Transit System Technology Guide

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Overview

- Survey results
- App / mobile website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google Maps
- Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)
- Olmstead Plan
Transit Technology Survey Respondents

- Anoka Co. Transit
- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- Brown Co. Heartland Express
- Central Community Transit
- Chisago-Isanti Co. Heartland Express
- Greater Mankato Transit System
- Hubbard Co. Heartland Express
- Maple Grove Transit
- Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
- Moorhead MATBUS
- Paul Bunyan Transit
- Prairie Five RIDES

- Prairie Lakes Transit
- Rochester Public Transit
- Rolling Hills Transit
- SMART Transit
- SouthWest Transit
- Trailblazer Transit
- Transit Alternatives
- Tri-CAP Transportation
- United Community Action Partnership
- Wadena Co. Friendly Rider Transit / Becker Co. Transit
- White Earth Public Transit
Current technologies utilized

- **Website** – 100%
- **Facebook** – 74%
- **App / mobile-friendly website** – 35%
- **Google Maps** – 35%
- **Twitter** – 30%
- No responding systems currently have *Transportation Network Company (TNC) / rideshare* integration
Technology implementation priorities

- App / mobile-friendly website – 43%
- Website updates / improvements – 35%
- Google Maps – 30%
- Facebook – 17%
- Twitter – 13%
- TNC / rideshare integration – 4%
Barriers to addition / upkeep of new technologies

- Staff is too busy – 65%
- Lack of funding – 61%
- Staff would need training – 43%
- Riders do not ask for new technologies – 30%
- Additional response: County won’t allow Facebook access
Why is an app / mobile website important?

- 80% of internet users own a smartphone (Smart Insights, 2017)
- Since 2014, more websites are accessed via mobile than computers
  - Gap continues to widen
- As of January 2016, over half of Facebook users only access it via mobile
Best Practices: App / Mobile Website

- Minimum: One page with easily accessible contact information
- Focus on making important information easy to find and read
Why is Facebook important?

- Most popular social media tool worldwide
- 79% of US adults who use the internet use Facebook (68% of all US adults)
- Part of Facebook’s continued growth is increasing use by older adults

Source: Pew Research, 2016
Best Practices: Facebook

- Facebook page with a custom URL
  - Solely for the system if possible
- About tab with complete information
  - Link to website

Like MPTA’s Facebook page - we will like yours back which drives traffic!
Best times to post on Facebook

**TIP:** Set a reminder on your calendar or mobile phone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Best Times</th>
<th>Best Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9AM, 10AM, 11AM, 12PM, 1PM, 2PM, 3PM</td>
<td>S: 32%, M: 18%, T: 18%, W: 32%, T: 18%, F: 18%, S: 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And people seem to be happier on Friday (small wonder), so funny or upbeat content will fit right in to that “happiness index.” Posting at 3pm will get you the most clicks, while 1pm will get you the most shares.

**Quick Tip:** Use Facebook analytics and Foursquare’s Karma to track your data and see when your audience is online.
Why is Twitter important?

- #4 in popularity worldwide
- 24% of US adults who use the internet use Twitter (21% of all US adults)
- Younger Americans are more likely users than older Americans, but all age groups have users
- Twitter is often accessed when there is breaking news
- #Hashtags are important (high visibility), but use caution

Best Practices: Twitter

- Short Twitter handle
- Solely for the transit system if possible
- The account description on the left under the profile picture should include a link to the website
- Encourage the system’s account to follow @MNPublicTransit and vice versa – help drive traffic!
Best times to tweet

Don’t worry about this too much! It is better to post whenever on a regular basis than not at all.
Potential content for Facebook and Twitter

- Schedule changes / weather alerts
- Job postings
  - Facebook: link to website and/or use Jobs (see left sidebar)
  - Twitter: link to website
- Event photos
- Employee / rider profiles

*It is easy to link together Facebook and Twitter to save time.*

*Hootsuite is a great and free option.*
Additional Social Media Tips

- Have **accounts** on both sites to increase exposure
  - Link them to one another and link both to the system’s website
  - Make sure account information like the About tab on Facebook and the profile box on Twitter is filled out / updated

- Keep **posts** as short as possible to increase engagement
  - Only essential details
  - Tweets are limited to 140 characters each

- Use **images** whenever possible to increase visibility
  - Polls, numbered lists and graphics are great too
Follow MPTA on social media – we’ll follow you back!

Facebook
- Minnesota Public Transit Association

Twitter
- @MNPublicTransit
Public transit services that operate with fixed routes and schedules can join Transit Partner Program for free.

Travelers and urban users are used to using Google Maps to plan multi-modal and transit-only trips.
TNCs

- Transportation Network Companies
  - Both are available in Duluth, Mankato, MSP, Rochester, St. Cloud
- Public-private partnerships between TNCs or taxi companies and transit systems can help fill coverage gaps

Source: WCCB Charlotte
Where does Olmsted fit into this?

The state of Minnesota has developed a plan to provide improved access to community services for people with disabilities as a result of the Olmstead lawsuit.

This mandate will have a large impact on transit systems as they work to provide increased service. Technology has a role to play in this endeavor.
Olmstead in Action: How Transit and Integrated Technologies Help People with Disabilities

Transit service:

- Gives independence to wheelchair users and people who do not drive
- Reduces isolation by providing community access
- Eases responsibilities of caregivers by providing rides to appointments and other outings
- Connects riders with disabilities to productive employment

Transit technologies:

- Online booking of bus rides is an alternative to traditional phone calls
- Farecards simplify the payment process – no need to make a trip to the store to buy tickets or tokens
- Real time mobile alerts ensure shorter wait times in inclement weather and give peace of mind to caregivers
- Modern software streamlines the dispatching process, providing improved coverage