**An invitation to contribute to Special Sessions at WCTR15 in Mumbai**

**Transport policy decisions in the age of big data**

**Transport policy in response to automation and new mobility services**

**8th January 2019**

The five active Emeritus Members of the World Conference on Transport Research Society are keen to encourage early stage researchers to contribute to the debate on the potential for transport policy of two of the most significant current technological developments: big data and automation.

We will be hosting two Special Sessions in Mumbai, one on each of these themes, and aim to facilitate a journal special issue on each, drawing on the presentations made, and providing an opportunity for early stage researchers to publish their research findings on these key topics. The objectives of each session are set out below.

We invite members of the Society, and registered delegates for WCTR15, to submit abstracts for contributions to these two Special Sessions, and to encourage early stage researchers working with them to do so. We encourage two types of contribution: presentations which are not already reflected in papers accepted by the conference, and short summaries of papers which have already been accepted for presentation.

If you wish to contribute, please send an abstract of no more than 400 words, setting out the objectives, methodology, results and policy implications, to Professor Tony May at a.d.may@its.leeds.ac.uk by Friday 22nd February. Please indicate whether the abstract is for a new research output or for one which has already been accepted for presentation elsewhere in the conference, and which you wish to summarise in the Special Session.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Professor Tony May on behalf of Professors Alain Bonnafous, Yucel Candemir, Werner Rothengatter and Roger Vickerman

**Transport policy decisions in the age of Big Data: Exploiting Text and other Semantically Rich Data for Transport Policy and Strategy decision-making**

Objectives

Planning and decision-making in transportation and logistics projects involve a large number of stakeholders with distinct and often incompatible concerns and agendas, which all is accompanied by a high degree of uncertainty. Traditionally different sources of data are used for decision-making. On the one hand, quantitative data such as national statistics, or surveys are incorporated which are usually scarce and expensive. On the other hand, qualitative data from public consultancy may be used which is not easy to gather and to be analysed quickly and systematically. With the emergence of Big Data and growth in Big Data techniques, a huge number of textual information is now utilizable, which may be applied by different stakeholders. Formerly unexplored textual data from internal information assets of organisations, as well as textual data from social media applications has been converting to utilizable and meaningful insights due to the advancements of text mining techniques.

The objective of this special session is to develop the potential of textual data and the application of text mining in transportation, as an innovative and alternative big data application for transport policy decisions. The session should lead to fruitful research conversations and collaborations in the future. As big data methods, and data analytic techniques are very popular with the next generation of transportation researchers, another important objective of the session will be an attempt to bridging the gap between traditional policy and decision-making research within the field with these new methods and breed of researchers.

**Transport policy in response to automation and new mobility services: How best can countries and cities take advantage of new technologies and avoid suffering their adverse consequences?**

Objectives

The nature of the transport system is changing rapidly with the emergence of automated private cars and the development of new mobility services. Automation of the driving task could increase road capacity, remove the time and cost of parking, reduce the value of time spent “driving” and open up car use to those who cannot currently obtain a licence. All of these could lead to an increase in car use. At the same time, shared taxis, demand-responsive buses, shared cars and shared bikes are able to offer a wider range of mobility options, which may compete with, or extend the range of conventional public transport. New approaches to charging for public transport, collecting fares and providing information can affect the awareness and acceptability of the range of public transport options. And Mobility as a Service has the potential to offer the user a simpler, integrated way of choosing, booking and paying for the most appropriate combination of modes for a given journey.

Governments and city authorities face two difficulties in incorporating such innovations into their future transport policy. Firstly, there is still very limited information on their performance and the transferability of that performance between contexts. Secondly, most are being offered by third parties who are not in the public sector, are not motivated by public policy objectives, and may wish to compete with, rather than complement, existing provision. This introduces challenges for option generation, evaluation and above all governance in the development of transport strategies.

This session will offer an opportunity to consider these issues from the standpoint of policy makers, and thus, it is hoped, help to balance the technology-led literature on the subject. It is possible to envisage this session leading to the emergence of a new Session Track and SIG.