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mixing & matching!



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mixing & matching!

- exploiting software possibilities in our processing and presentation of modelling data



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acknowledgments ...

- David Turner and Tony Sharpe of Halcrow
- Dan Jones, an independent transport modeller
- Serco
- Highways Agency



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our context ...

- a growing range of software platforms with which to process and present our data
 - e.g. Excel, Access, MapInfo, ArcInfo/ArcView, Emme/2's Enif, ...
- relatively simple and transparent data transfer protocols
- formal interfaces, in certain instances, to effect transfer
 - e.g. the Aimsun2/Emme/2 interface



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our context ...

- data transfer between independent software packages has become something that can be assumed rather than agonized over as too inconvenient or onerous to attempt
- it's not so much how data can be transferred between packages that presents the challenge as what can be done when such transfer is assumed



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two-fold objective ...

- deal very briefly and very generally with data transfer realities
- illustrate one instance of multiple software use, with and without formal interfaces



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appreciating the possibilities ...

- one of the biggest limits in modelling comprises a lack of human creativity
 - obviously, time and budget aren't always on our side
 - further, not every planning situation demands or even deserves imagination



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appreciating the possibilities ...

- perhaps, one of the sources of the lack of human creativity is an outdated understanding of what is actually necessary to make data transfer a reality
 - the specialist programmer is not as essential as before
 - not at all because the specialist programmer has become redundant, but because he or she has opened the environment up to the average planner



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appreciating the possibilities ...

- acquiring a basic acquaintance (c.f. mastery) with what is possible coupled with a boldness to explore and experiment
- the motivation lies in feeling the need
 - current design and planning environments
 - the expectations and capacities of the public and decision-makers
 - demands of certain planning exercises



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appreciating the possibilities ...

- respecting well-worn but also proven principles
 - do no more than is necessary
 - especially, don't over-complicate
 - develop simple one-stop correlation tables
 - build in regular and diligent book-keeping and systematic cross-checks
 - avoid data format "cul-de-sacs"



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unusual example ...

- route set generation exercise undertaken as part of the development of the UK's National Traffic Control Centre
 - providing real time traffic management and user information on the UK's 15,000km trunk road network

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route sets?

- simply,
 - pairs of road sections,
 - comprising a primary and an alternative route,
 - between decision points on the project road network and general destinations
- a collection of route sets is a library (of route sets)



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broader context ...

- extremely large project encompassing:
 - extensive software development
 - institutional planning and coordination
 - compilation of a comprehensive database-based description of the project network



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immediate context ...

- traffic and transportation tasks encompassing:
 - network building with MapInfo
 - additional network validation with Saturn
 - route set generation with Emme/2
 - compilation of preliminary route sets using a custom-written computer program and MapInfo
 - processing of route set and project network databases in Access and Excel to add VMS locations
 - matrix generation and catchment factor calculation using Contram



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