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## Towards More Comfortable Railways

Providing passengers with greater comfort is one of the key enablers for enhancing customer experience and making passenger railways more competitive with each other, as well as other transportation modes. It should also be pointed out that the rapidly growing wave of digitalization across almost all aspects of railway operations, including train operation, maintenance, and passenger services, has two important implications relative to passenger comfort. On the one hand, commercially available digital technologies, including the Internet and smartphones, are promoting the launch of a variety of passenger information services which accommodate the ever changing needs of passengers. On the other hand, digital technologies are a strong R&D tool to assist in making railways more comfortable. In order to build more comfortable environments for passengers, it is necessary to undergo a quantification process in which the notion of “comfort” is broken down into clearer components, the criteria for evaluating “comfort” are defined, and solutions to measure and improve the comfort level based on those criteria are devised. In other words, it is inevitable for us to use digital technologies through the process of quantifying the apparently ambiguous and broad notion of “comfort.”

This issue of the Ascent magazine features current trends of railway comfort studies as well as some of the solutions that RTRI has developed for improving passenger comfort.

If the articles contained in this issue of the Ascent aid our readers who are involved in improving railway comfort around the world, I could not be happier.

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