

Rail Data Marketplace

Welcome to your round up of news related to the Rail Data Marketplace (RDM). If at any time you wish to unsubscribe, email us at raildatamarketplace@raildeliverygroup.com.

In This Edition

Rail Minister heralds 'open data initiative' at RIA Conference

Programme summary

DataWharf becomes the first publisher to make chargeable data available on RDM

Rail Data Marketplace shortlisted for OpenUK Awards

Introducing the RDM Community

Multi-Factor Authentication implementation

Rail Minister heralds 'open data initiative' at RIA Conference

"It's not just about looking inwards, we can learn from other industries. Better data can drive up efficiency, improve customer experience and deliver better services. The Rail Data Marketplace is a prime example. The government matched millions in industry funding to get it off the ground and now it's growing into a one-stop shop that can truly deliver open by default rail data, nurturing opportunities for creative businesses and bearing fruit for a market hungry to make the most of it. But it needs your help and your engagement. Please could you have a think about how your organisations can play a role in this open data initiative."

Extract from Keynote Speech by Huw Merriman MP, Minister of State, Rail & HS2 at the RIA Conference, 1 November 2023.

We couldn't agree more with Huw!

Programme summary

It has certainly been a busy month. We set ourselves some ambitious targets for 'things that we wanted to get done prior to the RIA conference' and we were successful. Those included delivering the RDM community functionality, more details of which are below. We hope that over time, RDM will build into an active group of contributors who can provide feedback on both the platform and individual data products but also a rich source of information and help to other users of data. There is also an area to state your 'data wants'; what data would you like to see on RDM? We can't guarantee to get it, but we will be sure to highlight the market demand to publishers. Feel free to take a look and take part.

The breadth of data (a key area of feedback from our survey) has also expanded. Network Rail have published some great new datasets; firstly the Network Rail ENRICH team have a demonstrator of their Railway Model Shapefile (a less snappy but maybe more accurate description than 'track centre line' as I have previously known it). In addition, there is the NR Daily Concourse Footfall dataset which is rather more understandable and will prove incredibly valuable in informing decision-making.

Alongside 'community' we delivered numerous other functional, content and aesthetic changes to the platform in response to feedback, which might be a bit 'spot the difference' but which we hope will all incrementally contribute to a better user experience.

Perhaps more significant than those platform changes is the momentum which RDM is gaining. Our consumer numbers have tripled over the last two months which is a vivid demonstration of the demand for data relating to our industry. We now have more than 290 active data sharing agreements, and one consumer made around 2 million API calls on the platform in October.

In another first, we now have chargeable data products on RDM. The ability to sell data on the platform was a key requirement of the Rail Supply Group when specifying the RDM and it gives large and small organisations a new channel through which to generate income from their data. Our first publisher, DataWharf is offering datasets covering Stations, Journey distance and Operators. More detail about DataWharf, their products and why you might find them attractive are below.

As our invoicing and payments functionality is due in early 2024, we will be bolstering our security features to ensure that we keep your details secure by implementing multi-factor authentication (MFA). MFA provides an added layer of security by asking you to confirm your identity on your smartphone when making some transactions. In implementing this, we will be conscious of balancing the security of your data with user convenience. More details below.

Looking ahead, we have considerable interest from new publishers and some great new datasets which will be published prior to Christmas. Alongside that data will be the delivery of 'publish / subscribe' data publication functionality, but more on that in the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you would like to talk to us about publishing or how to make best use of RDM, then feel free to get in touch on the email address above.

DataWharf becomes the first publisher to make chargeable data available on RDM

DataWharf is a startup whose founders have a long history in the industry and who believe that they have spotted a gap in the market for comprehensive data in key areas. Their data products covering Stations, Journey distances and Operator details cover the whole of the UK and have been created by combining data from multiple sources and individual surveys. They have clearly defined descriptions that have been thought out from a user perspective, are time stamped and designed to be easy to work with. The licensing model provides both post-pay (for larger organisations) referred to as the 'Operator Release', and a pre-pay version available to anybody, referred to as 'General Release'.

The DataWharf products demonstrate a key premise of RDM; the creation of a competitive marketplace. There are a number of datasets relating to Stations, some of which are free; by offering consumers a choice, RDM allows them to decide whether the free or the chargeable data products offers them more value.

Search 'DataWharf' on the RDM homepage to find out more, or if you are interested in monetising your data, then get in touch with us and we will show you how RDM could allow you to do that.

Rail Data Marketplace shortlisted for OpenUK Awards

We're delighted that RDM has been nominated for the OpenUK Awards, an event celebrating achievements in the UK's Open Technology community. We've made the shortlist in the Data category, sponsored by Open Data Institute. This award recognises projects that encourage open data practices. The winner will be revealed on Monday 20 November. [Read more](#)

Introducing the RDM Community

The aim of the new RDM Community section is to provide a supportive space where industry professionals can openly exchange knowledge, share best practices, and tackle industry challenges collectively.

The community is organised into 6 separate areas of discussion:

- **Rail Data Marketplace:** This is a space to chat about general topics that are not covered in other sections of the community. If you need help getting started, you can ask questions and get advice about using the RDM platform.
- **Technical discussion:** Share your experiences of publishing or consuming data. Discuss best practice and get advice about setting up APIs or other data sources.
- **Industry challenges:** Join conversations about challenges faced by the rail industry and explore potential solutions.
- **Data wants:** Browse by tags and themes to discover the data the community wants to see on the RDM platform. If you have specific data needs, you can let publishers know by posting them in the data wants catalogue.
- **Collaboration:** Connect with people in the industry by joining collaborative discussion groups. You can either search for relevant groups and ask the originator to join or start a new public or private collaboration group. The existence of these groups are visible to all, however the discussion threads themselves are only visible to members of the group.
- **Data products:** Explore the 'Discussion' tab on each product page in the data product catalogue. This feature mirrors the functionality of community sections, allowing you to read and contribute posts and comments specific to each data product.

Navigating the community is easy - use the search and sort options to find existing discussions. In each category, you can create topics to start new discussions, or add posts and comments to contribute to conversations.

Participation in RDM platform discussions is subject to our community guidelines. Following these guidelines will help to make sure we build a respectful and inclusive environment that supports collaboration. We hope RDM users will join us in creating a community that benefits everyone on the platform and in the wider rail industry.

Multi-Factor Authentication implementation

To enhance security, we will shortly be implementing Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for RDM account administrators and finance approvers. MFA is a security mechanism that adds an extra layer of protection by verifying your identity and reducing the risk of unauthorized access. When we implement this authentication method, users in those two roles (administrators & finance approvers) will be asked to set up MFA. If you're not one of those roles, you do not need to do anything.

If you're the administrator for your organisation's account, when we implement MFA, you will be prompted to set it up when you first sign in. To do this, you'll need to download an authenticator app on your phone, like Microsoft Authenticator or Google Authenticator. Read our guide for step-by-step instructions on [how to set up Multi-Factor Authentication](#). Your smartphone will then be 'linked' to your account and when you are asked to authenticate using MFA, you will use the app on that specific phone.

If you use the same device and browser, you will only be asked to re-confirm your credentials using MFA periodically. If you sign in from a different device or browser, then you will be asked to use MFA the first time that you use that device/browser combination.

We hope that users understand the need for an appropriate level of security on a platform which allows organisations to transact and that our approach balances security and usability.