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Map Based Regional Transit Information on the Web – The Bay Area 511 Transit Experience

Presenter

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Every major transit service provider in the country maintains a website to provide information to their customers. Currently almost all transit agencies primarily provide static information that is gathered from multiple departments and manually processed and fine-tuned for the web presentation. Due to lack of a central transit information database, transit service providers find it difficult to not only to provide up-to-date information on the web but also to integrate textual information with the spatial information. Web based location and mapping services have come a long way and can provide user friendly methods to convey transit information to the transit community.

With the introduction of 511 as the one-stop transportation information source, regional and state agencies are looking at ways to provide timely and comprehensive transit information through telephone and Internet. Transit 511 becomes more challenging when the system needs to integrate multiple transit services within the region. Metropolitan Transportation Commission of the San Francisco Bay Area met this challenge by creating a spatially enabled central database that integrates spatial and non-spatial transit information for more than 25 transit services within the region and delivers up-to-date information to transit customers via the web.

The presentation reports on the various map based features that have been developed for the regional 511 Transit website for the Bay Area. Location and mapping services that enhance the web users' experience by providing a wide variety of features including address and map based geocoding for the regional trip planner, maps for service providers' service areas, fare zone maps, popular destination maps, and live database driven route shapes will be discussed. The presentation will illustrate these features with examples and point out the advantages and issues with map based transit information display over the web.