

Connectivity from new

NORWAY: Later this year NSB is due to receive four pre-series trains as part of an order for 50 Stadler Flirt EMUs, with an option for up to 100 (RG 9.08 p551). The trains will be equipped with a wi-fi platform supplied by UK company Nomad Digital under a contract worth £1.5m.

While high-speed broadband mobile communications systems supplied by Nomad already enable NSB passengers to access the internet or onboard entertainment, this is the first time that the technology is being provided as an integral part of a new train build. Thanks to real-time data transfer, NSB will be able to provide passengers with updated journey information via a portal web page, while on-train systems including CCTV can be monitored to assist maintenance and other management tasks.

'NSB is a train operator that has a clear policy of using IP data connections to the train for many purposes', says Nomad Chairman Nigel Wallbridge. 'Incorporating the installation of our system into the manufacture of a train minimises any possible

inconvenience to the operator.'

Each train will have an R3500 Communication Control Unit, managing an on-train LAN with wired links between the cars and wi-fi access points for passengers, as well as modems for the 3G, CDMA and wi-fi networks. Selecting the best backhaul to send data to the 'home agent', the CCU enables the system to provide a seamless broadband connection of up to 5 MB/sec by switching between different mobile operators, which Nomad says is ideal for Norwegian conditions including many tunnels and fluctuating mobile network coverage.

Developed in conjunction with Stadler, the Nomad system is auto-configuring, receiving information from the train when first powered up and then feeding it through to its components. Coupled with remote connectivity, this means that the system should require virtually no on-train access for configuration or maintenance.

Series production should see the Flirt EMUs delivered to NSB in 2011-12. Half of the 50-strong fleet is to be deployed on local services around

Free wi-fi on NS

NETHERLANDS: Transport Minister Camiel Eurlings joined NS Chief Executive Bert Meerstadt on March 29 to launch an onboard broadband wi-fi service that is initially being offered to passengers free of charge to stimulate usage. Under a five-year contract with Nomad Digital, wi-fi using the T-Mobile network is initially being deployed on 187 NS Intercity trains and eventually 365, carrying 'approximately 600 000 journeys a day'.

At present, the facility is being used to provide real-time travel information, but further applications could include CCTV and passenger counting. The roll-out is scheduled to be completed in three years' time, with the Ministry of Transport & Public Works providing €15m of funding.

'During their train journeys, our customers need the correct information, at the right place and at the right time', said Meerstadt. 'This marks an important step towards the attainment of a key NS objective, namely the provision of first class service, including appropriate information, for the train traveller'. ↩



Transport Minister Camiel Eurlings (right) and NS Chief Executive Bert Meerstadt sample the onboard wi-fi.

Oslo where journey times will be up to 1 h 30 min, with the rest operating on routes in southern Norway where journey times will be up to 3 h. ↩