

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%

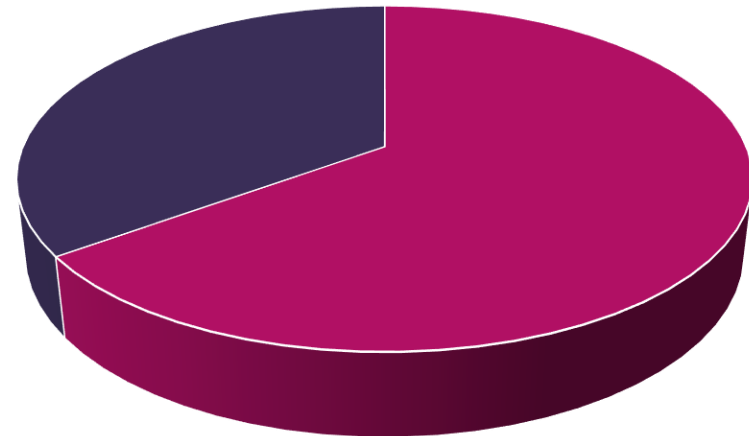
Barriers to addition / upkeep of new technologies

- ▶ 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?

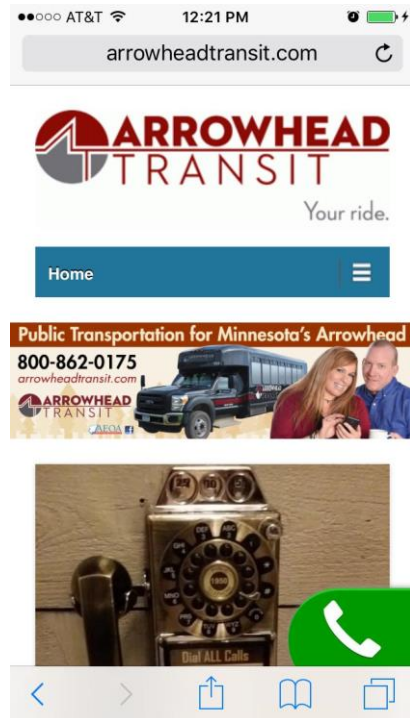
- ▶ 80% of internet users own a smartphone (*Smart Insights, 2017*)
- ▶ Since 2014, more websites are accessed via mobile than computers
 - ▶ Gap continues to widen
- ▶ As of January 2016, over half of Facebook users only access it via mobile

Internet Access Method
(comScore, Dec. 2015)



■ Mobile ■ Desktop

Best Practices: App / Mobile Website

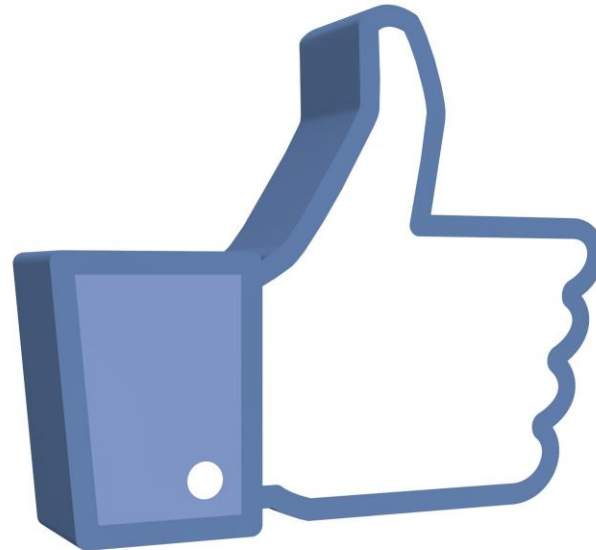


- ▶ Minimum: One page with easily accessible contact information
- ▶ Focus on making important information easy to find and read

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*



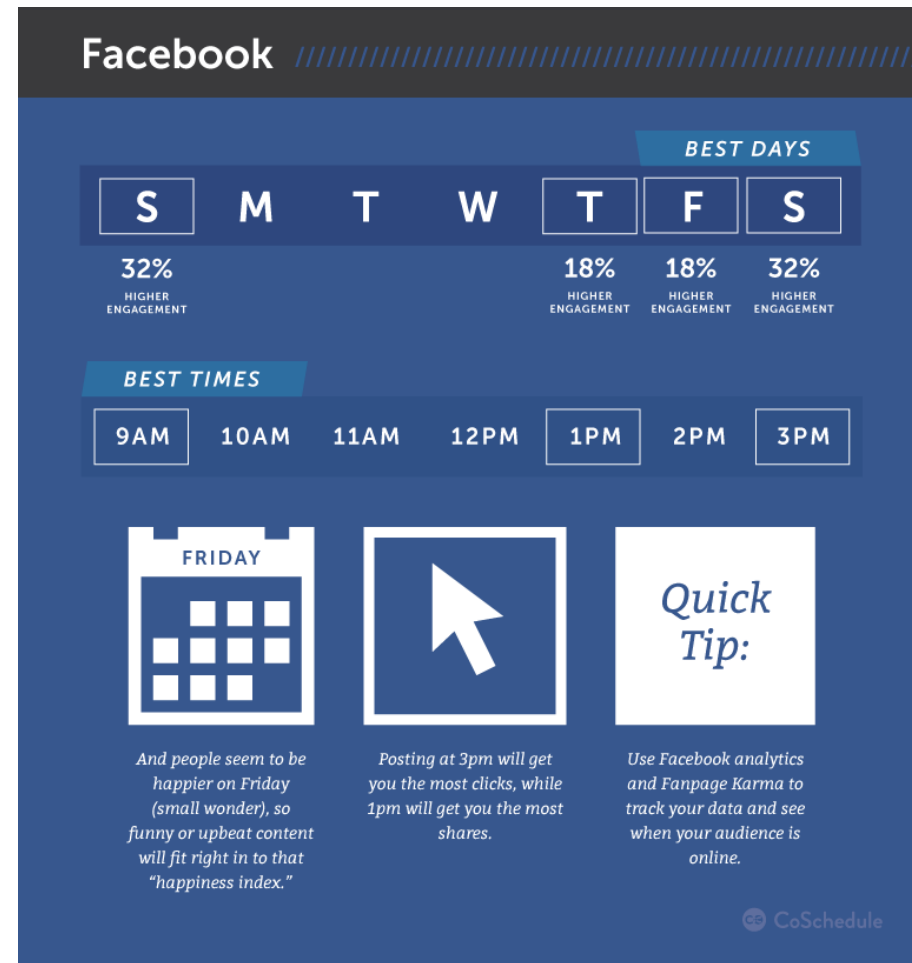
Best Practices: Facebook

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

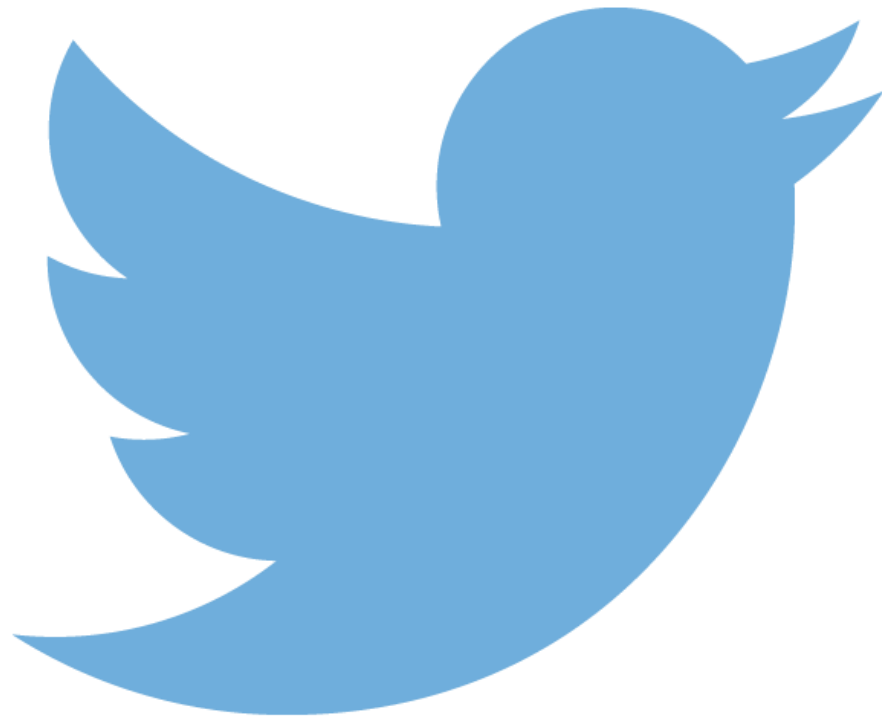
Like MPTA's Facebook page - we will like yours back which drives traffic!

Best times to post on Facebook

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



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

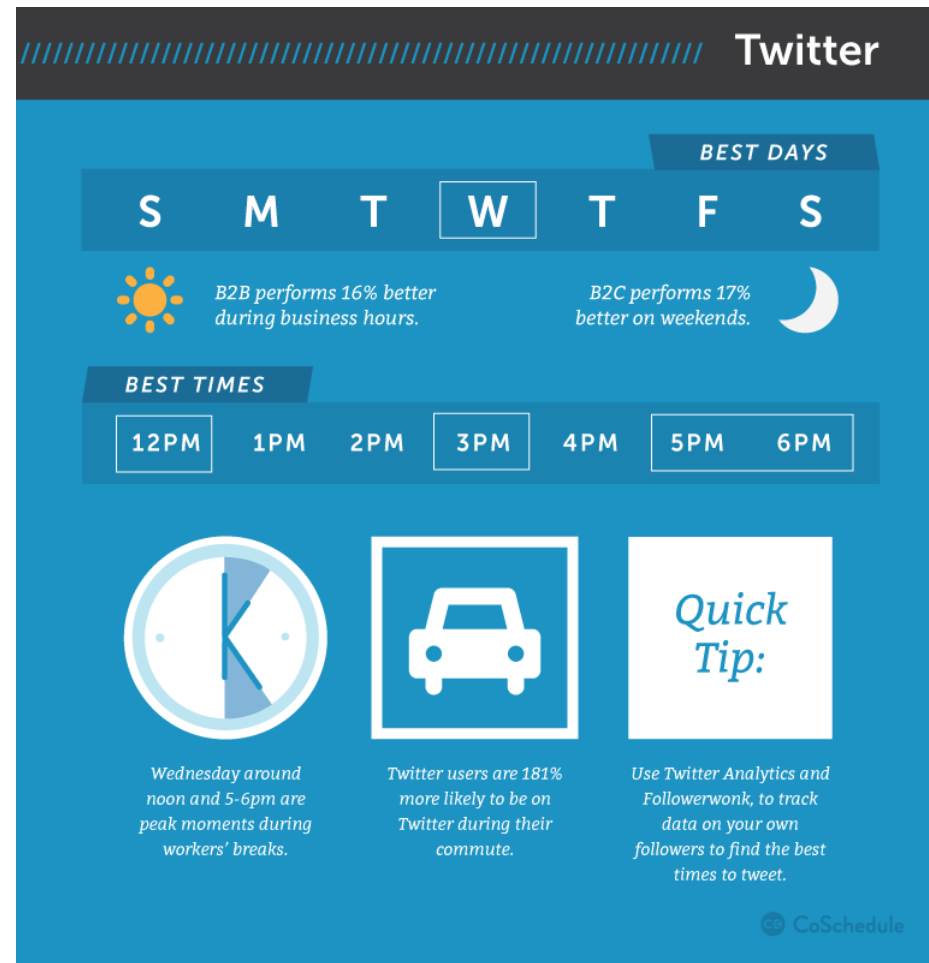
Source: *pluggingroup* & *Pew Research*, 2016

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!

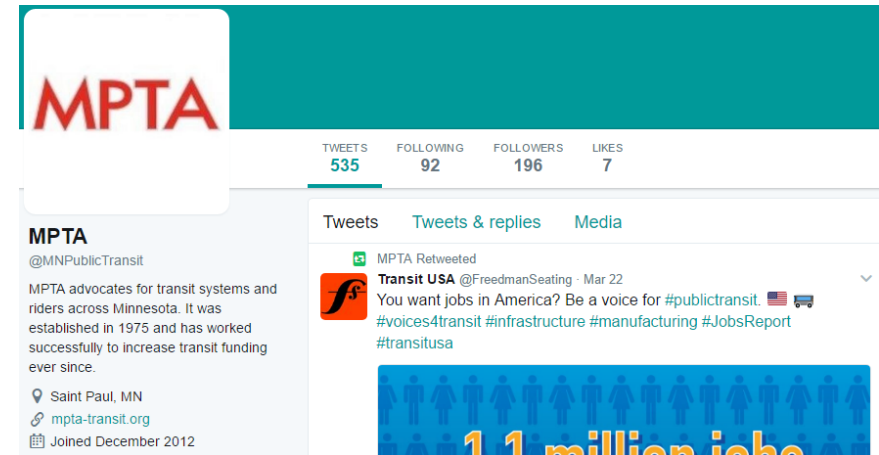
Facebook

- ▶ Minnesota Public Transit Association

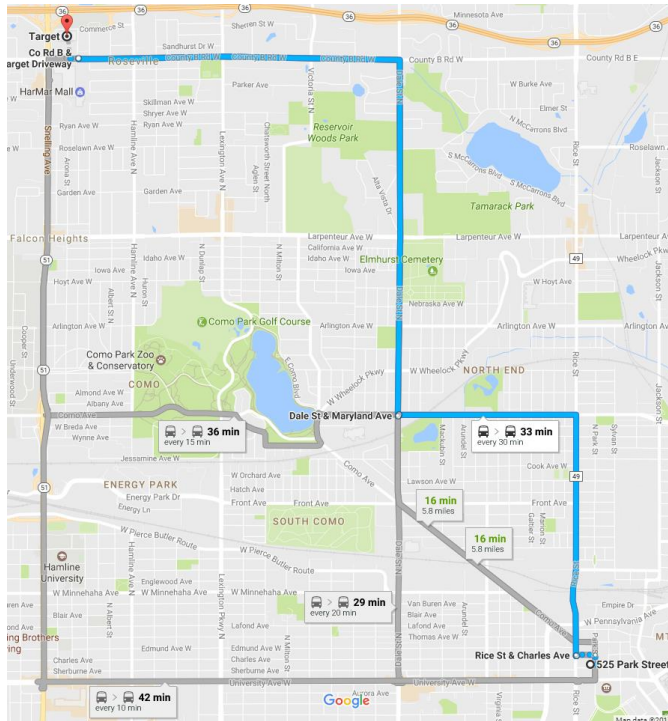


Twitter

- ▶ @MNPublicTransit



Google Maps



- ▶ 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