

Kizoom in the news

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Centro maximises its real-time investment with Kizoom technology

Centro, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority has officially launched *Live Travel Map* for Network West Midlands, an advanced mapping technology launched from Kizoom, now part of CitySpace, which takes complex real-time data feeds and delivers easy-to-use public transport information via mobile phones and the internet.

Centro has also enhanced its existing .mobi mobile phone service from Kizoom (www.netwm.mobi), which provides live bus times, to now show bus stops on a simple map interface. This valuable evolution of the service allows passengers to search for stops by either name, postcode or stop code and bookmark details for frequent, easy access.

"Consistently easy-to-use and readily available passenger information is a key requirement appearing time and again across our customer research," said Pete Bond, Bus and Highways Development Manager for Centro.

"Our investment in real-time data feeds gives us a highly valuable proposition which we can maximise through the wider delivery channels now available to us like the internet and mobile phones. So it makes sense to harness the data and cost effectively feed it to passengers as an innovative service which, given the success of our SMS and .mobi services to date, is evidently what people want."

Kizoom has been working as a trusted technology partner with Centro since it first launched its *Live Departures to Mobile SMS* (TextTime) service early in 2006 - every one of the West Midlands 12,500 bus stops has a unique code from which passengers can text to 84268 to get live departure times, or scheduled times where RTI is unavailable. TextTime was followed by the roll out of www.netwm.mobi (MobiTime), as similar service for mobile phones with WAP capabilities, in February 2007.

"Our TextTime service is proving to be very popular with passengers – we consistently receive around 6,000 SMS messages a month. However MobiTime is already taking over with some 8,000 users a month and we expect this to continue growing exponentially thanks to its enhanced capabilities and because it is often perceived as free since mobile phone internet services are often bundled into the service provider contract," explained Bond.

Live Travel Map presents a truly holistic transport service for passengers by encompassing live bus and rail departures. It offers useful features such as links straight from a specified stop to interchange maps and to Transport Direct for journey planning. Bus stations are cleverly presented as a single entity on the map with departures split out by stand, making it simple and intuitive. Centro sees *Live Travel Map* and the .mobi enhancement as adding value to its real-time family of information products which give Network West Midlands passengers control over their journeys and the confidence of knowing exactly when their next service is due.

“There is significant enthusiasm here for the software mapping technology which Kizoom brings into play, providing complex real-time data feeds as simple, easy-to-use public transport information. Critically, Kizoom is a valued technology partner to Centro; the team is highly professional and responsive and they design, develop and deploy on time and on budget,” concludes Bond.

Once Live Travel Maps has had time to settle in, Centro is considering further, innovative enhancements like messaging from bus stops, adding points of interest to maps and further developments of the data to keep the service compelling for passengers.