



Passenger information screens at railway stations

Understanding passengers' experiences of current systems and their aspirations for the future

November 2014



National Rail Enquiries



Introduction

This research was carried out by Passenger Focus in partnership with National Rail Enquiries and Network Rail.

We looked at passengers' experiences of current passenger information systems at stations and their aspirations for the future.

The objective was to allow passengers' views to inform future developments with information systems.

The research was designed to look at passengers' overall information needs at stations – that is, both types of information system were considered in the context of each other.

The research covered:

- Customer Information Systems (CIS) – that is, departures and arrivals screens on concourses and platforms
- Operational Information System (OIS) – that is, screens installed in recent years by Network Rail to supplement the information available from CIS, particularly during disruption.

Customer Information Systems (CIS)

We found that CIS screens generally perform well in meeting passengers' needs because:

- they provide confirmation of departure time, platform number, destination and calling points
- they are a 'focal point' for passengers entering a station and are actively consulted by passengers, whether they are commuters wanting confirmation that all is well or infrequent travellers using the train for the first time
- a conventional 'main departures board' provides reassurance to any passengers in a 'foreign' environment
- passengers welcome what is seen as a broadly 'standard' approach to CIS design across the network.

Customer Information Systems (CIS)

The key findings were:

- non-standard boards (such as Manchester Piccadilly's 'next-train-to...') can cause confusion, especially to passengers unfamiliar with them
- supplementary screens are useful for passengers using secondary entrances, but multiple banks of smaller display screens (such as at London Paddington) were not as well received – passengers' preference is for a conventional 'main board'
- some of those travelling to intermediate stations found conventional 'summary of departures' screens unhelpful because they show only the train's destination
- arrival times in brackets after stations (a feature of some systems) would be welcomed by some if provided more widely

Customer Information Systems (CIS)

Key findings (continued):

- passengers observed that, on routes with multiple operators, the train company name is key information and should be shown near the departure time and destination (rather than at the bottom of the display)
- passengers expressed a preference for intermediate calling points to be displayed as a static list (rather than scrolling) so it is clear at a glance if the train stops at their station
- ‘minutes to arrival’ versus ‘minutes late’: overall, passengers preferred screens showing ‘minutes to arrival’ and scheduled arrival time – judged to be the ‘best of both worlds’.

Operational Information System (OIS)

Research was at stations with 'conventional' OIS, that is plasma screens installed retrospectively, and at London Kings Cross where OIS is integral to the infrastructure on the new Western concourse.

The research found that:

- passengers tend to be focussed on finding their train and as such are looking for the information that C/S provides
- OIS screens tend to be overlooked or ignored – virtually no passenger in the research could recall having seen them before
- warnings of future engineering works or other significant changes to services are welcome
- overall, passengers were unclear what role OIS is intended to play
- views were not significantly different at Kings Cross. However, there was some evidence that Kings Cross-style OIS can be more effective at providing secondary information (such as measures to combat leaves on the line).

Operational Information System (OIS)

Reasons why OIS screens were not noticed or were simply dismissed:

- at many stations OIS screens are not as well located as they might be
- the screens are often physically dwarfed by CIS and advertising display screens
- even at Kings Cross, where the screens have been incorporated into the redeveloped station, OIS becomes 'part of the background'
- the content outside times of disruption is of secondary (if any) interest to passengers and can lead them to dismiss the screens – and message – as 'just advertising'
- public service messages (such as warnings about pickpockets) tend to be dismissed as unnecessary or even condescending.

Where next for OIS?

We understand that the original purpose of OIS was, primarily, about communicating disruption information faster and more effectively than CIS systems could.

The research suggests that OIS has not proved well suited to this primary task, for the reasons discussed.

The research suggests that a fundamental rethink of the role of OIS is needed.

However, it may be possible to improve OIS effectiveness by using it only for its primary task and by:

- removing what can be regarded as ‘advertising’ and ‘public information’
- switching off the screens when there are no disruption or forthcoming engineering works messages to display.

Where next for OIS?

Because passengers tend to gravitate towards CIS (rather than OIS) displays, the industry should consider if it may be more effective to fulfil the primary objective of OIS in other ways. For example:

- by enhancing the capability of CIS systems to provide better disruption information
- by using temporary posters that emphasise the ‘immediacy’ of such messages (and noted as being used effectively by London Underground)
- by ‘requisitioning’ the large advertising screens for short periods.

The research suggests that OIS could be successful at communicating ‘secondary’ messages (such as warnings about pickpockets or measures to combat leaves on the line) in a way similar to billboard advertising. But, if OIS is used for this purpose it will be less effective at fulfilling its primary function.

Passenger Information Screens

Research Debrief

July 2014

Prepared for



National Rail Enquiries



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BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

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Background

- Passenger Focus, Network Rail and National Rail Enquiries all have an interest in understanding passenger requirements from information systems and wished to further their understanding in this area via a piece of research
- Information systems that may be in operation across stations can include both Customer Information Systems (CIS) and Operational Information Systems (OIS)
 - CIS screens are those that are featured at entrance halls and/or platforms and provide departure/arrivals information and communicate stations at which particular trains stop
 - OIS screens are plasma screens which serve to communicate additional contextual or generic information (for example, informing passengers of planned engineering works), as well as offering additional information during disruption, for example, adding greater context to an incident affecting services to/from the specific station.





Objectives

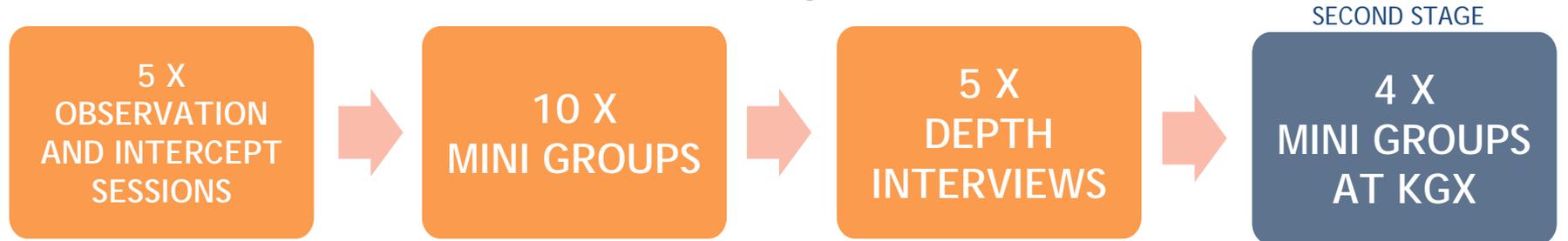
The research set out to explore passenger perceptions of both CIS & OIS screens, as well as to understand what passengers required from information screens and to test some of the proposed messages to be screened on OIS

- To strengthen the three organisations' understanding of passenger requirements from information screens at stations
- To provide practical input to how Network Rail develops OIS screens already installed at several stations in terms of content and presentation, as well as ensuring they complement existing CIS screens
- To provide an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of existing CIS and OIS systems in terms of design, location, information presented and ensuring they maintain consistency with other information channels etc.
- To establish customers' current perceptions on both consistency and reliability of the information received through CIS
- To draw attention to any significant differences in passengers' views across different stations.



Methodology

Four elements of fieldwork across two stages:



- Passengers using the information screens were observed and then approached for questioning at five stations across the UK
- These stations were Euston, Victoria, Waterloo, Manchester and Leeds
- Interviews lasted anywhere between one and five minutes, dependent on the time that the passenger had available
- On average, 30 intercepts took place across each of the five stations
- Observations and intercepts took place at different times during the day in order to ensure a mix of business, leisure and commuter passengers were interviewed.
- Mini groups, containing 3-4 respondents were conducted at ten railway stations across the UK These groups lasted 90 minutes in total and included a walkabout of the station half way through in order to ensure that respondents were fully aware of the different types of screens that they were being asked about
- They completed a workbook during this walkabout session
- Five of the mini groups were with those using the train for commuting purposes, whilst five groups were amongst passengers using the train predominantly for business/leisure passengers Groups contained a mix of males and females.
- In order to ensure that the research was all encompassing, depths interviews were undertaken with those who had a disability
- Disabilities included partial hearing, partial sight and mobility difficulties
- Interviews lasted an hour and also included a walkabout session, like the groups.
- A further four mini groups conducted at Kings Cross station
- Kings Cross was not included in the initial study, but it was cited by many respondents in the first stage of research as an example of a station where information provision was better than at other stations.
- Hence, it was felt that research at KGX would provide useful additional context about attitudes towards OIS/CIS
- Mini groups at KGX were conducted in the same manner as in the previous stage of research.



Sample structure

GROUPS

Mini Group	Location	Passenger Type	Demographics
1	Bristol Temple Meads	Commuter, frequent	Older (40+)
2	Clapham Junction	Commuter, frequent	Younger (18-39)
3	Leeds	Leisure, infrequent	Older (40+)
4	London Euston	Leisure, infrequent	Older (40+)
5	London Paddington	Leisure, infrequent	Older (40+)
6	London Victoria	Commuter, frequent	Younger (18-39)
7	London Waterloo	Commuter, frequent	Younger (18-39)
8	Milton Keynes Central	Commuter, frequent	Older (40+)
9	Manchester Piccadilly	Leisure, frequent	Younger (18-39)
10	Wolverton (group held at MKC)	Leisure, frequent	Younger (18-39)

11	London Kings Cross	Commuter, frequent	Older (40+)
12	London Kings Cross	Commuter, frequent	Younger (18-39)
13	London Kings Cross	Leisure, frequent	Younger (18-39)
14	London Kings Cross	Leisure, infrequent	Older (40+)

DEPTHS

Depth	Location	Passenger Type	Demographics	Disability
1	Leeds	Commuters, frequent	Younger (18-39)	Mobility
2	London Euston	Leisure, frequent	Older (40+)	Mobility
3	London Victoria	Commuters, frequent	Older (40+)	Partial hearing
4	London Waterloo	Leisure, infrequent	Younger (18-39)	Partial sight
5	Manchester Piccadilly	Commuters, frequent	Younger (18-39)	Partial hearing



ROLE OF INFORMATION IN THE PASSENGER JOURNEY

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Information provision identified by passengers

STATION CONCOURSE

BOARDING



CONCOURSE
SCREENS



TEXT
MESSAGES



PLATFORM
SCREENS

APPS



APPS



PLATFORM

ANNOUNCEMENTS



OIS
SCREENS

NRE/
OPERATOR
WEBSITES



MEMBER OF
STAFF

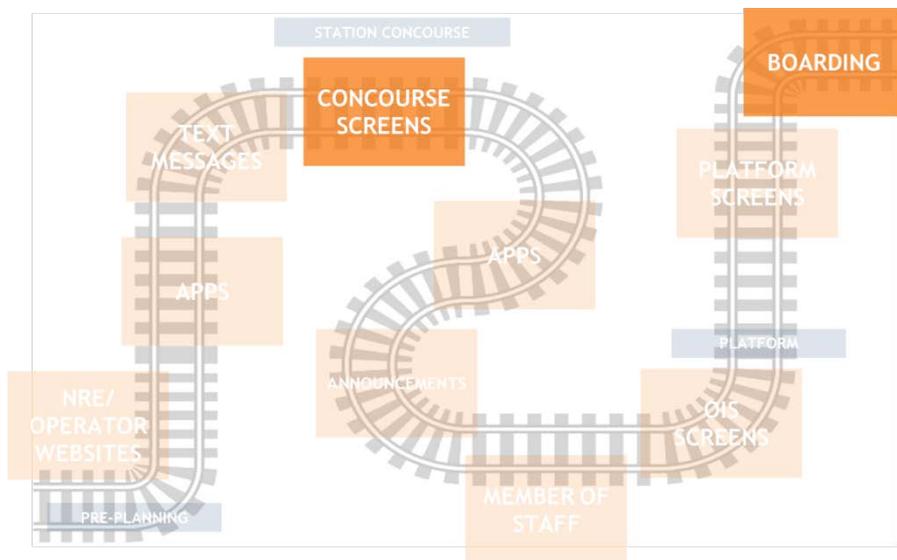


PRE-PLANNING





Information use: commuters



Commuters' information needs are limited

- Little or no planning pre-journey
- Little information utilised in the station
- But, departure boards used to check for delays
- And to confirm platform number for reassurance

- Commuters typically on familiar journey and 'auto-pilot'
- Trains are more frequent, which reduces the need for planning:
 - Can turn up at the station and are likely to be on a train within a few minutes
 - No fixed tickets for particular routes or trains.

Next departures screens display the majority of information that commuters require (providing their journey is running smoothly):

- Platform number
- Time of departure
- Destination

Those with mobility issues more likely to carry out pre-planning. Apps may be utilised before arrival at the station so that passengers are aware of which platform needs to be navigated to

*"I have a quick scan, there's the station, what platform it is, on time, great, go."
Commuter, Victoria, Younger*

*"You miss a train, in a couple of minutes there is another one. Victoria I don't even look at the boards, I walk straight in, platforms 15-19, there is a train that will stop at East Croydon..."
Commuter, Victoria, Younger*



This can differ by region... the London effect



Commuters in London have a tendency to **rely on information more** than those in other parts of the UK:

- **Larger stations with more platforms** mean that trains don't always depart from the same platform
- **Working patterns not so fixed**, with commuters finishing work at different times each day and taking different time trains home
- **Several routes home often available**, meaning that commuters use different routes dependent on delays and for variation
- **Use of connecting services more prevalent**, e.g. tube, train & bus

Key information sources:

- **Mobile apps** may be checked for delays/which route is departing first
 - For the status of tube lines/bus departures
- **Platform boards** to ensure that the correct train is being taken before boarding
- **Boards displaying status of tube lines** at station e.g. OIS.

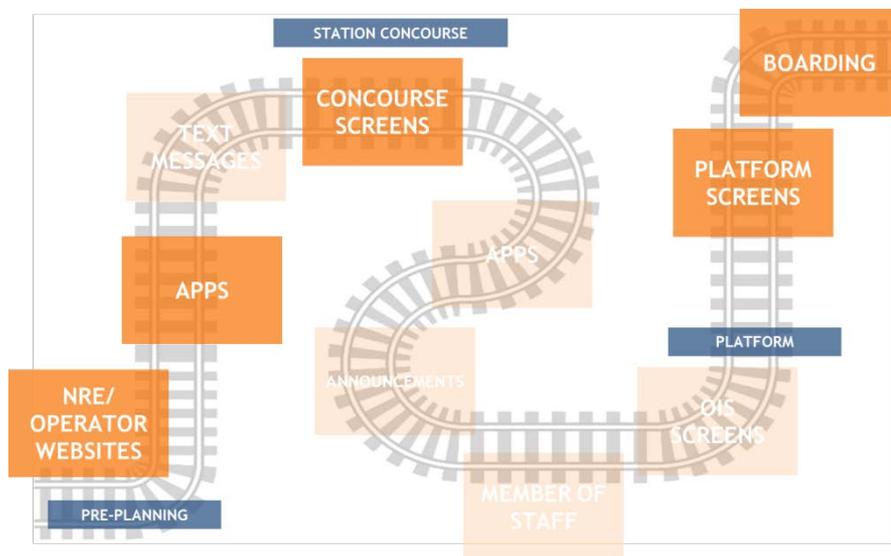
*On NRE app: "They tend to update and the train is always late. So I use it to sort of check that you're not leaving early when you don't have to."
Waterloo, Commuter, Younger*

*"If you've got to try and get off the line, and you want to know what's happening in the tube before you go to the underground, it tells you what's running, that's brilliant..."
Victoria, Commuter, Younger*





Information use: leisure



Information plays a larger role on leisure journeys

- Users less familiar with the station
- Less familiar with the route (including departure and arrival times, platform number and final destination)

*"I use the train ticket websites like the trainline, to book tickets and check train times for journeys."
Leeds, Leisure, Older*

Those with sight problems more likely to utilise smaller screens and platform boards as can get up close to them, as oppose to concourse screens that have to be read from a distance

Planning journeys before travelling is prevalent, passengers use:

- Computer/laptop (NRE/trainline.com/redspottedhanky.com) - if planning and purchasing tickets for journeys
- Phone Apps - if identifying train times

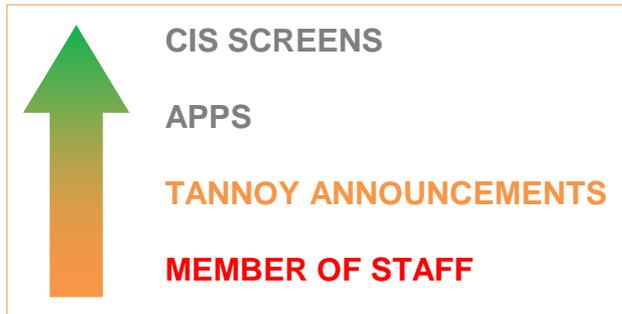
Screens are used throughout the journey from station arrival to train boarding:

- Main departure boards on platform concourse, crucially displaying all calling points
- Screens at platform entry being checked (particularly at Bristol and Manchester [platforms 13 and 14] where distance from concourse to platform can be longer)
- Platform screen to ensure that the correct train is being boarded.



CIS screens trusted above other sources of information

- CIS screens regarded as **most trustworthy and most used** source of information by **both commuters and leisure passengers**



- Perception that CIS screens are updated before other media
- Focal point for information and actively sought out upon arrival at the station
- During times of disruption, tannoy announcements override screens
 - Announcements viewed as most efficient way of information delivery
 - Only 'important' information communicated, so worth listening and believing

"When we had all the bad snow delays last year, that's when there were staff present, I never see staff present otherwise, they're all in the office."
Commuter, Waterloo, Younger

- Regular commuters do not always view staff as a reliable source of information



- Staff are not necessarily better informed
- Alternative sources such as Apps are used
- Perception that some staff have a poor attitude
 - (Particularly in London)
- Lack of staff available for help.

"I hardly ever bother asking them because the times that I have, they either just don't know, or as with most of them, are pretty rude as well."
Commuter, Waterloo, Younger

Passengers feel that they have little option but to trust the CIS screens for information



Information use: during disruption

Tannoy announcements, members of staff, and for many commuters, mobile phone apps, are not utilised on a day to day basis, but come into play if problems or disruption occur

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Utilised in times of severe delays when updates are considered more accurate
- Utilised for last minute platform changes
- Some accounts of screens failing altogether and announcements become the dominant source of information
- Tannoys can cause confusion when announcements are played at simultaneous times, making it difficult to hear one or the other
- For those with **partial hearing**, the movement of the crowd often acts as an indication that an announcement has been made



MEMBER OF STAFF

- Staff used as a last resort by regular travellers and commuters. Staff used more by infrequent travellers
- Infrequent travellers check details of their journey with staff, if unfamiliar
- Commuters believe that they know their own journey better than anyone, and consequently staff will be unable to help the situation
- Those with **mobility issues** more likely to check information with staff to save needless walking to the wrong platform

APPS

- Used by regular leisure/commuters to seek information on delays to trains
- Or find alternative routes to destination
- Of some use in station as can filter the information down to the relevant trains...
- ...removing the task of having to search for the right board.

"You'll be listening to one tannoy announcement about your train and then the platform next to you will also start playing a tannoy announcement, which means that you can't hear either!"
Commuter, Milton Keynes, Older

Unanimous appeal in enabling Sky News screens to show travel information in times of disruption



Inconsistency between sources rarely mentioned

- In an ideal world, all sources would be consistent
- However, passengers are not necessarily surprised when inconsistencies do occur
 - Due to the number of sources available
 - Though, CIS (main departure, platform, next train indicator) screens ARE expected to synchronise
- There are isolated instances of sources of information not being consistent
 - Screens communicating information before Apps
 - Scheduled train departure times on App sometimes a few minutes out from screens
- Passengers can accept this and are not overly concerned by this, providing the information does not result in taking the wrong train or missing it

THOUGHTS ON DARWIN

- Passengers largely unmoved when informed that information is from two different sources
- Few aware that this is the case, nor particularly surprised by it
- Though acknowledge that this increases chance of error
- But, if one source fails, another source available to inform passengers
- Providing information remains consistent, there were some calls for information to come from more sources...
- ...with each region transmitting information.

"I think it's always going to be hard for all the different kind of sources of information to marry up. Because there are so many different ones, there's like the boards on the platform and the number you can dial and the app, so I think they're never all going to be quite be the same at the same time."

Manchester, Leisure, Younger



OIS screens play no distinct role in the customer journey

- Few, if any, mention OIS screens or spontaneously recall seeing them in stations
- Those who are aware, do not view them as “information” sources as such
 - Do not fit in to the repertoire of essential journey information and as such, are not sought out
 - Often dismissed as ‘advertising’
 - Information is seen as contextual and as such, tends to make little conscious impact



*“I was aware of them and have seen them before, but I didn’t think it was worth mentioning them upfront!”
Milton Keynes, Commuter, Older*

*“I thought they kind of blended in to the background, so I honestly can say I’ve never once in my years of travelling noticed them.”
Waterloo, Commuter, Younger*



USE OF CIS SCREENS IN THE PASSENGER JOURNEY

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Use of CIS screens: commuters

Commuters: Use of information screens is limited

- Commuters often catch the same train every day, so main use of CIS is to check that the train is running to schedule, but still the key focus
 - This will involve checking the main departure boards or the next departures boards, in a single step process before departure.

Ensure train is running to schedule



Depart

"I don't particularly pay a lot of attention to the screens. It's the same service I take. I know which platform I am on." Bristol, Commuter, Older

Commuters have a preference for 'next departure' boards, as they provide all the necessary information. In instances where these are not available, main departure screens are used

"When you come in there is a screen that indicates the next train that is going to a particular station. If you look up there you see Bristol Parkway, it tells you which platform to go for the next train so I think that is quite handy." Bristol, Commuter, Older

Platform numbers and departure times are often known by commuters. This information is checked by commuters for confirmation, rather than new knowledge

"In the mornings if I'm going to work, I always get the same train at the same time, which goes to the same platform, so when I get there I will just like glance at the board and see if it's running to schedule."

Victoria, Commuter, Younger



Use of CIS screens: leisure

Leisure: Use of information screens is more detailed than with commuters, but still the key focus

- More stages involved for leisure users when using boards to check train information
 - Some prior knowledge of the journey is prevalent, but CIS provides confirmation as well as new information
 - In a 2-step process, destination and time of departure is checked, whilst platform number is learnt. Platform boards utilised for confirmation before boarding.





High satisfaction with CIS screens and key focus point for all

- Satisfaction with CIS screens is high and there are few gripes from passengers
 - In their current state, CIS serve the needs of both Commuters and Leisure customers, although some improvements can be identified, particularly from Leisure customers:

SATISFACTION		REASON AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS
Location of screens	✓	Easy to locate and large majority of passengers able to identify different types of screens in different locations
Number of screens	✓	Larger stations have a sufficient number of boards Some less regular travellers overwhelmed by the amount of information
Size of screens	✓	Preference for larger main departure screens, such as those at Victoria, as information is easier to read from a distance Some platform screens could be enlarged, particularly on larger platforms so that they are more visible
Format/design	✓	Black and orange font format familiar and preferred Blue/white/black screens can produce less glare and easier to read Listed format of displaying stations preferred to scrolling
Clarity of information	✓	Some platform boards not entirely clear in how delays and amount of time until departure is communicated
Content of information	✓	Current amount of information sufficient for commuters, though some additional information suggested by leisure users: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arrival time at each calling point▪ Train operator name - and position relative to other information▪ Any delays further up the line/later on in the journey▪ Where carriages will stop on the platform



Satisfaction: main departures board

"It's too saturated. Whereas the one in Kings Cross is less saturated and much, much clearer." Euston, Leisure, Older

List preferred to scrolling as required to wait around to see if desired station appears

An expectation that there will be a large central departure board

All the information that is needed by passengers - all calling points, platforms, departure time, operator, location of first class carriage

In stations where screens are not full size, e.g. Paddington, listed stations can merge into each other as no differentiation in font and lines close together

Only display next nine or so trains to depart, if scheduled train is not in this, information on it is difficult to find

Operator information is desired by leisure, as multiple operators run on the same route and tickets are often only valid on a single route. Could be made more prominent (maybe at top of screen with destination)

Paddington: Two banks of smaller screens cause confusion



Breakdown of the different stops is essential if unaware of final destination

Essential for Leisure in particular

Screens that all passengers are aware of, and familiar with

"I think it's got everything you need, it's clear and orange on black, it stands out. And it gives you a breakdown of all the different stops, it's got everything that you actually need." Manchester, Leisure, Younger

Easily locatable at stations

Black/orange colour scheme clear, familiar and easy to read

"The black and yellow or orange screens, they're quite straightforward, so they are pretty easy to read." Manchester, Leisure, Younger

"They are exactly where you would expect them to be, as soon as you walk in the station they are there. You don't always want to think where do I go for information, you want them to be right in your face there." Euston, Leisure, Older

COMMUNICATION OF REPLACEMENT BUS JOURNEYS ON DEPARTURES BOARD
Unanimously, both Commuter and Leisure passengers felt that in the event of replacement bus services, the final destination of the journey, inclusive of bus travel, should be shown - regardless of journey type and familiarity with destination. This needs to be supplemented with clear information about the stations between which the replacement bus will operate and any impact on journey times. Secondary information such as where to catch replacement buses from, length of time that route will be affected for, and any other relevant information should be communicated on adjoining boards (such as OIS) or posters/A-boards.



Satisfaction: next fastest train indicator

*"The blue ones I definitely prefer, there's less of a glare."
Manchester, Leisure, Younger*

Lists all of the essential information that is needed

Favoured by Commuters

Operator	Destination	Time	Plat	Operator	Destination
	Feltham	09:28	6		Leatherh
	Fleet	09:46	9		Leatherh
	Fratton	09:52	9		Lewes
se enquire	Gatwick Airport	09:23	13		Littleham
	Gillingham Drst	09:27	9		Milton Ke
	Gospel Oak			Please enquire	Mitcham J
	Guildford	09:23	9		New Cross
	Hackney CtI			Please enquire	New Milto
	Hamstead Heath			Please enquire	Nexhaven
	Hampton Court	09:45	11		North Dul
	Haslemere	09:23	9		Norwood J
	Hastings	09:53	13		Oxted
	Havant	09:38	13		Peckham R
	Havant	09:52	9		Peter-sfie
	Haywards Heath	09:23	13		Poole
	Highbury & Isl			Please enquire	Portsmou
	Horsham	09:38	13		Portsmou
	Hounslow	09:26	5		Purley
	Hove	09:23	13		Putney
	Imperial Wharf	09:24	17		Reading
	Kingston	09:36	11		Redhill

Next fastest train			
Destination	Plat	Time	Exptd
Aldershot	5	15:30	On time
Alton	5	15:20	On time
Andover	4	15:16	On time
Ash Vale	5	15:30	On time
Azmerster	4	15:46	On time
Basingstoke	4	15:16	On time
Bath Spa			Please enquire
Berkley	5	15:20	On time
Bosley	4	15:35	On time
Bournemouth	4	16:00	On time
Bradford-on-Avon			Please enquire
Bratton Torquay Mds			Please enquire
Brookhurst	4	16:00	On time
Brookwood	5	15:16	On time
Byfleet & New Haw	3	15:32	On time
Christchurch	4	16:00	On time
Clapham Junction	2	15:37	On time
Colham	4	15:35	On time
Crawley	4	15:46	On time
Dorchester South	4	16:00	On time
southwesttrains.co.uk		15:16	

Some prefer blue/black/white tones as they were easier to read and gave off less glare compared to the black/orange boards

Though the unfamiliarity was a problem for some, causing confusion

*"Well maybe I'm just used to it, but I prefer the black and the yellow orange. I find the blue one there slightly confusing. It kind of all blends in a bit more whereas I don't know, just the two tones (of the black/orange), it's just very clear."
Bristol, Commuter, Older*

*"It's terrible, my eyesight isn't the best but I have to get right up close to see it and then once I have actually worked out what it is communicating and found my station, it's changed."
Manchester, Business, Older (Intercept)*

MANCHESTER PICCADILLY



Manchester Piccadilly uses a 'next fastest train' style board as their main CIS screen, positioned in the main concourse. This screen was divisive across the passengers using the station

- ✓ Commuters and those using the station on a regular basis favoured the style of screen
 - ✓ Provides all of the information that is needed: platform number, time of departure and destination, with any other information deemed irrelevant
 - ✓ Information displayed in a clear and easy to read layout, particularly easy to find destination as listed in alphabetical order
 - ✗ Not all destinations can fit onto a single page of the screen, so it rotates between destinations every 15 seconds
- ✗ Business/Leisure users did not favour the screen
 - ✗ Unfamiliar with style and dissimilar to anything that they had previously seen
 - ✗ Small font which is difficult to read unless up close
 - ✗ Colour of font/background (blue/yellow) does not transmit information in the clearest manner.



Satisfaction: summary screens/platform boards

Disliked as are required to know the final destination of train, which isn't always the case

Applicable mainly to Leisure users

*"I hate those ones because that's not the destination I know, once I get off at my stop I don't know where it ends personally. So I don't know that's my train."
Euston, Leisure, Older*

Benefits of having calling points recognised by passengers, even commuters

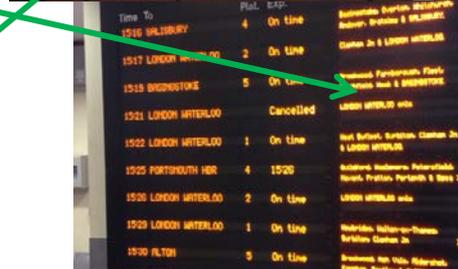
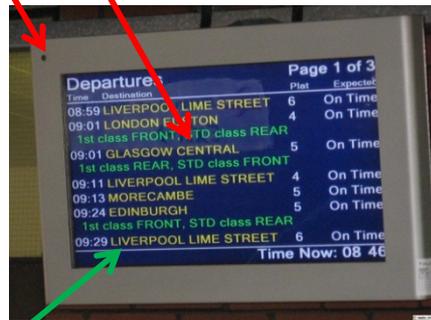
Those with partial sight: these screens are easier to read than dot matrix

Can get up closer to these screens than main departures board

Those with partial sight like use of different colours to differentiate information

Popular amongst commuters - particularly if they are situated next to main departures board, as saves time scanning all of the boards for the minimal information that they need

Green writing prominent, but communicating least helpful information



Preference for stations being listed below, rather than scrolling. So it is clear at an immediate glance if train is stopping at desired destination

*"When it's scrolling through you can easily miss it. Whereas I think when it's underneath, it's really simple, but at least you know it's actually there and it's static, it's not sort of moving."
Manchester, Leisure, Younger*

*"Because with these it kind of scrolls past and then you are like oh I have got to sit through and wait. I mean it's not a major problem because you know sometimes you have got time. But it's more an annoyance."
Bristol, Commuter, Older*

Act as confirmation for passengers before they board the train

Importance of these screens increase at smaller stations where there is no staff member to ask for information





Platform boards continued...



1

States how far away the train is (in minutes) with the scheduled departure time

- ✓ Best of both other screens:
 - ✓ Easy to identify originally planned for and scheduled train
 - ✓ Any delay can easily be added on to the scheduled time to calculate exact time of departure
 - ✓ Easier to calculate when train will be arriving at destination
- ✗ Colour contrast gives the screen glare
- ✗ Board not titled e.g. needs to have 'scheduled time, destination and expected time' above information



2

Expected departure time is given, but passengers left to calculate how long they will have to wait

- ✓ Preferred by those taking **Leisure** trips
- ✓ Lists scheduled time of the train that is due to be taken - reassurance that the correct train is being boarded
- ✓ Aware of the exact time that the train, whether it is delayed or not, will be departing
- ✓ Not required to calculate for yourself what time a train will be departing if it is delayed
- ✓ Colour contrast of font preferred



3

States how far away the train is, but no mention of scheduled departure time

- ✓ Preferred by **commuters** for trains that arrive on a regular basis - likened to format of tube screens
- ✓ Aware of time waiting for the train to arrive
- ✓ Preference for larger size of clock
- ✗ Unaware if the train is delayed or on time
- ✗ Difficult to identify scheduled train, particularly if only certain trains from the platform go to station.

"It doesn't really matter how late it is running, what you need to know is your expected departure time. The other two you have to work it out for yourself."
Bristol, Commuter, Older

"It's just another way for the train companies to hide the poor service as if the train is late, you won't know about it."
Leeds, Leisure, Older



Satisfaction: information screen within help points



- Those using train stations on a regular basis, i.e. commuters, more likely to have noticed the help points
 - Though usage is very much limited
- Concerns about the working functionality of the help points
 - Assumption that they will not work/will have been vandalised
 - Concern that no-one will answer on the other end
 - Fear that any information coming through will not be heard
 - Easier to find out information through use of smart phone
- When concerns have been eradicated, usefulness of help points recognised:
 - At smaller/remote stations where there is no member of staff
 - If phone battery has run out/phone is not available for use
 - Not needed at larger stations as other forms of information provision available
- Screen embedded viewed as beneficial, if help point situated at smaller stations
 - Though needs to compliment other information screens, not used instead of
 - Arrival time at each calling point favoured
 - Last report information particularly useful, as will be accurate in communicating any delays to the service and the whereabouts of the train.



"They would be quite useful at smaller stations. Because then at least if it's not manned, you've got someone that you can always ask, you're not sort of left wondering if the train is going to turn up or not. So in that respect it would be quite good. I don't think you'd need them in a bigger station though."
Manchester, Leisure, Younger

"Last report, I presume that's just an update then is it? That's following the train. The last time they heard about it. That's quite good isn't it because that is the same as on the app or on line where you have got your live departures or arrivals."
Bristol, Commuter, Older



FEELINGS TOWARDS CURRENT OIS SCREENS

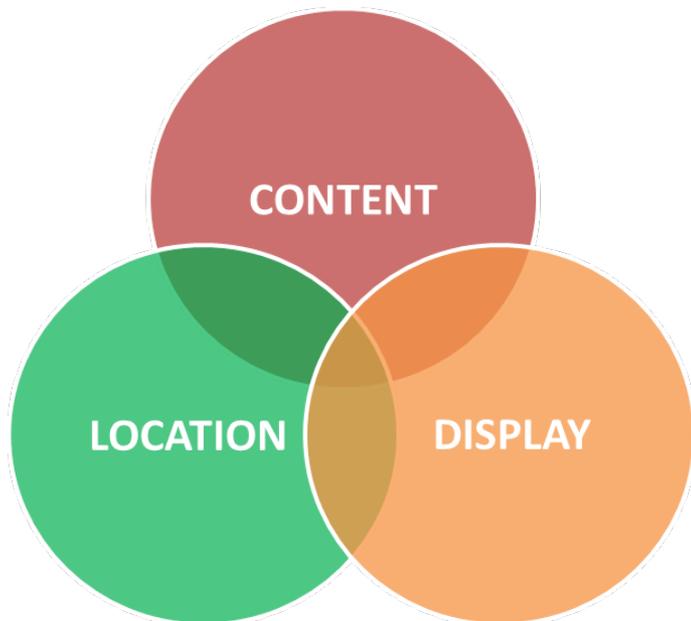
*Enlighten.
Empower.*



Minimal awareness of OIS

- OIS screens not recalled spontaneously and only acknowledged - often for the first time - after the station walkabouts
- Passengers often struggled to understand the role of OIS
 - Passengers rationalise their lack of awareness of OIS as being due to three factors:
 - **Content:** felt to be the key factor. OIS information considered non-essential and unlikely to impact on immediate journey
 - **Display:** Size of the screen adds to the perception of them being unimportant. Many also argue that font and graphics lacked impact
 - **Location:** Screens were often positioned in obscure positions, out of eye line etc. In other cases, screens are in prominent positions but overwhelmed by other media.

*"The biggest shock was the, is it the OIS screens? They are next to the information ones and I've never once looked at them."
Waterloo, Commuter, Younger*



*"I'm not sure how helpful they are. They are too small for me, for your needs, for my eyes. Either you have to kind of go close or just you know, not very catching attention."
Euston, Leisure, Older*

*"I never really noticed the operational information to customers. I've never taken much notice of them in the past."
Euston, Leisure, Older*



OIS information seen as largely generic

CONTENT

- **Information** displayed considered very **generic**
- Some mistook the messages as 'adverts', particularly at Kings Cross, due to:
 - Presence of actual advertising e.g. Centre Parcs
 - Train information that is not journey-critical
 - Communicating secondary rather than primary information e.g. 'keep belongings with you', 'do not feed the pigeons' etc.
- Or deemed as just a way for TOCs to 'sing their own praises'
- Some messages did carry practical information...
 - Messages communicating future delays, engineering works or line closures

"The one that says beware of pickpockets, could be useful. It depends how often you use the train really."

Leeds, Leisure, Older

"I would be more likely to ignore the important message, because the other three messages before that are full of stuff that I'm not interested in."

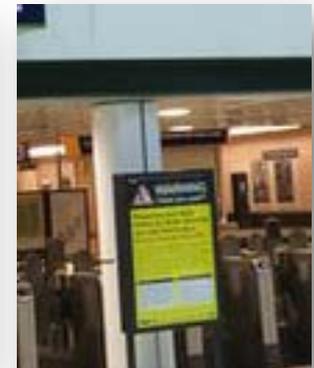
Manchester, Leisure, Younger

- **Commuters** often felt that messages were unnecessary. Some irritated that such messages were being communicated
- Some **leisure** users, although not describing the information as useful, felt that some messages were 'nice to know' particularly those who used the train on a less regular basis.



Passengers argue for more specific and timely information

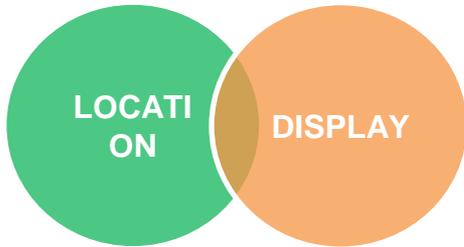
- A wide belief that the screens should show:
 - ✓ Travel delays
 - ✓ Slow running of trains
 - ✓ Engineering works
 - ✓ Inclement weather causing disruption
 - ✓ Rail replacement services
- Passengers argue that screens should show journey specific information
 - Supplementary to CIS screens
 - Or further still, only showing information about disruption when necessary and remaining blank at all other times
- Argued that messages regarding safety and luggage are unlikely to change on a regular basis, and could be communicated through free standing A-boards or posters in stations



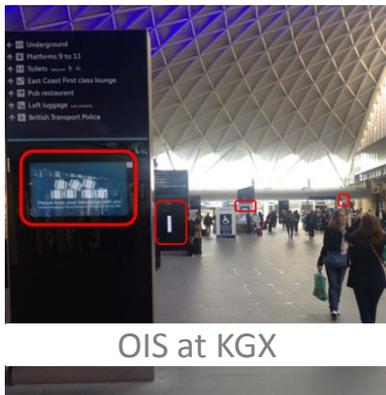
"I think the other three messages that could be displayed on posters, because they are permanent messages and never change. Whereas the other, that's information that is constantly being updated, so it would be necessary to have a screen for that."

Manchester, Leisure, Younger

OIS location and display varies across stations



- In many of the stations sampled in the research, OIS was positioned amongst CIS
- This resulted in OIS getting 'lost' and passengers tending to see them as 'CIS-lite' rather than as a separate category of information provision
- This perception also influenced by the size of the screens and design of the messages
 - OIS too small - Passengers believe that the size of the screen correlates to the importance of the information with messaging on the screens difficult to read
 - Message design unengaging - colours are bland and lack distinction
- At Kings Cross, location and display of OIS differs from elsewhere, screens are positioned away from CIS, within plinths.



*"They have to be somewhere a little bit further from the main screen, not being distracted from the main information that you need."
Euston, Leisure, Older*



An additional stage of research at Kings Cross

- Kings Cross was not included in the initial study, but it was cited by many respondents as an example of a station where the environment was superior to other stations
- OIS provision at Kings Cross shows a different approach compared to other stations, with OIS screens placed clearly away from CIS (and indeed other media). Our hypothesis was that:
 - OIS in this context may be more likely to work in a manner more akin to advertising media
 - As such, it will not be actively sought out to help passengers complete a task (as per CIS), but can work in terms of low-level processing, which allows for a wider range and combination of message types
- Given this, a decision was taken to conduct a second phase of research at Kings Cross to test perceptions and understanding of OIS.





Perceptions of OIS at Kings Cross

- The differing set-up of OIS at Kings Cross had little affect on passenger awareness of the screens
- But did have an impact on the way in which passengers interpreted what OIS information was intended for...
 - Respondents tended to talk in terms of 'advertising'
- This perception appears to be driven in part by **content**...
 - Presence of actual advertising e.g. Centre Parcs
 - Train information that is not journey-critical
 - Communicating secondary rather than primary information e.g. 'keep belongings with you', 'do not feed the pigeons' etc.
- ...and in part by **location & format**
 - Separate and distinct from main CIS boards (journey-critical information not expected or sought)
 - Likened to the screens that are present in shopping centres

*"Your journey-specific information should all be in one place, not dotted around like a treasure hunt."
Commuter, Older*



*"There is a role for that information sitting there. I'm just not sure that the information that's coming through is primary because it's not designed in the right way - it uses really neat infographics and pictures. Primary information should be communicated in a direct, straightforward fashion."
Leisure, Older*

*"That secondary information of 'don't feed the pigeons' - that's [OIS] the better place for it. When you're transitory and you're passing it, you're never going to read those signs. If it's black and orange you're going to look at it because you need that information."
Commuter, Older*



Do passengers at Kings Cross see OIS differently?

- Respondents in the Kings Cross phase of the research - in common with the previous phase - were at best lukewarm about OIS
 - Little spontaneous recall
 - Many struggle to see the point to OIS
 - Most claim they would not notice/pay attention in real life
- This is partly a research effect. In the research sessions respondents are being asked to pay attention to media in an unrealistically intensive and sustained way. In reality, consumers' approach to mass communication is typically characterised by:
 - Overload - too much information
 - More important things to think about
 - Resistance to 'advertising' claims
- However, it is well-known that out-of-home media (bill boards, street furniture, buses etc.) can be effective. Hence the continuing popularity of these media for advertisers and indeed, their expansion into digital formats. But the effects of these media work at the level of **passive, unconscious processing**
- As such, when asked explicitly about OIS, respondents react in much the same way as when asked about other 'advertising' media i.e. they are largely uninterested, claim not to notice, claim to want more 'factual' information
- Thus, the success or otherwise of OIS needs to be assessed in terms of what the communication is trying to achieve
 - If the intention is to communicate 'need to know' messages about current journeys, then OIS (at Kings Cross and elsewhere) is inadequate and inappropriate
 - If, on the other hand, the intention is to communicate non-journey critical, contextual information, then OIS screens are a reasonable approach and seem well-deployed at Kings Cross



Is OIS therefore better at Kings Cross?

- Overall we would say yes, for the following reasons:
 - As indicated, in terms of **location** OIS screens at Kings Cross are separate and distinct from main CIS boards
 - At other stations, OIS screens are often close to CIS screens meaning they are even more likely to be overlooked (passengers will be looking at CIS for journey-critical information) and to generate confusion about their purpose (same or different to CIS?)
 - In terms of **format**, OIS at Kings Cross more closely resemble other advertising media than at other stations
 - Eye-level, large screens
 - Combined with useful but secondary information that is not related to individual journey - location of toilets, taxis etc.
 - However, in this context, OIS is likely to be more effective where the messaging is consonant with the medium
 - That is, we would suggest that OIS information should use classic advertising techniques to generate engagement, rather than taking a more direct, factual approach.

Denotative

Works when focused/attentive
Seeks explanations
Verbal
Voluntary recall

CIS works in this register

Connotative

Works when distracted/inattentive
Playful
Non-verbal
Involuntary recognition

OIS works in this register





An example of connotative messaging

- An example of this connotative messaging is already visible on OIS at Kings Cross:
 - Two videos -communicating the causes of 'leaves on the line' and 'buckling' as well as the process in place to reduce delays caused by these issues.



- ✓ Engaging story
- ✓ Moving graphics, bright imagery
- ✓ Information presented in a playful manner
- ✓ Fits the medium

Plus, (when thought about consciously):

- ✓ Provides context to problems
- ✓ Transparency - railways not covering up problems.

- ✓ If OIS were to display messaging such as this, adverts may not look out of place
- ✓ In fact, passengers may expect to see advertising messages on media that they perceive as 'for' advertising.

*"The video has character. It gives me some context as to why my train is delayed."
Commuter, Older*

Better fit with 'advertising' type environment, more connotative messaging



FEELINGS TOWARDS
PROPOSED OIS SCREEN
CONTENT

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Feelings towards new OIS message designs

- NB - Passengers were asked to review these messages as if they were positioned on the traditional OIS format, i.e. not at Kings Cross
- NB2 - Passengers reviewing the proposed messages out of context, away from the station environment and in the absence of any improvements in terms of positioning
- Despite this, the proposed messages were viewed as an overall improvement to OIS screens
 - New more design intensive approach generally seen as more impactful
- Some reservations still persist about the content of the messages.





Feelings towards new OIS message designs

Aesthetically attractive designs and colours give the messages a modern feel

Passengers consider these designs more eye-catching and more likely to notice screens if they were showing these messages

Information overload - too much information being communicated at the same time with 3/4 different messages (Arrivals, News, Weather, Time)

Unlikely to take notice of departures information as it is not the focal message on the board
Difficult to read given the size of the font
If required this information would be sourced from CIS

"Just because of the colours I would be more drawn to looking at it. Even if I wasn't even paying attention to the context, I would still look at it, the colours."
Victoria, Commuter, Younger

"Too small, you can't read it and understand it or anything."
Euston, Leisure, Older

COMMUTERS: Unnecessary information that can be sourced through various other mediums

Confusion to why Network Rail are communicating information about weather and road conditions/driving

Insignificant information that causes passengers to disregard the screens

Looks too similar to advertising

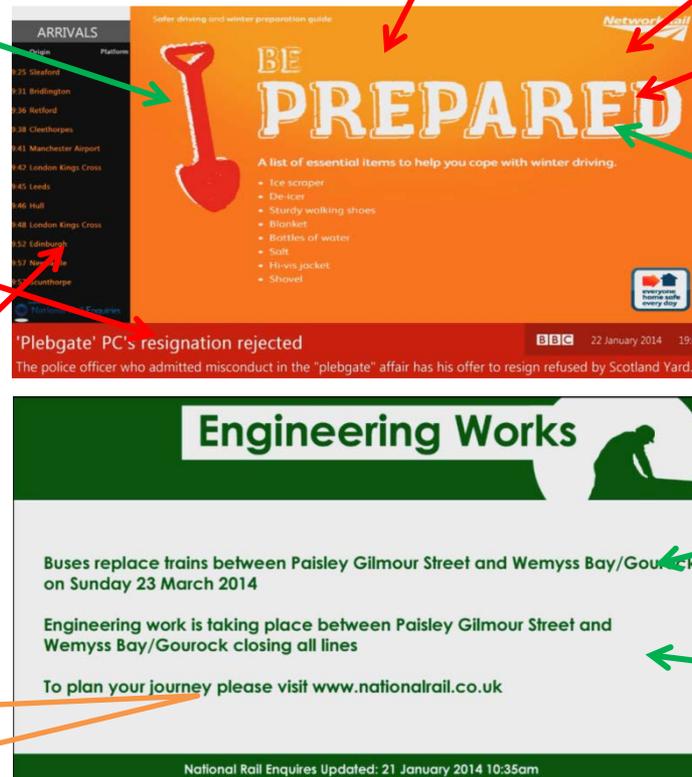
LEISURE: 'Nice to know' but not essential information. Would be more appreciated if waiting for a train to depart

"It looks like advertising, It's telling you to like pack for your summer holiday. So I would instantly sort of glaze over it."
Waterloo, Commuter, Younger

Fonts and colours used make for the clear communication of the message

The type of information that should be displayed on these screens

Though information is not extensive and more will need to be sourced from other mediums



- Colours, fonts and graphics used in the propositions are considered considerably more striking than the current versions, with both commuters and leisure users claiming that they would be more likely to grab attention
- Still dissatisfaction with the type of information being communicated and it being seen as of limited use.



Feelings towards new OIS message designs

"I really like having the logo, especially if it's not a journey I'm familiar with. It's helpful to have that logo, it makes it clearer, and I know it's definitely the right train."
Waterloo, Commuter, Younger

Unnecessary to have departure information on these screens. If looking for train times/platform number would go to CIS screens.

"I think it's unnecessary, it's so small you hardly even notice it, when you've got all the main information above it anyway on the big screen..."
Manchester, Leisure, Younger

Colour scheme not distinguishable from the main CIS screens

Colour scheme looks outdated

Layout and font sizes clearly communicates the information and makes it easy to read

Good to have the arrival times for all calling points, rather than just end destination

"It's got everything you need in one place. It's not scrolling, it's not flashy. It's just there in front of you so you can literally scream through the station and grab the information you want."
Victoria, Commuter, Younger

"If you're meeting someone or you've got somewhere to be at a certain time, it's useful to know what time you will get there."
Manchester, Leisure, Younger

Displaying logo of train operating company is useful, particularly at stations where several operators run on the same route. Some tickets are only valid for a particular operator and in these cases, this is vital information

Operator logo preferred to words as is more prominent

All information is in a single place, on a single shot. No scrolling/flashing through pages and messages

Font colours modern and differentiation between calling points and final destination, i.e. primary and secondary information

Too much information for the size of the screen. Difficult to read unless up close

Time	Destination	Platform	Expected	Operator
20:34	London Kings Cross	9	On Time	
Calling at Doncaster, Newark NorthGate, Peterborough, Stevenage, London Kings Cross				
20:49	Newcastle	8	20:51	
Calling at Darlington, Durham, Newcastle				
20:56	Manchester Piccadilly	3	On Time	
Calling at Leeds, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Manchester Piccadilly				
21:10	Leeds	5	On Time	
Calling at Church Fenton, Micklefield, East Garforth, Garforth, Cross Gates, Leeds				
21:28	Hull	4	On Time	
Calling at Selby, Howden, Gilberdyke, Brough, Ferryby, Hessle, Hull				

TIME NOW :20:01

National Rail Enquiries		London Marylebone		ATOC	
Destination	Plat.	Departs	Expected		
Birmingham Snow Hill	6	1945	On Time		
Calling at: High Wycombe (2026), Bicester North (2029), Banbury (2042), Leamington Spa (2150), Warwick (2155), Warwick Parkway (2109), Hatton (2144), Leamington Spa (2125), Stratford (2121), Birmingham Moor Street (2140), Birmingham Snow Hill (2148)					
Bicester North	3	1948	On Time		
Calling at: Gerrards Cross (2007), Beer Green (2011), Beaconsfield (2014), High Wycombe (2026), Princes Risborough (2032), Haddenham & Thame Parkway (2036), Bicester North (2056)					
Last report: Between London Marylebone and Wembley Stadium (1948)					
Gerrards Cross	5	1952	On Time		
Calling at: Wembley Stadium (2001), Sudbury & Harrow Road (2004), Sudbury Hill Harrow (2007), Northolt Park (2010), West Ruislip (2015), Denham (2020), Denham Golf Club (2022), Gerrards Cross (2030)					
Aylesbury Vale Parkway	2	1955	On Time		
Calling at: Harrow-on-the-Hill (2007), Rickmansworth (2017), Chorleywood (2022), Chalfont & Latimer (2026), Amersham (2030), Great Missenden (2036), Wendover (2043), Stoke Mandeville (2047), Aylesbury (2050), Aylesbury Vale Parkway (2101)					
Kidderminster		2015	On Time		
Calling at: Bicester North (2058), Banbury (2111), Leamington Spa (2129), Warwick Parkway (2134), Dorridge (2144), Solihull (2150), Birmingham Moor Street (2206), Birmingham Snow Hill (2203), The Quadrant (2218), Birmingham Gannon Bridge (2218), Rowley Regis (2244), Creditry Heath (2230), Stourbridge Junction (2236), Kidderminster (2245)					
Stratford-upon-Avon		2018	On Time		
Calling at: High Wycombe (2044), Princes Risborough (2055), Haddenham & Thame Parkway (2103), Bicester North (2117), Kings Sutton (2131), Banbury (2136), Leamington Spa (2150), Warwick (2206), Hatton (2208), Cleverdon (2213), Beoley (2219), Wilcote (2223), Stratford Parkway (2227), Stratford-upon-Avon (2231)					
Aylesbury		2021	On Time		
Calling at: Harrow-on-the-Hill (2022), Rickmansworth (2043), Chorleywood (2047), Chalfont & Latimer (2051), Amersham (2055), Great Missenden (2102), Wendover (2108), Stoke Mandeville (2112), Aylesbury (2118)					

Page 1 of 2

Last updated: 1943

- Passengers struggled to identify a need to show departure times on OIS as this information is easily available on CIS
- Should departure information be shown on these screens, passengers struggled to identify a preferred format and opted for a combination of the two designs; using the information from the bottom screen, presented in the clarity of the top screen, along with the operator logo.



Feelings towards new OIS message designs

"I would have to sit in a room like this and have it explained to me for two hours before I could actually absorb it, take it in and understand it."
Victoria, Commuter, Younger

Not clear cut and causes some confusion - need time to work out what is being communicated

Difficult to make out detail given the size of the screen e.g. meaning of coloured lines

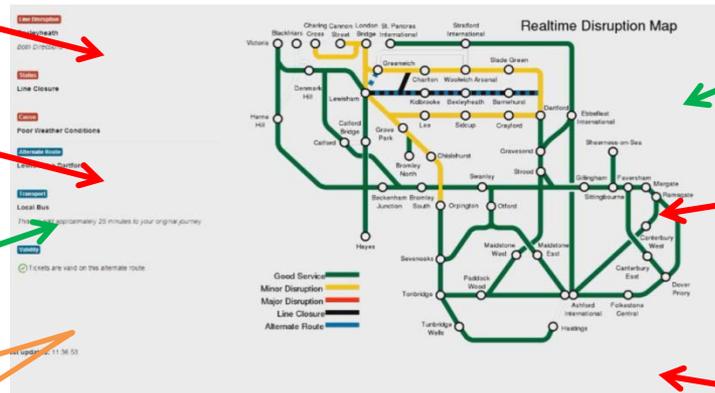
Able to visualise the delay, rather than just knowing that delays are affecting routes between A and B

"That could be conveyed in a far easier way. That's the information you want that can be given on the train, while you are on the train."
Victoria, Commuter, Younger

Both map and next bus departures list liked

Conveying detailed information that may be difficult to interpret given the size of the screen

Positive that Network Rail are thinking of the passengers entire journey, rather than just their train journey



Along the lines of the type of information that should be communicated through OIS screens

Information could be displayed in a simpler way. For example, in a list or table format

Information overly detailed, and more practical information available via apps and departure boards, e.g. length of delay, alternative routes

"That's really what these screens are more appropriate for, is this sort of thing rather than bombardment of information."
Euston, Leisure, Older



LEISURE: Helpful if in an unfamiliar town/city

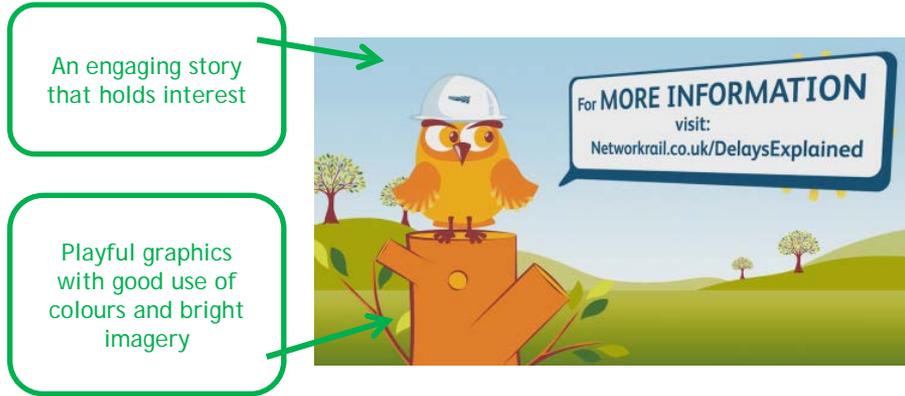
COMMUTER: Alternative sources clearer for this type of information, such as apps

Screens are facing the wrong way for this type of information. Would need to be positioned towards those arriving at the station rather than those departing from it.

- Disruption map communicates information seen as useful and relevant
- Bus/Boat information positively impacting passengers journeys by joining up different mediums of travel
- Both viewed as useful information, but concerns about the amount of detail being conveyed given the size of the screens.

Feelings towards new OIS message designs: videos

- NB: These videos were tested at Kings Cross ONLY
- Proposed videos to be shown on OIS polarising

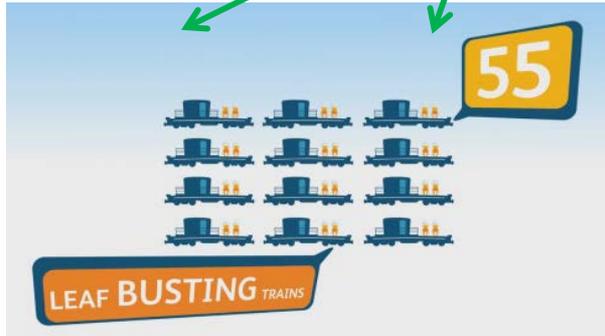


An engaging story that holds interest

Playful graphics with good use of colours and bright imagery

Fits the medium at Kings Cross as connotative messaging akin to 'advertising'

Communicates useful, secondary information, that although may be irrelevant at the time, may prove informative in the future

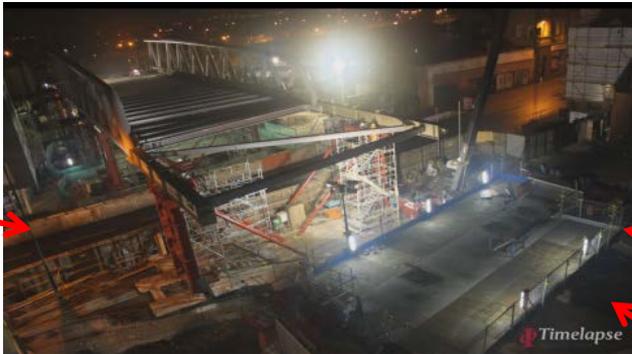


"It's worth knowing. That might not happen today, but might in the future. I like the transparency."
Commuter, Older

Lack of context about what the video is communicating or what the key message is

- What are they building?
 - Where is it?
 - How long did it take?

"There's not even a narrative, it could be one day, twenty days, whatever, how long did it take."
Leisure, Older



"I actually feel I don't like looking at that kind of thing on the screen, flashing lights, it's not comfortable to the eyes at all. I mean the other one was just sort of simplistic."
Leisure, Older

Lacks relevance

Futile - 'what's the point?' of the communication

- Buckling/leaves on the line holds engagement of respondent as it is informative (although perhaps not immediately), and visually attractive
 - Timelapse of the bridge build lacks any context which results in futility.



EFFECTS OF STATION ENVIRONMENT ON INFORMATION PROVISION

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Characteristics of good/bad station layout on information provision

- **Layout and environment** of a station has an influence on the extent to which passengers feel that **information provision within it is good or bad**
- Passengers clear in the stations that they felt were designed in the best way to offer optimum passenger information



- There are some clear characteristics regarding station layout and the position of information points which make for good or bad provision:





Raising the bar: Kings Cross

WHY?

- ✓ **Station design and environment**
 - ✓ Spacious, light, modern
 - ✓ Ticketing, screens & platforms more integrated - smooth journey from entering the station to boarding the train
 - ✓ Open layout means that boards are visible from almost anywhere in the main concourse - even when sat in restaurants and cafes
 - ✓ Prominent information desk
- ✓ **Information provision considered better:**
 - ✓ Perception of more information being available than at other stations:
 - ✓ Directional & navigational signs
 - ✓ Screens at exit of Underground station informing of departing trains
 - ✓ Perception that CIS screens are larger and clearer
- ✗ **Some minor improvements:**
 - ✗ Positioning of clock telling current time not focal or easily locatable
 - ✗ Clock also 'out of use'
 - ✗ 'Second' bank of screens (by platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$) under-utilised



*"The fact that there is more space and it just seems to be a little bit more sort of spread out, the signs are just bigger."
Leisure, Older*

*"I can go and get a coffee or something to eat and still see the screens. I won't miss information about my train because you can always see a screen."
Commuter, Older*



Dividing opinion: Manchester

WHY?

- ✓ Clean, Spacious and light
 - ✓ Large main concourse reduces overcrowding
 - ✓ Staff clearly visible, helpful and friendly
- ✗ Platform locations
 - ✗ Platforms 13 and 14 detached from rest of station
 - ✗ Insufficient provision at platforms requires information to be sourced from main screen - laborious
- ✓ Regular commuters generally appreciate the station
 - ✓ Main screen communicates only essential information
 - ✓ Screens in coffee shops/restaurants mean that you can relax while waiting for the train
 - ✓ One main central screen
- ✗ Gripes amongst infrequent business/leisure users
 - ✗ Main concourse screen dissimilar to any other major station
 - ✗ Layout of information confusing
 - ✗ Colours and font make it difficult to read - not visible unless up close
 - ✗ Ring style of station makes accessing platforms from shops lengthy.



“If the train is coming to the two end platforms (13 and 14), there’s a small TV screen with the trains and destinations but not the different calling points in between, so you have to go back to the main concourse to see that.”

Manchester, Leisure, Younger

Familiarity with station affects satisfaction with information provision



Room for improvement: Euston

WHY?

- × Dark, congested and outdated
 - × Overly crowded and congested around the main concourse screen
 - × Lack of seating in view of information screens
 - × Station is dark and dingy, with an antiquated feel, in contrast to outside concourse
- × Screens in one central location only
 - × Little choice but to stand around the main board as there are few screens elsewhere
 - × Fear of going to buy food/drink as might miss important information about departure
 - × Modern eateries outside, but also a gathering place for smokers
- × Positioning of key services
 - × Information point is too centrally located - long queue's cause more confusion, irritation and crowding
 - × Ticket machines located on the periphery and not clearly signed.



*"You come out of Euston, you go to Pret a Manger, you have a coffee, then you're anticipating, you're not relaxing, because you think I've got to get back in again."
Euston, Leisure, Older*

*"If the screens were split up, people wouldn't be scared to go to Nando's, or somewhere else, if you could see a screen."
Euston, Leisure, Older*

*"You have to stand around that big screen and it gets so crowded, everyone says it."
Euston, Leisure, Older*



Good/bad characteristics from other stations...

✗ Birmingham New Street

- ✗ Lack of a main concourse or focal point to the station
- ✗ Difficult to find main departure boards
- ✗ Lack of provision at platform level: when changing trains, required to visit departure screens on top level, to then go down back to platform level

✗ Leeds

- ✗ Second set of main departure boards positioned above ticket barriers which causes congestion in this area

✗ Victoria

- ✗ Separation of platforms and screens into two parts

✓ Bristol

- ✓ One main screen that lists all of the information required
- ✓ Platform numbers clearly displayed in underground walkway

✓ Paddington

- ✓ 'Village' like feel, with abundance of shops to keep entertained
- ✗ No clear focal point - two banks of main departure screens cause confusion
- ✗ Platform boards face the opposite way to traffic flow for people crossing between London Underground and trains in the main station.



"In comparison I find somewhere like Birmingham New Street not as easy to navigate around compared to say here or London."

Bristol, Commuter, Older

"At Victoria the boards are so spread out. I prefer smaller stations because the information is closer together."

Waterloo, Commuter, Younger



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Enlighten.
Empower.*



Satisfaction with CIS is high

- **Satisfaction with CIS screens is high**, amongst both commuters and leisure users, notwithstanding their differing information requirements
- Regardless of passenger (commuter/leisure, frequent/infrequent traveller), the main board is the key point of reference upon arrival and unlocks information needs
 - CIS fits well with passengers' frame of mind in station: task-oriented, attentive, seeking reassurance
 - Location, quantity, size, format and design of the screens is generally considered sufficient
 - Content seen as relevant, displaying all the information that is necessary for journey completion
 - Information is clear and readily comprehended
- Lack of consistency between stations was the only significant issue for CIS
- Particularly evident at Manchester Piccadilly
 - Main departures screens is considered dissimilar to anything anywhere else
 - Those not familiar with the station have particular difficulty in interpreting it
- Also, Paddington and Birmingham New Street
 - Screens not optimally positioned or sized





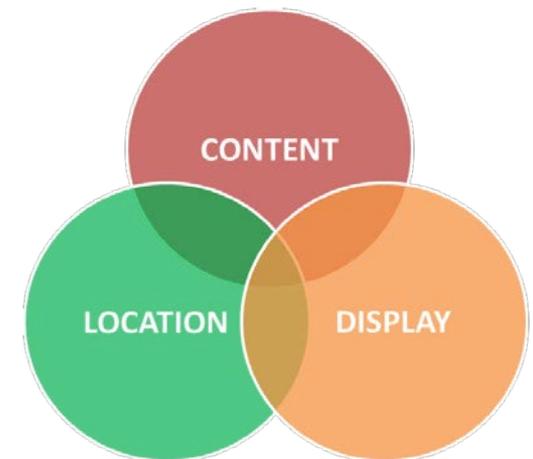
Station environment affects satisfaction with information provision

- Satisfaction with information provision is influenced by the environment in the station
- Layout of station and location of boards has a significant influence on passengers' perceptions of quality of information provision
- Characteristics of good station environment include:
 - Multiple screens
 - Large, clearly visible screens
 - Light/bright
 - Modern facilities
 - Spacious
 - Points of importance clearly signposted
- While passengers rarely struggle to find the information that they require, the perceived effort exerted during this process is influenced by station environment
- London Euston highlights the issue
 - Passengers complain that finding information is more stressful/hard-work.



OIS lacks awareness and is confusing

- Passengers (both regular commuters and leisure users) fail to notice OIS screens, regardless of the format in which they exist
- Lack of awareness and a distinct role is driven by three interlinking factors:
 - Content
 - Location
 - Display
- Passengers also struggle to understand the role of OIS in a station
 - Is OIS essentially 'more CIS'? (In which case what is the point?)
 - Is OIS something else entirely? (In which case, what is it exactly?)
- OIS at Kings Cross does have a more distinct role
 - But this 'perceived' role does not fulfil intention
 - Instead, likened to advertising media





Confirming a purpose for OIS

- The role of OIS needs confirming, as currently it appears clouded
- There appear to be two distinct options for what OIS may be used to achieve:

OIS to be used in a peripheral role, communicating secondary, non-journal critical information and working at a low-level processing

OIS to be used alongside and supplementary to CIS, communicating emergency, journal critical information

- OIS should be tailored differently, depending on its desired purpose...



What to do with OIS: Option 1

- Kings Cross provides some guidance on what can be done with OIS (providing there is an acceptance that OIS will play only a peripheral role and will not become part of the passenger journey for information sourcing)

LOCATION:

- ✓ Position OIS away from primary information
 - Avoids confusion about purpose
 - To work at a passive and unconscious level
 - (Journey critical (CIS) information sought out and expected in one prominent and central place)

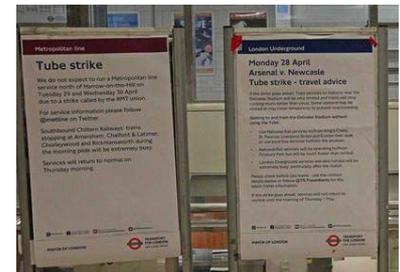
DISPLAY:

- ✓ OIS information that reflects a more advertising-type context:
 - Non-verbal
 - Playful
 - Colourful
 - Impactful
- ✓ Displayed on screens that suit this type of design
 - Larger (surface area), more prominent, stand alone

CONTENT:

- ✓ Consistency in the 'type' of messages OIS delivers
 - Non-journey critical - distinct from CIS
 - Secondary messages (including advertising)
 - Educational
 - E.g. 'Leaves on the line' & 'Buckling' videos.

- Operational information (unplanned disruption/future engineering etc.) could be communicated through posters/A-boards.
- London Underground successfully communicate this type of information by making boards synonymous with short term, important information.
- Temporary boards only appear at times of disruption, achieving greater impact and passenger awareness





What to do with OIS: Option 2

- If however, OIS is to be used more as supplementary to CIS ('CIS-lite')
 - Showing journey specific information supporting CIS
 - Emergency information
 - When operational issues (disruption/delays/engineering) occurs
 - Turned off if there is no journal critical information to communicate
- **CONTENT:**
 - Travel delays
 - Slow running of trains
 - Engineering works
 - Inclement weather causing disruption
 - Rail replacement services
- **DISPLAY:**
 - Minimal graphics
 - Words should be the focal point of the message
 - Distinguishable from advertising
 - Showing information about disruption when necessary and remaining blank at all other times
 - Possibly working in a similar way to motorway dot matrix boards
 - Likely to increase awareness of OIS as passengers are desperate for information during disruption and emergencies
- **LOCATION:**
 - Neighbouring CIS
 - But lower down/eye-level, enabling detailed information to be read



Passenger information screens at railway stations

Understanding passengers' experiences of current systems and their aspirations for the future

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