MASSTRAVELER POPUP SURVEY
INITIAL RESULTS FOR MASSDOT

Requested By:

The RTIC Advisory Board

MassDOT

University of Massachusetts Transportation Center

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the evaluation effort of MassTraveler.com, the Regional Traveler Information Center's (RTIC) web page, the RTIC Advisory Committee has requested the implementation of a small popup survey that will appear when users access the website. The short survey asks questions regarding the users' usage and thoughts of the website, along with some demographics. Originally, the popup would appear immediately as the user loaded the website. The box appeared on the center of the screen. Throughout the first two weeks of having the survey online, over a hundred responses were obtained. The results page was viewed once daily (or every other day). During the first two weeks of being active, New England was struck by Hurricane Irene. This strong weather system caused incredible amounts of flooding that closed roads and knocked out bridges in the region. It has been found that the passing of Hurricane Irene caused significant changes in the data beyond what is considered normal. These occurrences were brought up to the RTIC Advisory Committee, whom recommended notifying MassDOT. This summary will discuss the interesting changes in data that were discussed.

Please note, after discussion of the data, two questions were altered and the popup was moved. Because of this, a new survey has been started. The results below are all of the answers to the originally launched survey and popup (112 total completions). To date, the new survey only has 9 completions.

Also note, this discussion is not a complete evaluation of RTIC/MassTraveler. The discussion is meant to bring light upon some interesting findings in the data regarding the content of MassTraveler during this disastrous time.

RESPONSE SUMMARY

This summary will discuss the effects of the Hurricane on each question individually as they are answered by the users.

Question 1: Regarding which information the user uses.

1. What information are you looking for on MassTraveler?		
Webpage Links	3	3%
Traffic/Construction Advisories	71	64%
Webcam Images	31	28%
Travel Times	18	16%
Travel Speeds	10	9%
Bus Tracker (defunct)	4	4%
Other, please specify	38	34%

This question allows the user to choose which information they have been searching for on the webpage. Prior to the hurricane, around 25 responses were obtained and the majority of responders

selected Webcam Images as their desired information. This is not at all surprising as the previous focus groups that were held, as well as website clicks monitored by RTIC all point to Webcams as being the most popular information provided. However, once the hurricane came and went the focus switched from Webcams to Traffic/Construction Advisories. The "Other" category here lists 38 responders, all but three of these responders entered "Road Closures or Closed Roadways due to Floods." Again, this occurrence is not surprising due to the large amounts of roadways closed, as well as a stretch of I-91 being completely closed, and MA-2 being completely closed. A table of all "Other, please specify" responses is located in the Appendix.

Question 2: Regarding how useful MassTraveler is

2. How useful do you find MassTraveler?			
Very Useful		10	10%
Useful		33	34%
Neutral		44	46%
Not Useful		5	5%
Very Not Useful		4	4%
Total		96	100%

This question's responses can be seen above. The pre-Irene responses were all either "Useful" or "Very Useful." During and after Irene, there was an explosion of "Neutral" responses. After looking at other questions it was found that the majority of responders during this time were first time users and immediately jumped into the survey without actually viewing the site. Here, they had no basis to judge the usefulness and put Neutral. The responders who listed Not Useful were looking for road closure information that did not exist. Many of them took their frustration out on our survey. This can be seen in the discussion of later questions.

Question 3: Regarding Smartphone Applications

3. Would you use a MassTraveler App on your PDA or smartphone?If Yes, please select your smartphone or PDA.			
Android		14	22%
iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad		25	39%
Blackberry		7	11%
Palm (WebOS)		2	3%
Windows		7	11%
Other, please specify		14	22%

This question is irrelevant for the discussion at hand but we can clearly see here that Android and Apple products dominate. The heavy selection of "Other" were people who responded "None" or "I don't have one" instead of just not selecting anything. It was established that the question was confusing and a "None" option was added.

Question 4: Regarding Gender

4. What is your gender?		
Male	41	38%
Female	68	62%
Total	109	100%

This question is also irrelevant for the discussion at hand, but it is interesting to note that more females have responded to the survey thus far.

Question 5: Regarding Age Group

5. What age group are you in?		
<18	0	0%
18-20	1	1%
21-25	6	6%
26-30	3	3%
31-35	6	6%
36-40	11	10%
41-45	11	10%
46-50	12	11%
51-55	15	14%
56-60	19	18%
61-65	9	8%
66+	14	13%
Total	107	100%

This question is also irrelevant for the discussion at hand. It can be seen here that there is a lack of knowledge and use of MassTraveler in the younger population.

Question 6: Zip Codes

This question received 109 responses. The table has been sorted twice, once in order of responses (as they came in) and once in the order of zip code (smallest to largest). These tables can be seen in the Appendix as they are large. Most of the zip codes are listed in Massachusetts; however there are a substantial amount of users from Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey. Many of the Vermont users voiced their opinions in the following question.

Question 7: Any other thoughts

This is the most important question as it gave the users a space to voice their opinion on what needs to be added or changed. The most popular answer pre-Irene was to add webcams on I-91 and other busy highways in the area like MA-116. It is understood that this is in the process of happening, yet

has hit some snags. The entire list of responses can be found in the Appendix. Note in this table, the orange responses were pre-Irene.

THE ADVISORY MAP

By far the most popular answers during and after the hurricane were regarding the MassDOT imported advisory map. It seemed that everyone was visiting this page to look for road closures in Massachusetts yet were met with an empty map save for 5 or 6 traffic cones in Western Massachusetts, the area hit severely by the hurricane. Many left rather angry messages about how Vermont's website is better (www.511VT.com). Upon checking out the VT site, their map lists far more icons that even show the length of roadway blocked. The VT map opens a bubble over the map when you click an icon and it displays information as to what is closed, how far it is closed, and why it is closed. Reverting back to the MA map several traffic cones are placed on the map and when clicked information appears below the map. Several responders did not know this and just assumed nothing happened. One even said 'it would be nice if information appeared when I clicked on or hovered on the cone.' The information provided is rather lacking, as it doesn't give exact locations that people would be able to relate to. The map does display which lanes are open, a nice feature, but can cause some problems such as the I-91 stretch. Here, the interstate was completely closed for an extended period of time, yet neither the MA map nor 511 said so. The MA map did list a cone at the location of the blocked road, but it did not specify where, why and how long. Several people were also very frustrated that major closed roadways that the public and media knew about, "the 8 miles of closed MA-2," were not even listed on the map.

CONCLUSIONS

The major purpose of this summary is to point out the additions that need to be made to the Advisory Map. We know from several responses that the blocked or damaged road database needs to be updated and the map needs to reflect as such. It is RTIC's purpose to provide information to those seeking it, yet the map has dropped the ball in several survey takers' minds. To improve the map, more accurate information is recommended. How this information is obtained and relayed to the map is unknown, from an RTIC standpoint. It is recommended that the information displayed should be more concise and easy to see at a simple glance, without having to scroll if possible.

The survey's popup has been moved to the corner of the page, and will remain there until the user chooses to click it. This allows the user time to view the page before answering the survey. So far, it has worked well, but response rate has dropped substantially.

APPENDIX

Question 1 Other

Question 6 Zip Codes

Question 7 Comments

1. What information are you looking for on MassTraveler?	
Respondent #	**Response**
1	out of state
2	road closures due to weather
3	whether roads are closed due to weather/flooding
4	road closures due to Hurricane Irene
5	services stations
6	road closings due to hurricane
7	road closings
8	road closure information (after hurricane Irene)
9	public transportation
10	Flooding from hurricane
11	weather related closings
12	road closures due to weather/flooding
13	emergency info
14	post Irene - road conditions
15	road closings from downed trees and flooding
16	clousures
17	road closures from hurricane
18	road closures
19	road closures
20	detours and road closures due to Irene
21	Traffic on the rte 9 bridge
22	road closures due to Irene
23	road closures

24	Road closures
25	Road closings due to hurricane
26	closures
27	Buses to/from NYC
28	closed roads
29	Road closures due to damage
30	Roads closed
31	Road conditions after Hurricane
32	Road closures
33	closures of rt 91
34	road closures due to IRene
35	flooding road closures
36	Road closures due to Hurricane Irene
37	Road closures due to storm
38	road closure from flooding

6. What is your zip/postal code?			
Respondent #	**Zip Code**	**City**	**State**
1	01370	Shelburne Falls	MA
2	01376	Turners Falls	MA
3	01027	Easthampton	MA
4	01375	Sunderland	MA
5	04217	Bethel	ME
6	01118	Springfield	MA
7	01060	Northampton	MA
8	01562	Spencer	MA
9	01376	Turners Falls	MA
10	01060	Northampton	MA
11	01301	Leyden	MA
12	01093	Whatley	MA
13	01002	Amherst	MA
14	01002	Amherst	MA
15	01340	Colrain	MA
16	01341	Conway	MA
17	07626	Cresskill	NJ
18	02030	Dover	MA
19	01060	Northampton	MA
20	01060	Northampton	MA
21	12516	Copake	NY
22	10526	Goldens Bridge	NY
23	02120	Boston	MA
24	01070	Plainfield	MA
25	01089	West Springfield	MA
26	01060	Northampton	MA
27	01062	Bay State Village	MA
28	01351	Montague	MA
29	01002	Amherst	MA
30	01370	Shelburne Falls	MA
31	01301	Leyden	MA
32	01301	Leyden	MA
33	01060	Northampton	MA
34	01301	Leyden	MA
35	02135	Boston	MA
36	03084	Temple	NH
37	01027	Easthampton	MA

38	01070	Plainfield	MA
39	01002	Amherst	MA
40	01007	Belchertown	MA
41	12110	Latham	NY
42	01247	North Adams	MA
43	01035	Hadley	MA
44	01340	Colrain	MA
45	01085	Montgomery	MA
46	01098	Worthington	MA
47	01267	Williamstown	MA
48	01337	Bernadston	MA
49	01096	Williamsburg	MA
50	14850	Ithaca	NY
51	14850	Ithaca	NY
52	01027	Easthampton	MA
53	03446	Swanzey	NH
54	01247	North Adams	MA
55	01085	Montgomery	MA
56	01096	Williamsburg	MA
57	19460	Phoenixville	PA
58	01027	Easthampton	MA
59	05257	North Bennington	VT
60	01007	Belchertown	MA
61	01060	Northampton	MA
62	01301	Leyden	MA
63	01301	Leyden	MA
64	01217	Dresden	Germany
65	05201	Woodford	VT
66	01002	Amherst	MA
67	01351	Montague	MA
68	01463	Pepperell	MA
69	12309	Schenectady	NY
70	01060	Northampton	MA
71	01002	Amherst	MA
72	05261	Pownal	VT
73	01027	Easthampton	MA
74	01002	Amherst	MA
75	01240	Lenox	MA
76	01060	Northampton	MA

77	01240	Lenox	MA
78	44116	Rocky River	OH
79	07446	Ramsey	NJ
80	01201	Pittsfield	MA
81	12144	Rensselaer	NY
82	03458	Sharon	NH
83	06854	Norwalk	CT
84	01339	Charlemont	MA
85	10562	Goldens Bridge	NY
86	19081	Swarthmore	PA
87	01247	North Adams	MA
88	11418	Richmond Hill	NY
89	01301	Leyden	MA
90	03257	New London	NH
91	03458	Sharon	NH
92	06013	Burlington	CT
93	01226	Dalton	MA
94	01002	Amherst	MA
95	02458	Newton	MA
96	05089	Windsor	VT
97	01375	Sunderland	MA
98	01068	Oakham	MA
99	03755	Hanover	NH
100	01267	Williamstown	MA
101	06108	East Hartford	CT
102	03304	Bow	NH
103	06854	Norwalk	CT

6. What is your zip/postal code?			
Respondent #	Zip Code	City	State
13	01002	Amherst	MA
14	01002	Amherst	MA
29	01002	Amherst	MA
39	01002	Amherst	MA
66	01002	Amherst	MA
71	01002	Amherst	MA
74	01002	Amherst	MA
94	01002	Amherst	MA
40	01007	Belchertown	MA
60	01007	Belchertown	MA
3	01027	Easthampton	MA
37	01027	Easthampton	MA
52	01027	Easthampton	MA
58	01027	Easthampton	MA
73	01027	Easthampton	MA
43	01035	Hadley	MA
7	01060	Northampton	MA
10	01060	Northampton	MA
19	01060	Northampton	MA
20	01060	Northampton	MA
26	01060	Northampton	MA
33	01060	Northampton	MA
61	01060	Northampton	MA
70	01060	Northampton	MA
76	01060	Northampton	MA
27	01062	Bay State Village	MA
98	01068	Oakham	MA
24	01070	Plainfield	MA
38	01070	Plainfield	MA
45	01085	Montgomery	MA
55	01085	Montgomery	MA
25	01089	West Springfield	MA
12	01093	Whatley	MA
49	01096	Williamsburg	MA
56	01096	Williamsburg	MA
46	01098	Worthington	MA

6	01118	Springfield	MA
80	01201	Pittsfield	MA
64	01217	Dresden	Germany
93	01226	Dalton	MA
75	01240	Lenox	MA
77	01240	Lenox	MA
42	01247	North Adams	MA
54	01247	North Adams	MA
87	01247	North Adams	MA
47	01267	Williamstown	MA
100	01267	Williamstown	MA
11	01301	Leyden	MA
31	01301	Leyden	MA
32	01301	Leyden	MA
34	01301	Leyden	MA
62	01301	Leyden	MA
63	01301	Leyden	MA
89	01301	Leyden	MA
48	01337	Bernadston	MA
84	01339	Charlemont	MA
15	01340	Colrain	MA
44	01340	Colrain	MA
16	01341	Conway	MA
28	01351	Montague	MA
67	01351	Montague	MA
1	01370	Shelburne Falls	MA
30	01370	Shelburne Falls	MA
4	01375	Sunderland	MA
97	01375	Sunderland	MA
2	01376	Turners Falls	MA
9	01376	Turners Falls	MA
68	01463	Pepperell	MA
8	01562	Spencer	MA
18	02030	Dover	MA
23	02120	Boston	MA
35	02135	Boston	MA
95	02458	Newton	MA
36	03084	Temple	NH
90	03257	New London	NH

102	03304	Bow	NH
53	03446	Swanzey	NH
82	03458	Sharon	NH
91	03458	Sharon	NH
99	03755	Hanover	NH
5	04217	Bethel	ME
96	05089	Windsor	VT
65	05201	Woodford	VT
59	05257	North Bennington	VT
72	05261	Pownal	VT
92	06013	Burlington	CT
101	06108	East Hartford	CT
83	06854	Norwalk	CT
103	06854	Norwalk	CT
79	07446	Ramsey	NJ
17	07626	Cresskill	NJ
22	10526	Goldens Bridge	NY
85	10562	Goldens Bridge	NY
88	11418	Richmond Hill	NY
41	12110	Latham	NY
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69	12309	Schenectady	NY
21	12516	Copake	NY
50	14850	Ithaca	NY
51	14850	Ithaca	NY
86	19081	Swarthmore	PA
57	19460	Phoenixville	PA
78	44116	Rocky River	OH

7. What else would you like to see added to MassTraveler? (please describe)	
Respondent #	**Response**
1	Travel time information and incident alerts on many more highways in Western Massachusetts.
2	??
3	More cameras in other area of congestion like at Atkins or on 116 in N. Amherst. I would like to see this expand more for Hampshire County not just the Amherst area.
4	More webcams would be nice. Split up your sensors for Route 9 and Route 116. I think they're in odd places. Or, add intermediate sensors. Provide information for I-91. The webpage needs a better interface, maybe some cool tickers imported from PVTA/UMass Transit. Display Transit arrival times on MassTraveler... (Response from Tyler)
5	more cameras to include all of the state
6	More cams along Interstate 91.
7	I-91 webcams
8	It would be helpful if you let me use the site before taking me to this questionaire.
9	service centers and gas stations
10	Havent visited site yet

11	No surveys.
12	Trying to find road conditions (post hurricane) and construction advisories for smaller routes (8a, 9, 5, 116, etc), survey popped up before i could use the site & see whether or not it has that info!
13	never used before.
14	HOW CAN I JUDGE THE USEFULNESS OF THIS SITE IF THE SURVEY IS BEFORE I GET TO THE SITE (Question #3)??
15	I haven't used it yet so I can't answer this question yet
16	quicker advisiories.
17	road closures in western mass
18	I haven't browsed it enough yet to offer an opinion. Maybe the "survey?" popup should come later
19	I haven't actually been to the site yet. You might put this survey at the end of my visit...
20	Look at Vermonts. It was great. Told me every road closure due to Irene. THis was almost useless.

21	I could not find the information I wanted. I turned to the state web site to try and find out what roads are washed out. Nothing. I am disappointed and frustrated
22	All I was looking for is some idea of the roads that are closed in the state. Maybe the state should look at vt511.com to see how it is done..
23	Alternate routes of travel.
24	Bus tracker for UMass and Valley routes (eg., B43, M40) and a traffic camera that actually shows traffic on the bridge (eg., perhaps looking west and east from around the billboard that is just before the bridge in Hadley as you head west)
25	Road conditions
26	Not clear where I can drive N or S on I91 at the Greenfield closures exits 26-27.
27	more in depth description of traffic advisories
28	don't know yet - haven't accessed website - survey should happen AFTERWARDS!

29	Roads closed or under construction.
30	I don't know - the survey is required BEFORE I get to use the site :) Survey should pop up when I attempt to leave the site.
31	Route 91 travel times. The trip from Northampton to Springfield can be very unpredictable and it would be helpful to know what the traffic is like in order to plan the departure time for the airport, etc.
32	I have never used this before and did the survey first because I wasn't smart enought to say NO
33	put the survey AFTER I have finished using the website please, not before!
34	a survey that asked me these questions AFTER not BEFORE i've visited the site! i can hardly say anything informative at all now, since i've yet to actually make it to the site!
35	First time I have ever used it
36	Basic Phone Number access to traffic conditions
37	Don't know 1st visit