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Transit Technologies

MEDIA COVERAGE

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Passengers benefit as Putco gets smart

BY THANDI SKADE

In a bid to make bus commuting safer and eliminate ticket fraud, Putco has introduced an automatic smart card fare collection and tracking system.

Speaking at the official launch of the system in Sandton yesterday Putco managing director Franco Pisapia said: "This system provides secure auditable data and reduces risks associated with carrying cash."

Because commuters pre-load money on the card before they embark on a bus, they no longer needed to carry excessive amounts of money.

Developed by Questek Transit Technologies, the smart card is a contactless card that – when scanned – will read the commuter's travel route and the amount of money charged onto the card in 300 milliseconds.

"It is small, can fit into a pocket or purse, is very secure, cannot be read, copied or manipulated and is exceptionally user-friendly," Pisapia said.

Questek Transit Technologies general manager Ronald Salis said introducing the smart card fare collection system was a way to shift away from driver-commuter interaction, which would reduce incidents of fraud.

Smart cards can be bought at any Putco selling station, with a once-off starting fee of between R30 and R50. A customer can then recharge at any time, buying either a multi-journey card for a specific route or a stored-value card for any route.

The tracking system records the number of commuters on the bus per trip, the route the bus driver takes and any deviations from the set route.

"This system is aimed at helping us to be on the pulse of our operations at all times, to monitor our fleet, the driving patterns and the behaviour of our drivers," Pisapia said.



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PUTCO'S NEW SMART CARD

AS October is Transport Month, it is of interest that Putco has signed a multi-million rand contract to install Questek Transit Technologies' automatic smart card and fare collection system in 350 buses as part of a pilot project.

The Smart Cards project was launched yesterday, and will allow greater operational efficiencies for Putco.

The system monitors customer behaviour, such as type of tickets bought and popular routes.

It will manage revenue through less cash handling on buses, monitor routes, ensuring drivers stick to routes and secure crucial, auditable data on which to base strategic planning.

Rehana Moosajee, MMC for transport, remarked that the move was a major step towards providing a world-class public transport service.

She said it was important for improving the image of public transport, not only as a means to move around, but also as a way to build communities.



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[BUSINESS - TRANSPORT]

Putco turns to IT

Putco introduces smart payment system to reduce long lines and floating cash

BY BANDILE SIKWANE

IN A BID to remove cash transactions and speed up the process of loading bus passengers, Putco has installed a multi-million-rand automatic smart-card fare collection system from Questek Transit Technologies.

The deal, said to be worth more than R8 million, includes a live vehicle tracking system that will ensure Putco busses follow their demarcated routes and that bus drivers adhere to speed limits.

Commuters can now buy smart cards at Putco terminals and preload daily or monthly bus fare units. The contact-less smart card also allows for commuters to quickly embark on the bus by simply placing the card on the reader and eliminating driver-passenger interaction.

Putco MD Franco Pisapia believes the system will improve the commuters' quality of transiting because drivers can now be held accountable for their attitude on the road. "This is not a punitive system but it allows management to see where drivers need additional training," he says.



Ronald Salis and Franco Pisapia

He says that in the not-too-distant future commuters will see an end-to-end system, which allows for them to pay for all their public transport using the same smart card. In the meantime, Questek Transit Technologies' GM, Ronald Salis says that the company already has the technology to install the system in taxis, but is still under tough negotiations with stakeholders.

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Putco installs electronic ticketing system

Putco has installed an automatic smart card fare collection and tracking system into 350 buses as part of a pilot project involving the Soweto depot.

The Smart Card system from Questek Transit Technologies was chosen after an extensive search by Putco for an electronic solution that would enable the company to introduce an efficient and user-friendly fare collection system.

The system is intended to provide an on-bus smart card and cash-based revenue management system, which will help to manage routes and record data such as passenger behaviour, popular routes, type of tickets purchased, as well as vehicle tracking. The system will also assist with operations functions to control the dispatching of drivers and post-shift cash-up.

Other benefits of the smart card are that passengers can recharge and use it multiple times, it is small and can fit into a pocket or purse, is very secure and cannot be read or copied.

Coupled with the smart card was the launch of the bus tracking system aimed at enabling Putco to have a constant surveillance over its buses in order to monitor driving patterns and driver behaviour.

