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Centre for Transport Research and Innovation for People

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Title: Passenger preferences for real-time public transport information

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Abstract

This research examines the benefits individuals derive from using real-time public transport information. The focus of the study was to ascertain individuals' preferences between a number of methods of accessing this information. The methods of acquiring real-time public transport information considered in this study were: the internet, mobile phone, at-stop passenger information displays and call centres. The objective of this research was to estimate individuals' willingness to pay for real-time public transport information.

Data Collection

To measure individuals' willingness to pay for real-time public transport information a survey was conducted over a two-week period from the 18th April – 9th May 2005. A total of 1,500 surveys were distributed to the employees in Dublin city centre. 495 fully completed surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 33%.

Opinion of Current Public Transport Information

Table 1 presents respondents' opinions of the current public transport information provided in Dublin.

Table 1Perceptions of the quality of transport information currently provided

Option	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)
Maps at bus stops/train stations	4.4	13.5	27.0	28.8	26.3
Timetables at bus stops/train stations	6.6	21.8	30.7	22.4	18.5
Public transport websites	8.8	33.5	31.4	13.6	12.7
The availability of fare information	4.2	14.0	29.5	27.6	24.7
Availability of real-time information	3.5	11.1	20.5	29.2	35.7

(*N=495*)

Willingness to pay for real-time information

Table 2 presents the willingness to pay amounts for real-time public transport information. These values were estimated using the results from a series a multinomial logit models. The results are segmented by mode of transport. Willingness to pay amounts were estimated for the following real-time information options:

- Accessing real-time information at home using a text message, the internet or call centre
- Accessing real-time information at stop using a text message, call centre or a passenger information display
- Accessing real-time information at work using a text message, the internet or call centre

Table 2 Willingness to pay for real-time public transport information

Option	Bus users	Rail users	Car users
	Real-time options available at home		
Internet	€0.26	€0.14	€0.07
Text message	€0.36	€0.28	€0.17
Call centre	€0.23	€0.17	€0.8
	Real-time options available at-stop		
Passenger information display	€0.32	€0.27	€0.11
Text message	€0.25	€0.22	€0.09
Call centre	€0.21	€0.18	€0.08
	Real-time options available at place of work		
Internet	€0.15	€0.12	€0.07
Text message	€0.34	€0.28	€0.18
Call centre	€0.26	€0.23	€0.07

Conclusions

Respondents were found to be willing to pay the most for accessing real-time information from a text message when planning their trip from home to work and when returning from work to home. While waiting at a bus stop or train station individuals were found to be willing to pay the most for real-time information from a passenger information display. Bus users were found to be willing to pay the most for real-time information followed by rail users and car users.

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