

UK explores sentiment mapping for intelligent transport system

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Pod side

Projects brewing at a UK government-funded research center for transport include two-passenger pods and sentiment mapping. Sentiment mapping is considered a way to better understand what passengers think and feel as they use transportation services to get from place to place. A report in *The Guardian* on Saturday said that an innovation center is being launched in Milton Keynes to serve as a facility for the government's Transport Systems Catapult (TSC), part of a network of seven technology and innovation centers. The projects are driving collaborations among academics, and technologists, and business people. The Transport Systems Catapult has ambitious goals; the aim is to drive business growth, attract investment, and create jobs through Intelligent Mobility innovation, according to the TSC web site. With the facility at

Milton Keynes, TSC aims to be a collaborative center enabling the UK to become globally recognized "as the go-to place for expertise in intelligent transport systems."

As for sentiment mapping, this is a project that could map trouble spots by noticing drivers and passengers' feelings expressed on [social media](#), in the event of service flaws, breakdowns and delays. The system could know what people are thinking and feeling and also locate that information in time and place.

"Fuming in a traffic jam? Stuck on a stationary train? Standing waiting for the bus that was due 30 minutes ago? Soon you could get the chance to share your frustration," said The Guardian.

The TSC is working with the Royal College of Art and Commonplace, a crowd-based sentiment mapping application for collecting peoples' [opinions](#).

The idea is that with the use of social media and phone apps as tools, those who manage [transport](#) systems can get realtime visualizations of where problems occur and what traveler perceptions really are. The benefits are seen in both directions, both allowing transport providers to be more responsive transport providers can intervene to fix a problem as soon as it occurs, or improve long-term planning by becoming aware of repeated issues in perceptions—and also empowering travelers with a greater voice over their own experiences. As such, the public could feel more involved in transport planning, in turn building stronger connections between the two.

"Sentiment mapping gives you the opportunity to put passengers, users, right at the center of their operational decision-making," Mike Saunders, co-founder of Commonplace, said, according to The Guardian, Dr Stephen Boyd Davis of the Royal College of Arts, who is working on the

project, said. "The whole transport sector is increasingly good at using every kind of technology, from posters to digital media to social media to send information to [passengers](#), but [is] not necessarily very good at finding out what the passenger experience is like,"

Earlier this year, the TSC held two workshops on transport disruption and sentiment mapping, to engage industry, gather opinion and explore support. Transport providers, commuters, mobility groups and digital experts participated in the workshops. Traveler reactions to transport disruptions were among the focus areas.

As for the [pods](#), Coventry-based RDM Group, engineering service providers, are preparing the manufacture of the LUTZ Pathfinder pods. LUTZ stands for Low Carbon Urban Transport Zone. RDM and TSC are to work with Oxford University's Mobile Robotics Group to create three electric-powered pods to be tested on pavements of Milton Keynes next year. A key benefit of these pods, designed as unmanned vehicles for two people, is that they are forms of low-carbon transport.

They will move along, at about 12 kilometers per hour (7 mph). These are pavement-based [pods](#) intended to increase the number of mobility options available to the public, while reducing congestion and carbon emissions. With safety issues in mind, until testing is complete, the three pods will be manned by trained human operators. When RDM completes production of the first vehicle by the end of 2014, Oxford University robotics experts will install their technology in the vehicle and begin test-track trials in early 2015.

More information: * ts.catapult.org.uk/news

* www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/...g-travel-management/

* ts.catapult.org.uk/sentiment-mapping

* imaginefestival.co.uk/about-us/

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