

# Vehicle pools for goods

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Web 2.0 can help companies located in the same region share haulage space when transporting consignments. Pooling benefits the environment, reduces CO2 output and saves costs -- experts put the figure at around 15 percent.

"Have you got a spare seat on the journey to Berlin?" Many weekend commuters use opportunities to travel together, instead of driving alone. It's more companionable and saves petrol, money and CO2. Something similar could also become reality for goods consignments from companies located close to one another: pooling of transport on rail and road reduces the environmental burden and saves costs - experts put the figure at around 15 percent.

"It has hardly been possible until now to get an overall picture of the combined road-rail transport options available for sending individual consignments. The systems presently in use do not make specific proposals for joint haulage," says Agnes Eiband, Project Manager for freight transport at the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flows and [Logistics](#) IML in Prien. "Companies must themselves locate the goods transfer terminal nearest to them - and to their customer at the other end. They then need to find out what the connections are like, how much train transport will cost, and how to organize delivery and collection of the goods". Far too complicated for many companies, that end up sending their consignments to customers by truck, as usual - also because they do not always have enough goods to fully load a train.

Experts from the IML's Prien Project Centre, have developed a new web-

based tool with colleagues from the Fraunhofer Institute for Production Engineering and Automation IPA in Stuttgart: Intermodal4all. With a click of the mouse this tool finds out the options available to local companies who want to transport their goods jointly and economically. This prototype system suggests the most suitable shared-haulage partner company and displays a map of the route the consignment will take. The 'rail configurator' calculates the different rail and road variants, while another module evaluates the options and optimizes haulage enquiries.

"Local companies can either use already existing train connections or jointly set up a train service, which might cover a longer distance once a week," explains Eiband. "Service-orientated software architectures and web services ensure that customers can actively use Intermodal4all throughout Europe. The modular configuration ensures that other transport optimization systems are integrated and can continue to be used." That also makes the software solution attractive to trucking companies or major [transport](#) users who want to optimize their haulage services.

Source: Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft ([news](#) : [web](#))

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