

THE SOUND OF THE CROWD - HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN COMPLEMENT TRADITIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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1 DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran) is a partnership of Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils which together make up just under 10% of the nation's population and cover nearly 12% of Scotland's land mass.

The Tactran region lies at the heart of Scotland, connected to and connecting other parts of the Country and beyond. Containing the three thriving cities of Dundee, Perth and Stirling and a range of smaller towns, villages and rural areas, the transport, travel and information requirements of the area's population are diverse.

www.tactranconnect.com

is the first website of its kind in Scotland to provide comprehensive regional travel information in one

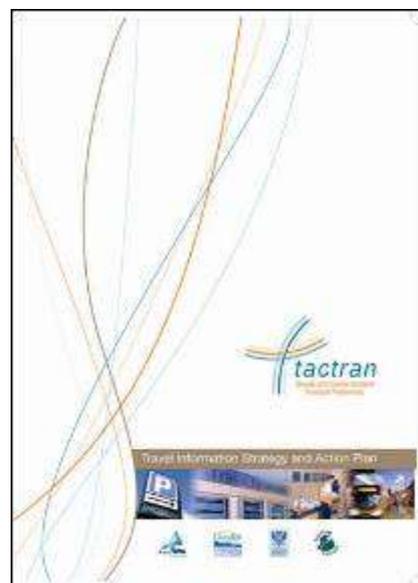


place for a wide range of travel options, whether travelling by bus, rail, car, air, cycle or on foot. The website offers a 'one-stop-shop' approach to help residents, business travellers, commuters and visitors to choose how they can travel to, from and within the Tactran region.

Social media - Facebook and Twitter - has been added to market the website on-line and also to create a "community" for sharing travel information and journey experiences in real time.

2 POLICIES

Following on from approval in June 2008, by the Scottish Ministers, of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), Tactran has published a Regional Travel Information Strategy (RTIS). This provides the policy framework for the development and delivery of the information element of the RTS. It has been developed in response to the RTS desire to significantly improve travel information and its accessibility within the Tactran area.



The RTIS has three key strands:

- Informing travel choices and awareness;
- Facilitating modal shift/sustainability; and
- Making efficient use of the transport network.

The provision of web based travel information is identified as a high priority in the delivery of these aims and also contributes towards achieving wider climate change goals and our Community Planning Partnerships' Single Outcome Agreement sustainability objectives.

3 PARTNERS/STAKEHOLDERS/CONSULTATION

Project partners include Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils. In addition the site's public transport journey planning facility has been developed with the assistance of Traveline Scotland.

Comprehensive public consultation during the development of Tactran's Regional Transport Strategy and stakeholder consultation as part of the Travel Information sub-strategy, both identified web based information as a priority to removing the barrier to travel created by a lack of travel information.

Tactran's Transportation, Public Transport and Sustainable Transport liaison groups have been used as a source of consultation, in addition to several travel habits surveys having been conducted across major employers in the region. All of this, in addition to feedback from website users and the Tactran Connect social media "community", continues to inform the development of www.tactranconnect.com.

4 PROJECT DETAILS

www.tactranconnect.com provides comprehensive regional travel information in one place, whether travelling by bus, rail, car, air, cycle or on foot. The website offers a 'one-stop-shop' approach to help people choose how they can travel to, from and within the Tactran area, promoting good quality transport and travel information to enable people to make more informed travel choices.

www.tactranconnect.com has been developed to utilise existing travel information from national and local websites as well as public transport operators and other information providers and to tailor this



information to regional and local needs providing information on all modes of transport. The website can provide travel information (for example car park location, capacity and tariffs) at a level of detail that a national website is unlikely to be able to provide, but also has sufficient geographical coverage to provide for longer journeys (such as commuting journeys) than a local authority website on its own can provide.



More recently, social media - Facebook and Twitter - has been introduced to www.tactranconnect.com in order to provide timely transport updates; to 'share' journey plan results and to establish two-way communications between Tactran and the travelling public. The goal being to 'recruit' regular travellers who will provide the site with real time updates. Social media information is especially useful during periods of travel disruption e.g. during heavy winter snow in 2010/11 and the recent high winds of winter 2011/12.

Tactran has also built up its user base by using social media based competitions; Facebook advertising and marketing on websites such as Radio Tay.



A recent 'win an ipad' Facebook competition aimed at increasing the Tactran Connect Facebook community attracted 1200 new Facebook "likers", taking the total to over 2200. This Tactran Connect Facebook community is cultivated by promoting events and sharing travel experiences and tapped into to provide 'crowd source' travel information, especially during winter disruptions. In addition, other Tactran initiatives and our other websites - liftshare and travelknowhow - are also promoted to this social media community.

5 TIMESCALE

www.tactranconnect.com was launched in May 2010. Twitter and Facebook were added in November 2010. Further developments such as a winter page

giving real time feedback on travel disruptions continue to be added and developed.

6 RESOURCES

The resources required are relatively low, with the development of the initial website by Steer Davies Gleave for launch in May 2010 costing £22,000. The addition of Facebook and Twitter in November 2010 cost £10,000. The annual maintenance of the site is £5,500 pa including hosting and monitoring and upkeep of Facebook/Twitter. Marketing costs vary depending upon the competition and advertising strategy undertaken. All costs are provided for within Tactran's revenue budget.

7 RESULTS

During 2011 the www.tactranconnect.com website received approximately 30,000 views. Usage of the website varies and tends to be more heavily used during times of disruption. In addition, there are now 730 Twitter followers and our Facebook page with over 2200 "likers" has a weekly Facebook reach of over 1000 people.

Spot surveys have been conducted with major employers to establish awareness of the website. Awareness ranges from 46% at Murray Royal Hospital to 18% at Dundee University.

8 CONCLUSION

www.tactranconnect.com is the only existing regional one-stop-shop travel information website in Scotland, providing travellers with information on all modes of transport and enabling people to make informed choices for travelling sustainably. A social media, Twitter and Facebook, "community" has been established providing real time travel disruption information and encouraging sustainable travel.

Social media marketing and promotional activities continue to be conducted by Tactran and are undoubtedly raising the profile of the website, encouraging more sustainable travel patterns and allowing individuals to make more informed and confident travel choices.



The screenshot displays the homepage of the Tactran Connect website, which is dedicated to providing real-time travel information for Scotland during winter. The page features a navigation bar with links for Home, About, My Journey, and various transport modes like Bus, Rail, and Air. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Winter Travel Information' with a welcome message and social media links; 'Winter Updates' listing recent incidents such as road closures and bus delays; 'Live Traffic Data' showing road status and congestion; 'Weather' with current conditions and forecasts; 'Ready for winter?' with a dog mascot; and 'Local Information' for regional updates. The website uses a clean, user-friendly layout with clear headings and concise text.