

Alex Nelson

Chester-le-Track Ltd., Chester-le-Street Co., Durham, GB



Speaker Qualification

Alex Nelson (aged 46) is an experienced speaker having addressed various conferences in the UK, and is also an accomplished after dinner speaker. His addresses frequently allude to the strange idiosyncracies of the British Railway system. He is an internet entrepreneur as well as acting as stationmaster of an independently-operated small station on one of Britain's major main lines. He was awarded Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society for his work on animated mapping of the British railway network.

Alex is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK, and had recently completed four years as Chairman of the Tyne Tees group. He is widely travelled and has used rail and bus networks around the world including the USA, Europe, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. Despite a busy lifestyle he has recently decided to get rid of the car and use public transport, and would like to learn from the experiences of other attendees at the Vienna conference.

IDEAS ABOVE HIS STATION

How a small independent railway station helps travellers all over Britain

Abstract

Public transport users vary from regular travellers who require punctuality data only through to infrequent users who need a great deal of information to plan and accomplish their trips. Even seasoned travellers need support when travelling out with their normal destinations, and increasingly expect such information to be available on the web so they can access it at any time.

Chester-le-Track, a small railway company based at a station on the East Coast Main Line, was founded in 1999 both to regenerate one location and to provide network-wide information to travellers in the UK. Working with Quickmap Ltd in London, a series of animated maps have been created to make complicated networks more readily accessible and understood. We claim our map of the UK and Ireland has more links per pixel than anywhere else.

Special maps have been produced for other locations such as Prudhoe (as suggested by Mr. Robert Forsythe who is also proposing to come to the conference). One important feature is to link up maps so that a user of the main line rail network travelling inter-city can obtain local bus and rail information on arrival, in both printed and web-based format.

Information on networks is complemented by information on fares and ticketing, which can be an area for much confusion, and can turn users away from public transport. Chester-le-Track produced a free leaflet incorporating fares information which the rail companies dare not publish, and the "Friendly guide to rail ticketing" is the only publication in its field.