

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	LU Engineering Works Maps		
Objective	To explore reponse to the current LU engineering works map design and two potential alternatives; and to understand the role of the maps in the context of other travel / checking tools used by customers		
Date	22/03/2012	Agency	2CV
Methodology	Three focus groups with a broad range of LU customers; and two observation and intercept sessions at four LU stations across a weekday and a weekend		

Abstract

Customers are alerted to engineering works closures via a range of communications channels, including a week ending engineering works map displayed at stations. Research found that these maps are primarily noticed at weekends when customers are faced with closures. Unfamiliar and infrequent customers (who are less likely to check before they travel online) have the greatest need for this information in station to both help make them aware of closures and to reroute. Of the three maps explored in the research, the current version showing all closures is the least confusing for customers. However, many customers find the written information complicated and irrelevant. By simplifying the written information of the maps and placing the maps among other sources of information in stations, the maps will achieve greater standout and work better to inform customers of works on the weekends.

Key findings

Of the three maps researched, the current map (showing the circle line) is the least confusing for customers as it demonstrates the full extent of closures across the system. This is preferred to other versions (including one which only highlights areas without service and one where the map is 'flipped' so closed lines are greyed out) which are considered inaccurate, confusing, and potentially deceptive for familiar customers.

When prompted to consider what role the poster should serve, customers want it to address two needs: to help them understand what is closed/open

and to help them reroute or plan journeys. However, the map alone does not provide all of the information and support needed by customers in the context of the engineering works and closures.

The written information is largely irrelevant to customers who are most concerned about their journey 'in the moment'. Information about how to reroute is often also sought through other in-station sources, therefore, simplifying the written information on the maps and directing customer to other sources may help to minimise confusion.

The poster's impact varies depending on the audience. The maps currently have the most positive impact on infrequent customers who have some knowledge of the system and are seeking information before the barriers. For customers with little or no understanding of the system, the map requires them to use other information sources alongside the closure maps in order to way-find and gain an understanding of the how the closures will impact their journey.

The closure maps are used and appreciated by station staff who use them to inform and remind themselves of closures, and as a tool to help explain how customers can reroute.

There is an opportunity for the posters to stand-out more for customers who need the information most, through changes to the information itself and its prominence in stations.

Overall, the posters need to:

- Be unambiguous and require minimal interpretation; the current version is the preferred option but can still confuse, especially for unfamiliar customers
- Have simpler text, and potentially adopt the layout of the rainbow style posters (or be positioned next to the rainbow style posters) where possible
- Be positioned near other key information sources (LU staff, main Tube maps), before the barriers, aligned to the flow of 'people traffic', and positioned in prominent locations when the main closures are taking place (typically weekends)
- Potentially also be given as a hand-out to staff and customers on request