

DART Riders Receive Real-Time Transit Service Updates

Today's increasing gas prices, traffic congestion, and concern with carbon emissions have driven more people to public transportation. On average, a person can save \$9,499 per year by taking public transportation instead of driving. The only downfall for riders is experiencing unexpected delays causes frustration since much of their day is scheduled around train and bus arrival times. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) riders no longer feel this frustration because they receive instant email and text message alerts notifying them of route or schedule changes. Utilizing GovDelivery Email and Digital Subscription Management service allows DART to communicate important service alerts quickly and efficiently to its stakeholders. This type of communication by DART is instrumental throughout a rider's commute – from knowing where there is a service disruption to providing information regarding the daily DART schedule.



“The GovDelivery System provides DART with an additional tool to provide up-to-the minute service notifications when conditions are rapidly changing.”

- Elizabeth Elam, DART

In 2008, Americans took 10.7 billion trips on public transportation – the highest ridership level in 52 years. High gas prices, energy conservation and “green” living have fueled the increased popularity of public transportation. Each year, public transportation saves 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline; public transit reduces the nation's carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 37 million metric tons.

With increased ridership, transit authorities are feeling the pressure to improve customer service and enhance the experience of each rider. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) (www.dart.org) envisions itself as the “preferred choice of transportation for now and in the future.” In working to become the preferred method of transportation, improve rider service and enhance the rider experience, DART implemented GovDelivery Email and Digital Subscription Management (EDSM).

Situation

DART services the city of Dallas and 12 surrounding cities with modern public transit services and customer facilities tailored to make each trip fast, comfortable and economical. The extensive network of DART Rail, Trinity Railway Express (TRE) and bus services moves more than 200,000 passengers per day across a 700 square-mile service area.

DART understands the importance of “pushing” information out to customers, rather than expecting them to visit the website and search for the information themselves. Because of DART's extensive network of services it is important for communications with riders to be relevant and targeted. DART implemented RSS feeds as a way to communicate with riders, but desired an additional communication method that would work in conjunction with RSS. Specifically, they hoped to find a solution to alert customers via wireless device so



RESULTS

Since launching GovDelivery in January 2007 DART has:

- Sent more than **1.39 million emails** to subscribers.
- Signed up more than **7,400 subscribers**
- Incorporated nearly **160 subscription items** including:
 - News & Events
 - Rider Alerts
 - Construction Alerts
 - DART Rail Expansion Information
 - **And More...**

updates could be available real-time, no matter where customers were located.

Solution

On January 2, 2007, DART launched GovDelivery's Email and Digital Subscription Management (EDSM) solution, joining other leading transportation authorities, such as Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and TriMet (Oregon), in recognizing the need for real-time service updates for commuters. GovDelivery is an automated system that uses email, text messaging and RSS to keep citizens and riders informed when new information is available on topics of interest. The email and text messages are provided to subscribers based on the DART website content.

The DART Schedule Planning Department was instrumental in researching GovDelivery and evaluating its efficiency as a communication tool. The department views the service as an opportunity to communicate high priority information: service disruptions, construction alerts, and expansion information. As a service disruption is posted to the website, alerts are automatically sent to riders via their chosen communication method. As a new construction project is planned and described on the website, emails or text messages are delivered to all those who have subscribed to updates regarding the affected routes or rail lines.

DART improves their customer service by gathering details such as zip code and frequently used transit methods and routes. With this information, when a service disruption happens, they have the ability to communicate with all subscribers within a specific disruption area and mode of transportation.

Results

DART has experienced a number of benefits since implementing GovDelivery. Most important is the ability to deliver targeted information to riders and stakeholders in a timely manner. An ancillary benefit is the ability to quickly distribute service disruption information to employees who work at outlying facilities throughout the system and to Customer Response Team members deployed on an emergency basis.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit has been able to improve the experience of transit riders through implementing GovDelivery EDSM. Riders now receive the most up-to-date information on bus and rail schedules, construction updates and service disruptions. The return on investment (ROI) for DART is evident as customers acknowledge

greater satisfaction in the transit system and choose to utilize the system in the future.

To receive DART's free email updates, go to www.dart.org.

GovDelivery is the world's leading provider of government-to-citizen communication solutions. GovDelivery's Email and Digital Subscription Management solution is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that provides organizations a fully-automated, on-demand public communication system.

Sources:

American Public Transportation Association (June 2, 2008). "[Public Transit Ridership Continues to Grow In First Quarter 2008](#)". Press Release. Retrieved on 2008-10-24.

American Public Transportation Association (September 4, 2008). "[Even With Declining Gas Prices, Public Transit Users Save \\$9,596 per Household Annually, Up \\$411 From Last Year](#)". Press Release. Retrieved on 2008-10-24.

American Public Transportation Association (October 6, 2008). "[High Gas Prices Put Public Transportation on Nation's Agenda](#)". Press Release. Retrieved on 2008-10-24.

American Public Transportation Association (October 6, 2008). "[Public Transit Users Save \\$9,499 Per Household Annually, Up Over \\$250 From Last Year](#)". Press Release. Retrieved on 2008-11-06.

American Public Transportation Association (March 9, 2009). "[10.7 Billion Trips Taken On U.S. Public Transportation In 2008 – Highest Level in 52 Years: Ridership Increased as Gas Prices Decline and Jobs Were Lost](#)". Press Release. Retrieved on 2009-5-14.

Updated January 2010