

eRoad claims \$2b savings possible from truck reform

TOM PULLAR-STRECKER

AUCKLAND company eRoad hit the streets in an environmentally friendly truck to show transport operators and bureaucrats how it hopes to take the collection of road-user charges into the internet age.

New Zealand's current paper-based system of road-user charges means that commercial vehicle owners need to buy rights to use the road network by paying in advance for each block of 1000 kilometres travelled.

eRoad has developed a tamper-proof device that tracks vehicles' mileage using GPS, rather than a traditional, mechanical hubodometer, and communicates this back to the company's servers over the cellphone network.

Commercial vehicle operators log on and pay road-user charges over the internet, with the licence transmitted back to eRoad's electronic terminal in the vehicle.

"It is like the difference between internet banking and standing at the Post Office with a little book," says business development manager Brian Michie. A monthly fee of \$109 per vehicle covers the hardware, software and data charges.

He claims the savings to the economy could be as high as \$2 billion, through improved productivity, reduced evasion of road-user charges and lower administration and enforcement costs.

eRoad's system will become one of a range of options for paying road-user charges in Sweden, if it is accredited in trials later this year. The company will also demonstrate its system at the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress in Stockholm.

Mr Michie says that as one of only four companies selected by the conference organisers, eRoad will get an "unprecedented opportunity" to showcase its system to a global audience.



On track: Brian Michie with eRoad, an electronic system for calculating road-user charges.