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### Service updates at 11:16

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<th>Now</th>
<th>Later</th>
<th>This weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H'smith &amp; City</strong></td>
<td>Severe delays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakerloo</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DLR</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overground</td>
<td>Minor delays</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Piccadilly</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo &amp; City</td>
<td>Good service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Summary

- Background
- Service updates in context
- Response to new naming conventions
- Service updates language context
- Appendix
Background

- London Underground (LU) is reviewing the impact and effectiveness of language used to inform customers of problems on the system.

- Design of the service update naming convention (Good Service, Minor Delays and Severe Delays) focused on shaping customer behaviour e.g. stay on system vs reroute.
  - However, there is now a need to review the service updates language conventions and whether there is opportunity to update the current conventions.

- Six one hour groups were conducted amongst customers to explore response to current naming conventions and viable alternatives.
  - Groups included a representation of LU users including Commuter and Leisure; a mix of life-stage; Inner and Outer London.

- Research was conducted by 2CV in June 2012.
Service updates in context
Customers are me-centric and journey led when on the Tube

- On their journeys customers are prepared for the expected experience:
  - Primarily: how long it will take
  - Secondarily: how it will feel (comfort, crowding, temperature)

- When something goes wrong, they need to re-think their expectations:
  - Primary need: how much longer will it take?
  - Secondary need: what will it feel like?

Customers want to understand personal rather than system impact
Two customer journey types and experiences

Commuter

- More time pressured
- Have calculated journey time quite precisely
- Can be quickly frustrated when problems occur
- But, more likely to be confident in travelling
- And more familiar with system and typical problems that can arise on their line – language is conditioned and therefore easier for them to **automatically process**

Leisure/Utility

- Less time pressured and often have more flexibility built into their journey plan
- Often less familiar with system or that particular route
- Less likely to be aware of the problems that can occur and what the language means
- And therefore less familiar with alternatives and less confident in re-routing

**More accustomed to disruptions and system language**

**Less certain of what system language means and what to do next**

Ccommuters are more conditioned to the system and language used and respond more automatically
Alternative naming conventions
Customers are trying to develop heuristics and automatic responses to fit with system language

- Good, Minor and Suspended are all relatively easy to respond to when heard/seen
- Severe requires more effortful thinking and weighing up of options based on a combination of information/factors: service updates, time between trains, behaviour of other customers, level of overcrowding

Commuter

- Commuters have learnt roughly what Severe might mean for them and their journeys:
  - Some don’t feel it’s a problem/is akin to minor on most days it’s used
  - Some experience repeated problems/overcrowding and have a back-up route
  - Use context of facts (ie PUT, signal failure) and how the system is working to decide if it really is severe

Leisure/Utility

- Leisure users are less confident in managing journeys and more likely to need extra information from staff when on system
  - May be more likely to avoid the system entirely on occasions and can perceive the service to be beset with problems

Current interpretations have taken effort for customers to learn, Commuters in particular are more conditioned to this language
Customers’ preferred service status language

- Commuters preferred the language they were used to (Good, Minor, Severe) but when asked to choose an alternative they were able to consider different options.
- Presented with alternatives customers preferred two key options:
  - Both had three steps – a logical and easy to learn model (like traffic lights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good service</th>
<th>Good service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short delays</td>
<td>Minor delays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long delays</td>
<td>Major delays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Time based definitions/impact on customer
- Can describe time taken between trains and/or speed of trains
- In keeping with current conventions
- Delivers emotional descriptor that is easy to respond to:
  - Clearer that they need to do something when hear Major
  - Major seems marginally less serious than Severe

Both have potential to be used on system
Short and Long delays are more time based, less emotive and could describe customer experience

- More time based and could create a clearer solution for customers
  - Short = a few minutes
  - Long = long wait and slow moving

- However, customers less likely to respond behaviourally:
  - Severe/Major prompt a more active response from customers as more emotive

- Cognitive dissonance (psychological distress caused by a difference between expected and actual experienced) could build over time if these don’t equate to time based disruptions
  - Is there an opportunity to reconsider classifications in line with customer experience to make language feel more customer-centric – ie, in line with cumulative time added to journeys
  - Needs to align with time displayed - eg 3 minutes between trains means does not mean long delays for most customers

To deliver to customer expectations, these definitions would need to be used more consistently in terms of time impact for different customers

If I called my boss and said there would be ‘long’ delays he’d be like, ok; but if I called and said ‘major’ he’d think oh god! She’s so dramatic about it!

Long and short sound a bit more factual, they could work
Major delays more akin to Severe, but with slightly less serious connotations

- Customers agreed these were broadly synonyms of one-another, with minor differences depending on associations, however, on the whole, Major was felt to be marginally less serious than Severe.

```
Marginal less serious (majority/ particularly for over 45s)

Major

Severe

Marginal more serious (minority, tend to be commuters who have experienced Severe)
```

- Major just isn't quite as bad as severe, for me it doesn't have the same connotations.
- This makes me think the problem isn't as bad as it could be.
- Severe has connotations of illness and being really bad.
- I would think that something catastrophic had happened.
- It's like a 'major' incident – like someone's died or there's been a terrorist attack.

Differences are marginal and over time meaning would come in-line with 'severe' to mean the same as customers become conditioned to system language.
Some alternatives are rejected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal service</th>
<th>Extended delays</th>
<th>Delays – please seek alternative routes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>Incomplete and unhelpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could mean minor delays</td>
<td>Makes you feel depressed</td>
<td>Distrust in service updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for more</td>
<td>Raises uncertainty in customers’ minds</td>
<td>means customers do not take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positivity/confidence in service</td>
<td>Negative connotations</td>
<td>this advice readily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal is only one step away from ‘bad’</td>
<td>May never get better</td>
<td>Can leave customer in decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TfL have Extended the service out of choice not need</td>
<td>paralysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I don’t like normal – I want to hear good and feel that everything is ok, normal would make me wonder

Extended delays doesn’t sound good – this sounds like it would last forever!

Why are TfL ‘Extending’ the delays, it feels like they’ve not done something

I would think oh my god take the bus!

It sounds like they’re doing engineering works and this was extended

I want to be able to make a decision about what to do on my journey and this doesn’t help me to do this

Makes customers feel less certain and less positive about the service
Limited service was preferred to Special service

**Limited service**
- More descriptive
- Less trains running
- Clear for customers what it means

**Special service**
- Less descriptive
- Unclear – is it better, is it worse?
- Dissonance causes frustration

*It tells you what is happening, it’s to the point*

*It is trying to be a bit deceptive isn’t it – like it’s telling you you’re getting something good when actually it’s something worse*

Limited most in line with customers needs
Customers’ views of service updates – consistency is key
Information on service performance comes from several sources

- Announcements
- Apps
- Word of Mouth
- TV/radio news
- Web
- ‘Digital displays’ (eSubs)
- Train drivers
- The herd
- Atmosphere/environment

Information is pieced together to inform next steps
Four key time-points for service updates information

**Pre-journey**
- Less committed to journey/mode
- Weighing up options
- More open to change

**Arrival at station/pre-barriers**
- Committed to embarking on journey on the Tube
- Have mentally entered into contract with the Tube
- Other options less conscious
- Have to switch from system 1 to system 2 thinking (effortful) if something goes wrong
- But not trapped in system/haven’t paid

**On platform**
- Have paid for journey but haven’t gone anywhere yet
- Feel trapped in system/stationary
- Feel less free to change route
- If leave you get charged anyway (or hassle to reimburse)
- Other options may take longer even with delays – getting out of system/onto another mode

**On train**
- On journey/have made progress
- In care of driver
- More direct/personal information
  - How long your train is being held for

At each stage customers have different choices to make and delays have a different emotional impact
Some service updates language helps customers feel in the loop and in control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good service</th>
<th>Minor delays</th>
<th>Suspended/part closure/line closure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive affirmation</td>
<td>There are small problems/disruptions</td>
<td>Clear and simple: ‘it’s not working’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know you can ‘relax’ and everything is working</td>
<td>You’ll be a few minutes late/it might be a bit busier but you will get there</td>
<td>Need to reroute if affected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*I feel reassured that my journey won’t be disrupted and that I will get to my destination on time*

*It’s better than ‘Normal’ it’s saying it’s performing well. Normal could be slow and congested*

*It says brace yourself for a bit of discomfort or a few extra minutes but the situation is under control*

*You know it’s not working so you just move on*

Easy to process and decide next steps – no need for customers to make choices
Severe delays spans a broader range of journey impacts

- A bigger impact than Minor ie 10-20 minutes on your journey
- For some customers LU’s definition of Severe isn’t ‘Severe’ (Leisure users)
- For Commuters time/experience is more significantly impacted (due to increased passenger volumes) but they are more likely to be able to re-route

- The service is not moving and an hour is added to your journey
- You get trapped in a crowd or out with no other options

Makes it harder for customers to decide what to do next – do they hope for the best or abort their journey plan?
However, from a customer perspective, all language conventions can currently be used inconsistently

- Customers feel service updates are not used consistently or accurately on system at present
  - And therefore Good, Minor, Severe are seen as less factual and more abstract/conceptual than the cause of the delay

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*It says there is a good service but I’m stuck in a tunnel! How does that work?!

*When they say there are severe delays and then the Tube comes 2 minutes later obviously I am happy that the Tube is there, but it seems strange that they call it severe when it’s pretty much a normal service*

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*Inhibiting the development of heuristics and ability to trust in service updates*

---

*It is dissonance and perceived unreliability of information that affects reputation more so than the language used*
Frustration caused by cognitive dissonance demonstrated in social media

Severe delays and good service are the most reported incidents in social media; ‘good service’ comments are negative due to cognitive dissonance.
Customers are keen to understand the nature of the problem in decoding what is happening

**Nature of problem acts as anchor for customers to understand seriousness and impact and helps them feel in control (knowing what’s happening underground allays fears); eg**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Problem</th>
<th>Customer Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person under a train</td>
<td>Service out of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person ill on train</td>
<td>Need to get off system but will be resolved quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal failure</td>
<td>More technical issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faulty train</td>
<td>May take a while to get ‘out of service’ but not a big issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I wouldn’t hang around if I heard this, I would find another way to get to work
- You know there is a problem and it is quite serious but they usually sort this out quite quickly
- You hear this quite a lot, the Tube usually keeps running
- I would think that they would handle this quite quickly and I wouldn’t be impacted too much

Due to inconsistent use of service performance language, the cause of the delay often provides the most concrete and factual information
In-the-moment decisions are strongly influenced by the herd and environment

You know when the extra staff come onto the platform that it’s not going anywhere and they are doing safety and crowd management. You have to assess how easy it is to get out then.

At Stratford everyone was emptying out because it was closed, but then it poured with rain and everyone flooded in again.

If it’s really hot and uncomfortable, I don’t like staying down there.

You get a sense of how it is going to be by how different it feels to how it is normally – what’s the atmosphere, what are other people doing, how much longer is it taking.

If everyone else is getting off you get caught up in the moment and follow, you wouldn’t want to be the last person on the train.

Customers susceptible to external influences when deciding what to do next
At present, information relayed is LU-centric rather than customer-centric

**London Underground**
- Cross-network communications
- Managing holistically
- Focussed on getting people off system/safety
- Engineering focussed

**Me-centric**
- In the moment/localised
- Want to know how long it will take for their journey and how their experience will be affected
- Focussed on specific part of line, not entire line
- Inconsistency means they can’t trust LU’s description of situation
- Often prepared for some delays

It feels like they’re thinking about themselves and what it means for them and their trains, not what it means for me – 10 minutes isn’t a severe delay – that’s ok for me

Desire for a more customer-centric solution
Apps and driver announcements are examples of when information is customer-centric

### Apps
- Proactive delivery of information
- Delivered off-system and when customers are prepared to adapt
- Uses ‘flagging’ system to emotionally alert customers to action required

### Driver announcements
- Customer-centric as delivered to them personally
- Localised to that train
- Little dissonance between what driver says and what customer experiences

In-the-moment information that is working well to meet customer needs
Some problems occur with information delivery

- Audio announcements often criticised as inaudible
  - PA system
  - Announcement
  - Environment/other passengers

- Information not always drawing attention in
  - Desire for information design that is easy to understand at a glance/draws your attention to the relevant information

- Information not always integrated across communication points
  - Journey planner still lets you plan journey when showing disruptions

Making information harder for people to process and work out their next steps
Summary

- Customers are me-centric when travelling on the Tube, system performance information is important for understanding if/how their journey will be affected and to stay in control.

- Two three-stage naming conventions were selected as potential options for developing service performance language:
  - Good service, Short delays, Long delays: feels logical and time based; has the potential to bring language more in line with customer experience
  - Good service, Minor delays, Major delays: delivers more emotionally directive information and is in line with existing convention with Major perceived to be slightly less serious than Severe

- Beyond naming conventions, customers called for service performance information that was more consistent and in line with their experience. The current use of language feels more LU-centric (network led) which is in discord with customer needs (me-centric and journey led)
Appendix
Research objectives

- To explore the language used by LU to describe delays currently and inform the development of a new naming convention for delays
- To understand how various naming conventions impact perceptions of service reliability
- To understand the context of how people look for information on delays and how they interact with the information provided
Methodology and sample

- 6 x 1 hour focus groups
- Each group contained a mix of SEGs, gender and Tube lines used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Life Stage</th>
<th>Primary use of LU</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-family (25-35yrs)</td>
<td>Commuter – travels on LU mainly to work</td>
<td>Inner London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family (30-45yrs)</td>
<td>Commuter – travels on LU mainly to work</td>
<td>Outer London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post-family (45+yrs)</td>
<td>Commuter – travels on LU mainly to work</td>
<td>Inner London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pre-family (25-35yrs)</td>
<td>Leisure – travels on LU mainly for leisure</td>
<td>Outer London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Family (30-45yrs)</td>
<td>Leisure – travels on LU mainly for leisure</td>
<td>Inner London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Post-family (45+yrs)</td>
<td>Leisure – travels on LU mainly for leisure</td>
<td>Outer London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Research conducted by 2CV in June 2012
Other audience differences are evident

- **Inner/Outer**
  - Inner more flexible in adapting to change:
    - More alternative options of similar time value
    - Outer may have less options

- **Travel mindset**
  - More flexible and often less time pressured (tend to be Younger/Inner London)
  - More organised travel behaviour with hard-wired expectations - feel less open to changing plans

- **Special journeys**
  - Some journeys have more at stake emotionally:
    - A flight to catch
    - An important meeting
    - Theatre tickets

Time and alternative options can affect emotional impact of delays