

# Smartphones get smarter

BY EDGAR JESSOP

The Meridian Exeda proffers conventional smartphone technology, along with ability to link to additional hardware. Benefits include streamlined fare payment, as well as slick on-board entertainment

**W**ith no immediate end to the global financial crisis in sight and the 2010 Fifa World Cup fast approaching, bus operators need to maximise the earning potential of their existing fleets.

Mike van der Merwe, director of Success-Meridian, a specialised South African fleet management solutions provider, says: "Success-Meridian has introduced a smartphone, Meridian Exeda, which will achieve savings and revenue income using the latest mobile communications technology."

While it may look similar to other smartphones, the Meridian Exeda is quite a different "animal", says Van der Merwe. "It has an 'extensible' architecture, which means it is modular and can be customised to suit various applications."

## In-coach TV

"Equipped with a GPRS modem, GPS navigation, WiFi and Bluetooth, along with best-of-breed processing power and memory capacity, it is able to serve as a fleet management system but also as a communications and marketing tool.

"Bus owners will be able to download fresh video content from WiFi hot spots and show it on drop-down video screens in the coach. Come 2010, soccer matches from other regions can be shown to fans while in transit. The revenue potential from advertising is enormous, in both luxury and commuter buses and taxis."

Tour operators can also benefit from the smartphone's multimedia capability. "Tour guides can be presented 'live' on coach video screens as they conduct the tour. The Meridian Exeda has a multi-USB interface, perfect for cameras.

"From a security point of view, having onboard cameras can help fleet owners lower insurance costs and prove culpability in the event of accidents and incidents involving their vehicles."



*Mike van der Merwe believes the Meridian Exeda SmartPhone will revolutionise the bus industry*

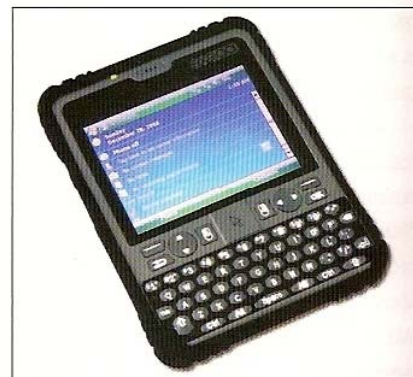
## Smartcard in the bus

In a joint venture with AirWave, an international supplier of wireless networking technologies, Success-Meridian will market a swipecard-based electronic fare payment solution to the bus, coach and taxi markets.

"Using the real-time reporting functionality of the Meridian Exeda connected to a small swipecard reader, the MyFare Classic swipecard will allow for cash-free transactions. This will make travel for soccer fans during the World Cup more convenient, allowing them to use all manner of transport, from buses, to limousines, to taxis.

"For taxi operators, having an on-board electronic payment system will add a new dimension of control to their operation and bring transparency to their revenue streams."

Another application using the swipecard/smartphone technology is the monitoring of scholars who travel to and from school by bus. "Each swipecard is linked to the cellphone of the parents. Should children fail to swipe upon boarding and exiting the school bus, immediate notification will be sent to parents. This will bring peace of mind to parents and enhance the accountability and efficiency of the bus service."



*More bells and more whistles make bus management more precise*

MyFare Classic cards can be linked to cardholder bank accounts or purchased using 'pay-as-you-go' and top-up packages available at retail outlets, adds Van der Merwe.

"The Meridian Exeda represents a new generation in mobility management, helping transporters maximise profit margins by making their customers' experience more convenient, safe and enjoyable."



*The Meridian Exeda can be fitted with an in-coach camera to send 'live' images back to base*