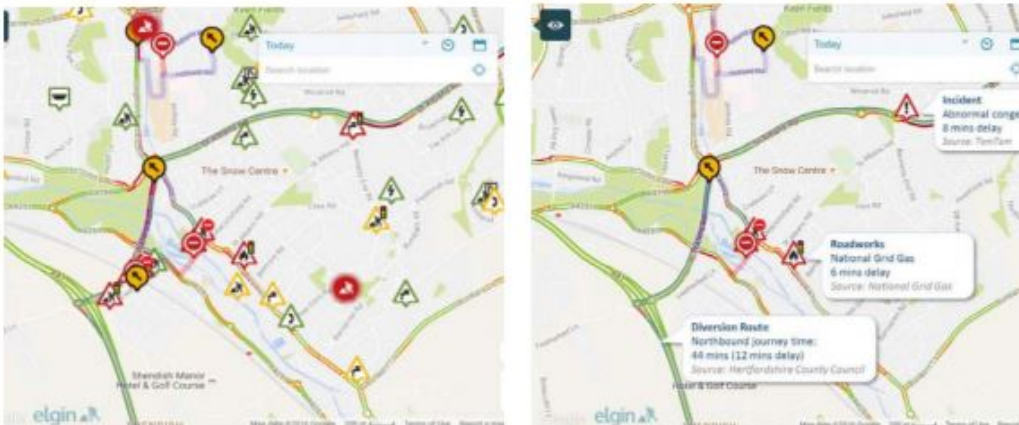


## Press Coverage

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### IT & DATA

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here are about three million roadworks a year with no sign of this decreasing. No-one doubts

that roadworks contribute to congestion and therefore to public frustration.

Garrett Emmerson, chief operating officer of surface transport at Transport for London, says that roadworks account for around 9% of congestion in London's network.

Whether roadworks account for 1% or 9% of congestion, it is still a substantial impact upon the economy and lives of motorists. Analysis of the causes needs to occur at a more granular level if we are to shed light on solutions.

For this we need to ask the right questions:

- Where does the worst congestion occur?
- Is there a relationship between traffic flow slowdowns and certain categories of roadworks or certain types of traffic management or between motorists' reactive behaviour and the steps promoters have taken to inform the transport authorities and the travelling public?
- Are in-car navigation systems and the main satnav services fully alert, not only about what has happened, but also what is about to happen?
- Has there been a breakdown in communication between the different highway regimes in creating closures and diversions to accommodate necessary works?

Ministers however are never too concerned about such detail. Nor should they be necessarily – their job is to set a direction and for civil servants to work with industry to achieve solutions.

Transport secretary Chris Grayling has said that there will be an increased focus on how information, data and technology can help

## Using data to beat roadwork congestion

*A collaboration between Elgin and TomTom will provide real-time analysis of the effect of roadworks on traffic and bring some light to controversial claims and counter-claims, writes Shane O'Neill, chairman of Elgin, providers of the national roadworks platform at roadworks.org*

address transport issues, one of the key ones being congestion.

By looking to the private information and technology sector to help provide solutions, the Government is aiming to square the circle of how to do more with less and to call upon the world of technology to usher out old ways of doing things.

The recent announcement of the collaboration between Elgin, provider of the national roadworks database at roadworks.org, and international satnav systems provider TomTom marks a change in roadworks communication.

Elgin's 'Real-Time Roadworks' service combines data from both organisations,

validating statutory roadworks information against unusual patterns of congestion, taking into account live and historic traffic flow and behaviour information.

This identifies which roadworks are causing high levels of congestion and which road closures are actually in force, resulting in a live 'map dashboard' displaying only those works causing a significant impact on the road

network. This allows traffic management centre officers and other domain professionals to focus resources on managing the small number of works that are causing the most impact on road users.

The significance of this is obvious to traffic management professionals. Unless traffic cameras are aligned to the exact position of roadworks and supported by expensive Urban Traffic Management and Control systems, huge areas of the network still remain in an information blind spot where the actual impact of individual roadworks on traffic flows and congestion remains inferred and only reported retrospectively.

Now we may be able to get information on what the precise impact of a major work on actual traffic speed is, compared to 'normal' speeds, ie benchmarked historic traffic flow data. This will help us understand what interventions traffic managers can make that will make a difference and how we can communicate more effective information in real-time.

'Floating data', the outcome of our world of smart phones and smart cars, and real-time communication by agile web based applications, is fast transforming our knowledge of real cause and effect of roadworks on congestion. The challenge will be for our policymakers and contracting and procurement cultures to take advantage of the opportunities that they bring. ☺