

# Railway Gazette

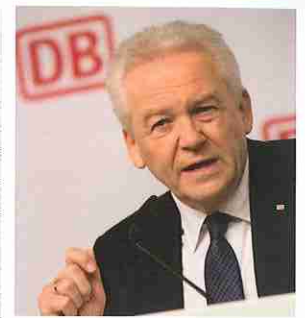
INTERNATIONAL



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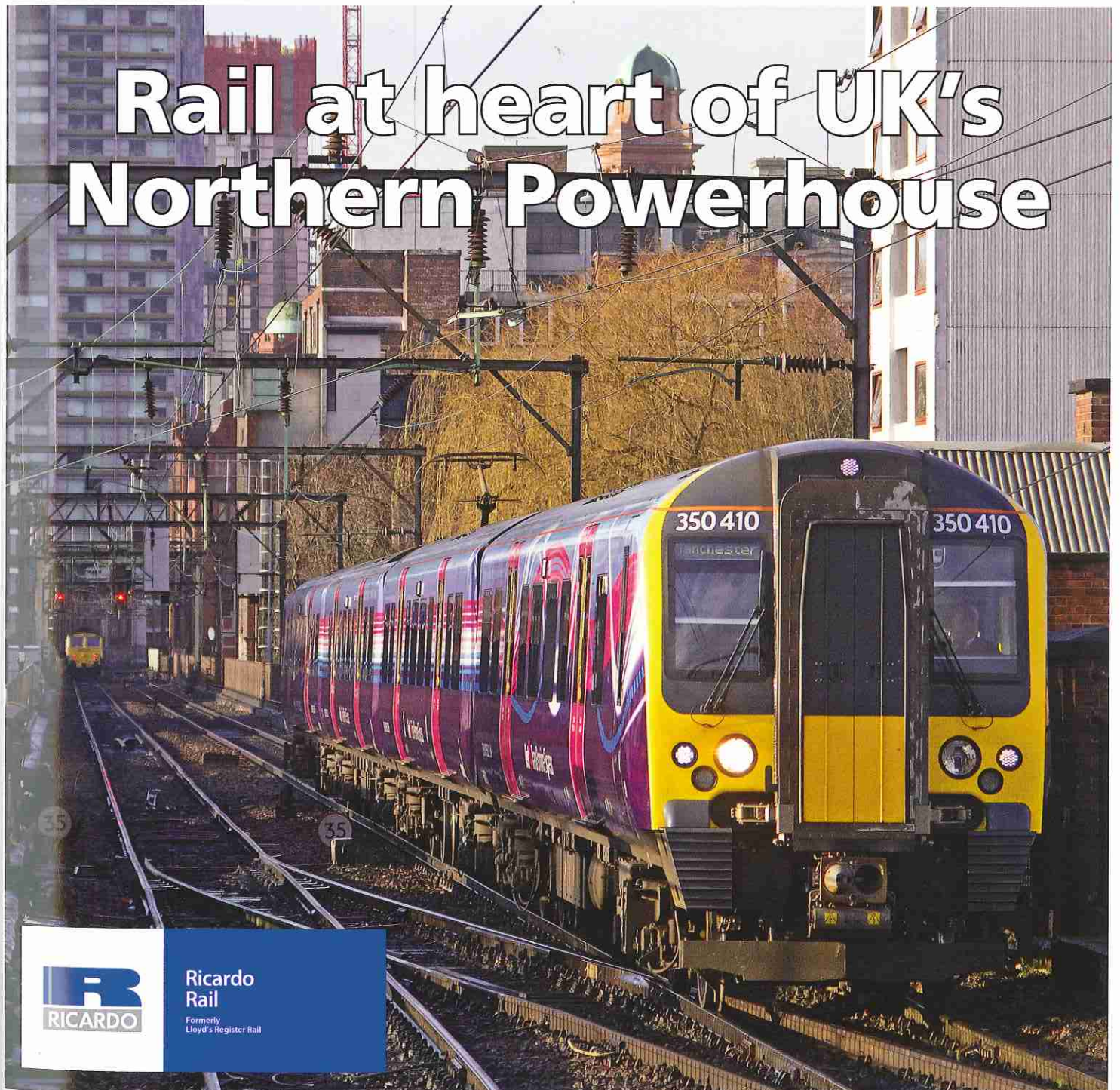


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February 2016

## Rail at heart of UK's Northern Powerhouse



**Ricardo  
Rail**  
Formerly  
Lloyd's Register Rail

are hiring people who understand these contractual relationships, the mobile operators are not really coming to the table.' Although T-Mobile was an active and high-profile partner in the original 2003 pilot, interest from telecoms companies has subsequently waned, he says.

Taylor accepts that not every operator is ready to go as far down the 'connected train' route as pacesetters such as ÖBB. But he does believe that across the four pillars of connectivity — wi-fi, onboard media, CCTV and condition-based maintenance — there is something that would appeal to most. 'Few analysts in the financial market appear to understand this in detail, so we have to estimate the business ourselves. But we believe this is a £800m to £900m market growing at around 10% per year.' He notes that CCTV is a 'low-margin commodity business' in which Nomad itself is not directly involved, but it can integrate others' equipment into its communications infrastructure, as it does for Queensland Rail's passenger services around Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

**Freight potential**

Nomad's maintenance and condition-monitoring operations are largely undertaken through its Nomad Tech

joint venture with Portugal's EMEF (RG 2.14 p60). This business is also registering strong growth, and is opening up opportunities in the freight sector especially. Taylor reports that Norway's NSB is using Nomad tele-maintenance equipment to support its domestic fleet, while Nomad's Australian office has recruited staff with a background in heavy haul railways.

The company is also looking at the possible use of its platforms to handle vital train control data in PTC or ETCS applications. 'We are confident that dedicated networks are not required for railway operational systems', Taylor says. 'Vital data can be handled over IP networks absolutely securely.' But he acknowledges that 'an entire industry' has emerged around

platforms like GSM-R, and they are 'not going away soon'.

Taylor is also adamant that the thorny question of spectrum availability must be addressed. 'This is a challenge for handling both vital and non-vital data in the rail sector. Rail doesn't shout loudly enough to governments and spectrum regulators about how crucial this is. There is a role for governments to make more spectrum accessible', he concludes. 'If passengers really want fast free wi-fi, that can only be delivered through government-backed spectrum. The reality is that in many regards, current 3G and LTE assets aren't suitable for rail needs, and in any case telecoms operators do not wish to share their networks', he concludes. ■

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ANDREW TAYLOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NOMAD DIGITAL

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