

RCMG Newsletter 4

July 2017

Note from the Chair

Interesting times could be ahead for Road Condition monitoring in the coming years. The Department for Transport will be consulting later this year on whether we should introduce new technology into how we monitor road condition. RCMG will be feeding into the discussion and we would encourage all of you who use road condition data to also get involved in the debate. In the meantime, this newsletter provides updates on the project we completed this year which looked into development of SCANNER technology and gives some information about the improvements to visual surveys that are being worked on. There is also an update on the survey we carried out last year about how road condition data is being used along with a link to the summary information gained from the survey. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Information about the RCMG, UKPMS and condition surveys can be found on the [UKRLG website](#) which has replaced the PCIS website.

If you would like further information or would like to be further involved or informed about the tasks that the RCMG is working on, please contact me or the individual groups using the details at the end of the newsletter.

Amanda Richards

Development of SCANNER and UKPMS

The research undertaken into the development of SCANNER and UKPMS has been completed. This work was funded by DfT, with contributions from SRRB (Scottish Roads Research Board) and CHiCs (Consortium for Highway Condition surveys), and managed by UKRLG.

The SCANNER research was undertaken following a review carried out by the SCANNER Development Group, which identified three key areas where enhancements or modifications to SCANNER were required: the consistency of SCANNER data; the appropriateness of the parameters delivered by the survey; and the suitability of the SCANNER RCI. The work has delivered a number of recommendations in these three areas,



a few of which are included here. However, the full results of the research work are available on the [UKRLG website](#).

Consistency: Cracking has been found to be the main cause of inconsistency in SCANNER, but it is also the most difficult parameter to assess during the accreditation and QA process. The research has proposed new tests of repeatability and fleet consistency for use within accreditation testing. These are to be trialled in the 2017/18 accreditation tests, to fine tune the approach and to allow survey contractors time to respond and improve any devices found to be inconsistent. The research also found that the consistency of cracking may be worse for surveys undertaken during the winter and has proposed a winter shutdown, which is discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.

SCANNER Parameters: SCANNER delivers more than 20 parameters, but only a few are used to calculate the RCI. The research consulted a number of authorities for their views on these condition parameters. It was found that few local authorities make use of SCANNER's "additional parameters", such as the bump measure, but authorities also felt that the currently delivered parameters do not cover all the aspects of condition considered to be important, such as potholes and fretting. The research has therefore made a number of recommendations regarding the continued delivery of the current parameters.

These results were also considered in the light of ongoing developments to the survey technology, and the newer equipment now employed in the SCANNER fleet. This has suggested that SCANNER survey vehicles already have the potential to report condition data in a number of the areas missed by the current survey. By making full use of the raw measurements that the systems now collect, there is potential to deliver a reliable bump/pothole measure, and it should be possible to identify fretting. The research has recommended that work be undertaken to update the data requirements for SCANNER and develop the processing methods to deliver these parameters, which would then be added to the set of SCANNER deliverables. This would add significant value to SCANNER at little or no additional cost to the survey data collection.

SCANNER RCI: The research also investigated how local authority practitioners use SCANNER to inform decision making. This has shown that there would be benefit in making users more aware of both the existing functionality of SCANNER/UKPMS, and of the examples of best practice employed by some practitioners. For example, this could include making better use of 'amber' data to help to identify roads that are starting to deteriorate, and where preventative maintenance would be helpful. This would be further enhanced by developing an overall education strategy for authorities, to address the loss of experience in SCANNER arising from staff changes.



SCANNER Winter Shutdown

Both the SCANNER research and experience gained in the SCANNER quality Audit have shown that cracking can have a significant effect on the consistency of SCANNER data. However, assessments of the consistency of SCANNER surveys carried out in summer and winter seasons have suggested that crack measurements are less consistent when collected during the winter. The SCANNER research has recommended that consistency could be improved by the introduction of a winter shutdown in the SCANNER survey. The period of this shutdown has yet to be defined, but is likely to cover two to three months.

The introduction of a winter shutdown should bring benefits to data consistency, but may affect the delivery of the survey. Discussion has already commenced with SCANNER contractors over the practicality of a winter shutdown. Contractors already recognise the higher likelihood of poor weather affecting survey coverage, efficiency and quality during the winter, and therefore it is already common practice to minimise the number of surveys carried during the winter. However, surveys are currently permitted during this period, and hence scheduling of surveys does take place. A winter shutdown would not permit this, and the length of the survey season could effectively be reduced by up to 25%. As a result authorities would need to plan and commission SCANNER surveys to minimise the risks of failing to complete their survey within the required timescales. Survey contractors would probably be busier during the survey season and would find it difficult to accommodate surveys commissioned at short notice, in particular if commissioned late in the survey year. In addition, the shutdown may result in a small increase in the cost of surveys, due to the rescheduling of the programme and the lower level of equipment and staff utilisation over the winter months.

The potential for a winter shutdown is being discussed with survey contractors, and we are also seeking views of authorities on this proposal, so that the implications can be fully understood and appropriate methods identified to mitigate any potential problems. If you would like to provide input to or express a view on this proposal, please email TRL at scanner@trl.co.uk.

RCMG Survey 2016

When the RCMG was formed in 2012 we carried out a survey to understand how people use surveys and condition data in order to inform our business plan. This has led to projects such as the SCANNER and UKPMS research described above. Towards the end of 2016 we carried out another survey which also included asking about things like “would you find it useful if amber data as well as red was reported nationally”, “do you use local weighting sets” and “do you carry out deterioration modelling”? A



summary of the responses to the 2016 survey can be found on the [RCMG pages](#) of the UKRLG website. The results will be used to focus the work of the RCMG on what the sector needs going forwards.

Visual Condition Surveys

The RCMG's Visual Survey subgroup have been working hard over the past year to identify improvements and developments to the range of UKPMS accredited visual surveys in order to aid engineers decision making. Further work needs to be done to make changes to UKPMS systems before the improved surveys can be implemented and work is ongoing to resource this work. Further communications will be made when the changes are ready to be implemented and this will be combined with publication of revised visual survey manuals.

Road Conditions in England 2017

The Department launched the 2017 road condition surveys in July. This was earlier than previous years, following requests from local authorities for earlier data collection and publication. Should returns be received promptly from all local authorities, the department intends to publish the statistics earlier than in previous years. With this in mind, we want to ensure that all local authorities are aware that the surveys have been launched, so they have every opportunity to provide a return within the 4 week period that the survey will be live (6th July - 3rd August).

If you are aware that the contact within your local authority has changed in the previous 12 months, please could you provide details (name, email address and phone number) of the new contact as soon as possible to: roadmaintenance.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

The surveys request data for the latest two financial years available (2015/16 and 2016/17), giving local authorities a chance to revise any figures from the previous year, as well as provide figures from the latest year. The information requested is the same as the previous year. Some of the data collected form part of the Single Data List, making the provision of data a mandatory requirement. These are:

- (130-01) Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
- (130-02) Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered
- (130-03) Skidding resistance survey
- (130-04) Carriageway work done treatment lengths



We appreciate the considerable efforts that local authorities make to complete the surveys within the deadlines each year, and welcome feedback on how they could be improved. As announced at the Traffex conference in April, the Department intends to seek views on the future of road condition statistics. As key data providers and users, the views of local authorities will be an important part of this process. Further details, including timings, will therefore be provided in due course.

2016 UKPMS Annual Health Check

The Annual Health Check (AHC) was introduced in 2005 to provide assurance that accredited systems continue to meet core UKPMS requirements. The 2016 AHC provides a test of compliance with the 2016/17 requirements as used by local highway authorities for reporting in 2017.

The 2016 AHC has been implemented by the RCMG's appointed Accreditors, Linhay Consultancy and Hyperion Infrastructure Consultancy, and is fully funded by the UKPMS Developers.

All five accredited UKPMS systems have successfully completed the 2016 AHC:

Insight (Symology)	version 3.6.6 & 3.6.7
MARCHpms (Yotta)	version 4.9
Confirm (Pitney Bowes Software)	version 17.00a.AM & 17.10b.AM
WDM PMS (WDM)	version 4.10.0
Bentley UKPMS (Bentley Systems)	version 4.5.5.0 & 4.7.1.0

As certain elements of the AHC are optional, users should check the RCMG website ([2016 Annual Health Check](#)) for their system. A certificate may be downloaded as evidence that the system version has met the requirements for the 2016 AHC and this also provides information about any notes and restrictions for the system version.

The accreditation of new versions is announced via Twitter. Follow @UKPMS to hear when UKPMS system versions have passed the Annual Health Check or keep abreast of other UKPMS Annual Health Check news.

Preparations for the next AHC (to cover the requirements for 2016/17) are now well underway and we expect the first systems to meet these requirements in the autumn. The requirements are available via [2017 Annual Health Check](#) on the RCMG website and details of successful systems will be published there in due course.

The timetable for the Annual Health Check is:



Months	Task
February to April	Gather requirements
May to July	Prepare Annual Health Check materials
August to October	Annual Health Check carried out by Developers
November to January	UKPMS system versions released to users

The interim accreditation process continues to be used to accredit UKPMS systems between full Annual Health Checks.

Contact details

You are welcome to pass a copy of this bulletin on to anyone else who may be interested in the subject.

If you wish to be added to (or removed from) the circulation list, please email your details to us at ukpms@trl.co.uk.

We welcome your comments and questions at ukpms@trl.co.uk

The UKRLG website is at <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/>

If you require further information about: you can contact us at

UKPMS
SCANNER

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