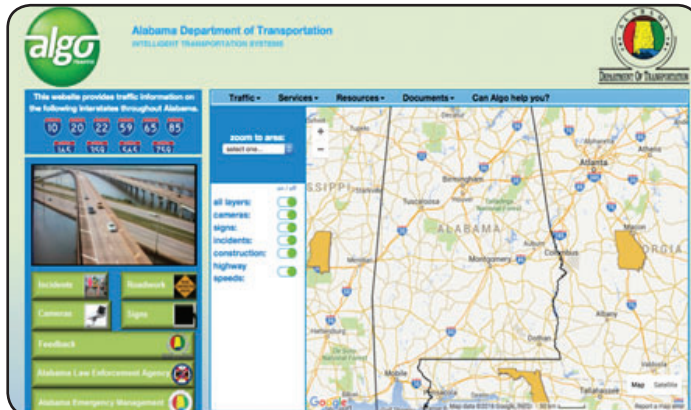


Traveler information systems offer real-time information to travelers, allowing users to make informed decisions about their route and mode choice. Encountering delays, especially those due to construction or crashes, with no prior warning is a major cause of driver frustration. Providing information to the motoring public is one of the primary functions of the TSMO program. This information cannot be disseminated without a traveler information portal. This portal contains information, typically entered at the TMC or automatically populated, such as weather events, road closures, congestion, Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), CCTV camera coverage, and crash incidents. Providing this information to the public leads to more efficiently utilized roadways, results in less gridlock and better traffic flow. Allowing users to set up personalized alerts directly to their email or smart phone increases participation and buy-in to this program. Traveler information can be directed at the motorist in different forms depending on the message. DMS and portable changable message signs are perfect for conveying short messages that will impact the motorist during their trip, while email and social media alerts are good for alerting drivers about upcoming unsafe conditions such as planned construction, special events, or severe weather.



Getting the Message Across

Crafting the message is only half of the battle when it comes to traveler information. The other half is getting the message to the motorists. Below are listed several of the technologies and services that help the DOT get the message out:

Traveler Informational Portals

These portals, such as algo (pictured above) serve as a catch all for traveler information. They contain up to date weather, road, and bridge statuses; contain cctv/dms information; and contain links to other DOT web services. Traveler information portals are helpful for checking information on an upcoming trip but are only accessible by a passenger while traveling.

DMS/PCMS

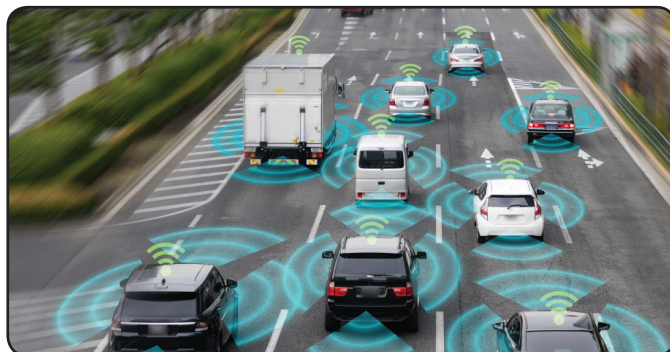
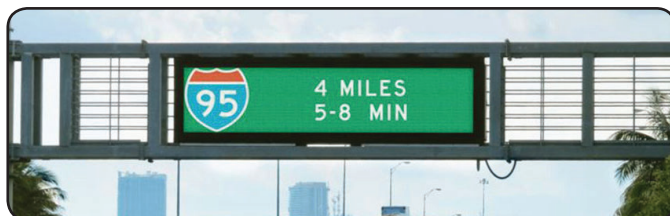
Dynamic Message Signs (pictured to the right) and Portable Changeable Message Signs are great ways to get informational and critical messages to the motorists while they are driving. DMS are permanent infrastructure typically mounted on access controlled roadways while PCMS are temporary and typically found near construction activity.

Social Media

Social media sites provide an instant connection with travelers and can be used to send out critical messages about severe weather events, road closures, and construction activity. Multiple services should be explored when creating an online presence in order to have a broad reach.

In-Vehicle Services

As technology advances, it is becoming easier to send messages to motorists in their vehicle using mobile Internet or DSRC radios. As these technologies become more common place, and pick up a larger market share, their viability as traveler information devices will grow.



Benefits and Recommendations

Avoided Congestion

When users have congestion information, they will make route and mode choices to avoid it, making the traffic system operate more efficiently at all times.

Increased Safety

The risk of secondary crashes increases for every additional minute an incident waits to be cleared. Providing the public with incident information allows them to avoid the area all together.

Compile Information

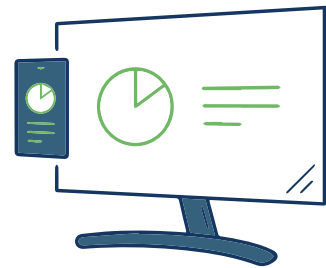
Many services already provide information to the traveling public. When creating this program, seek to combine these services into a single location that the public can use.

Get Predictive

Use historic information that has been collected over the years to predict impacts of specific events. Refine these predictions as more data becomes available.

Think Big Picture

Reducing the granularity of your data by too much starts to skew predictions and does not provide beneficial information.



Traveler Information Dependencies

The traveler information system is dependent on various TSMO strategies and field deployments for support. Without these strategies in place, the information provided to the traveler is not complete and can cause inefficient choices to be made.

