



13 September 2016

Rail staff set to go mobile with new Rule Book app

Rail staff could soon be using a mobile app to refer to safety critical rules and procedures, thanks to an RSSB-led programme to modernise the Rule Book.

The Rule Book is an essential reference for the 120,000 rail staff responsible for operating Great Britain's railways, as it sets out clear instructions that must be followed.

Currently, rail staff receive paper copies or can view the Rule Book on the RSSB website, but an app will allow it to be more easily accessed and updated. Over 70% of adults in the UK own a smartphone, more than half use a tablet, and rail staff are increasingly equipped with mobile devices to help them do their job.

RSSB has appointed technical content specialists Mekon to help develop the Rule Book app, and a prototype is set to be tested by a sample of staff from across the industry. The results will inform how the app can be developed into an industry-wide product, expected to be available in 2017.

RSSB's Professional Head of Rail Operations, Gary Portsmouth, said: *"The Rule Book going digital will bring a whole host of benefits in terms of the way users will be able to access Rule Book content. It's a potential win-win, where staff have a Rule Book which is easier to use and keep up-to-date, yet which is more cost-effective for the industry as a whole. We're currently working with people who use the Rule Book to develop the prototype that will influence the final design, thus ensuring we deliver a product that is intuitive and fit-for-purpose, whilst providing the industry with an opportunity to realise other related benefits."*

Rule Books are practically as old as the railways themselves, individual companies producing their own rules before being encouraged to adopt shared, standardised rules in 1876. A Rule Book app would just be the latest incarnation and improvement on earlier editions.

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Notes to Editors:

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About RSSB

Through research, analysis, and insight RSSB supports our members and stakeholders to deliver a safer, more efficient and sustainable rail system.

Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, valued by its members and stakeholders as an essential contributor to their success.

Our independent evidence based approach is built on strong technical capability, and the enabling of collaborative industry engagement for the benefit of the whole rail system.

Our strategic priorities are to support:

- Healthy and safe collaboration and inform industry decisions to reduce risk and harm
- Enhanced performance and efficiency updating standards, modernising systems, informing and enabling innovation
- The application of sustainability principles by collating and sharing tools and best practice.

Website: www.rssb.co.uk

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About Mekon

Founded in 1990, Mekon are leading UK consultants and systems integrators. They are focused on increasing the effectiveness of your content creation, management and delivery.

The Mekon team provide a complete range of services to help companies meet their technical documentation requirements ranging from consulting through to turnkey solutions. Key to their success is their consultants who review your current operations and suggest ways to improve and modify these in light of changing business objectives.

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