Planning 511 Traveler Services for Extraordinary Events:
Lessons from Pennsylvania's Papal Visit
(and other big events)

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Special Event 1: 2015 Papal Visit to Philadelphia

- A National Special Security Event.
- Cooperative cross-agency effort.
- 25+ miles of highways closed across states.
- Vehicles prohibited from a 4.7 square mile section of Center City.
Planning for The Papal Visit

- PennDOT and PA Turnpike Partnership
  - [www.papal511.org](http://www.papal511.org)

- Joint expansion of traveler information systems
  - MOBILE Website, MOBILE App, Special IVR

- Coordinated with 3rd party data provider (INRIX) to display closures

- Plans for emergency management, evacuations, etc. & using web, social, mobile, IVR for communications.
The Reality of the Papal visit.

• Actual stats:
  • Anticipated 1-2 Million
    860,000 attended (estimated)

• 511 stats, 9/14/2015 – 9/28/2015
  • 127,458 web sessions
  • 50.26% mobile/tablet users

• Estimated 20% drop in overall traffic through the impacted region

• Everything went great!
Special Event 2: 2016 Democratic National Convention

- Another National Special Security Event.
- 3+ miles of I-95 closed to commercial traffic.
- Multiple ad-hoc lane and planned restrictions/closures.
- Special one-way communications using existing technologies:
  - Special website (No special IVR).
- Everything went great!
Special Event 3: Marysville Rock Slope Project

- Not a National Special Security Event (construction event).
- Major detours near state capitol commuting route.
- Special one-way communications (using existing technologies):
  - Special website.
  - Event-specific email subscription.
- Everything went great!
What is the take-away?

• The one-way communication methods were successful in helping get the word out.

• The systems were well used before and during the events in relation to the magnitude of the event.

• Social media was successfully used for all events.

• The planning paid off.

• Everything went well.

But what if it didn’t?
It was a dark and stormy night.
Today, what happens during unplanned events?

- Lots of social media use (tweeting, Facebook).
- Regardless of agency efforts, travelers complain that agency is not in touch with them.
- People with old tech, like flip phones, have limited options for getting info.
- But... Travelers look to agencies for “official” updates.
What could be helpful?

- Knowing more about the types of vehicles stuck on the roads (trucks vs. cars vs. buses).
- Knowing more about the length of queues.
- Identifying and periodically checking in with motorists.
- Understanding (and responding to) motorist concerns.

Can existing technologies adapt?

- Two-way IVR
- Text messages
- Web page
- Mobile phone + location services
Yes they can.

Agency activates IRIS.

Agency operators manage web, text and robo-call communications through portal.

Event web page and IVR automatically go live.

Travelers register with the system.
How can it be improved?
Our thoughts....

• **Address “dead zones”**
  With a portable device that serves up event web info – like a hotel access point with no user Internet needed.

• **Warn drivers**
  Before a work zone, incident location or roadway hazard:
  • With mobile apps.
  • Continue to leverage geofencing.

• **Warn work crews**
  Of high-speed vehicles approaching.
Your thoughts and questions?

Let us know!

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