnessing renewable diesel-fired bio-methane, driven by a perfect storm around gas supply, refuelling infrastructure and diesel engine conversion technologies, particularly (but not only) in the US. That and 'intelligent mobility' – where trunking and urban logistics are rethought, again in light of alternatively 'fuelled' vehicles – appear to be on the threshold of transforming transport.

To stay in touch and get closer to the implications for your business, tune into the IRTE.



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