

RESEARCH SUMMARY

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| Title | TfL Digital bus innovations | | |
| Objective | To explore whether the introduction of E-paper and digital screen technology improve accuracy and reliability of information for London's bus users both at the bus stop and on the bus | | |
| Date | 22/01/2016 | Agency | 2CV |
| Methodology | 3 x intercept sessions at trial site (Waterloo Bridge) Auto-ethnography pre-task 4 x 1.5 hour focus groups | | |

Abstract

Customers prioritise two broad information needs at bus stops and on buses - they want to know when their next bus is coming and how long their journey will take. The latter is particularly important as journey times can be unpredictable and inconsistent. All of the new digital bus innovations were felt to be a positive step forward in meeting customers' need for more accurate and 'real time' information; bus digital screens and e-paper, in particular, were felt to answer the question of 'when' the bus is coming and make customers feel more confident; digital displays on buses are felt to meet an important information gap, giving customers a better overview of the journey, upcoming stops and more integrated modal information. While all three innovations were felt to be valuable, customers still feel there is a need for more real time information detailing 'how long' journeys are expected to take.

Key findings

While some information (eg LED displays, timetables) at bus stops and on buses is meeting customers' information needs quite well, there is a desire for more real-time information for **when the bus is coming** and **how long the journey is going to take**. Overall, all three digital innovations were well received and felt to largely meet the need for more accurate real-time information.

E-paper: Felt innovative and exciting and met customers' desire to find out **when the bus is coming** (through live arrivals) and **how long the journey will take** (an approximation provided through the spider diagram). Customers feel this innovation is timely and are excited at the prospect of seeing e-paper technology rolled out across bus stops in London.

On bus signs: Meeting the need for more accurate real-time information giving an overview of upcoming bus stops as well as the times between them. Customers appreciate the integrated modal information as well as the route overview. While customers want more information on diversions, they feel it is important to know where they are being diverted to as well as how long the diversion is going to take.

Digital bus signs: Customers want live bus arrival information to be prioritised over other types (i.e. information on other modes) on these screens. The screens feel like quite an expensive investment and customers feel they would be best placed at busy transport hubs/interchanges and not at every bus stop.