



PW-12

Real-time transit information

People waiting for buses in the city of Fairfax, Virginia (21,498), can find out when the next bus is coming by looking at signs at the bus stops. The city uses global positioning system (GPS) receivers on its buses to track their positions. A computer system examines the position of the buses, their routes, and normal traffic patterns and then transmits the estimated arrival time to signs in five bus shelters and one subway station. Transit staff can also transmit information on traffic delays and accidents to the system, which has proved to be extremely accurate. In addition to the signs, the information is available through cell phones, handheld computers, and the Internet. The city council allocated \$175,000 to purchase and maintain the system in order to make the transit experience more user-friendly. Visits to the Web site increased from 175 when the Internet system was launched in May 2001 to 3,500 in March 2002.

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