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Metro.net takes a dynamic turn with new look, easy-to-find features

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(July 15, 2008) Metro will launch its new homepage makeover Wednesday with a fresh take on more transit-friendly features for all visitors to the external website.

The homepage remake is more dynamic and interactive with special new buttons and sections that make it easier for the Metro customer to access the online information they need.

"We improved the look and feel of Metro's website, so that it's more exciting and more engaging for people to visit metro.net," said Communications Manager Vivian L. Tran, who led the project with the in-house web team.

New additions to the homepage include a direct link to Free Park and Ride Lots, a new section called "In the Loop," a Metro trivia feature and a quick button to get to resources such as the Transportation Library and Archives. The Metro Store also has its own new navigation tab at the top of the homepage.

The Spotlight section features interesting images, videos and information that rotate constantly throughout the day. "We saw it as an opportunity for us to highlight some very timely and critical transportation issues, such as Congestion Pricing, and still include fun facts and things to do," Tran said.

The web team integrated design with function to spark a virtual exchange of information with Metro's customers. The team looked at other transit agency websites and took a fresh approach to it, said Creative Services Design Manager Christian Rocha.

"This is more of an evolution of the current webpage than a complete redesign," Rocha said.

"We really wanted to promote the ridership component of the home page

What's New!



- It's bigger!
- *How to Ride* section is emphasized, easy to use
- More graphical buttons call out *System Service Alerts*, *Real-Time Traffic* and *Metro E-mail Updates*.
- Size of *Trip Planner* is more compact.
- Easy access to *Free Park and Ride Lots*; New "*In the Loop*" section points to timely news and headlines, the latest reports on current projects and great deals on hot tickets and venues. Mouse over any of these items to catch a surprise image that corresponds to the link.
- *Metro Store* is added to the navigation tabs on top.
- Fun trivia and factoids about Metro rotate constantly throughout the day.
- A quick button provides easy access to the *Transportation Library and Archives*, an invaluable resource for the public.

in terms of the customer – to make it easier for the customer to take advantage of the Metro system,” Rocha said.



Pictured: Joe Simpson, Christian Rocha, Vivian Tran, Omark Holmes

Metro.net Credit Roll

Project Management:
Vivian Tran

Information Architecture: Christian Rocha, Vivian Tran, Joe Simpson, Omark Holmes

Content and Copywriting: Vivian Tran

Art Direction: Christian Rocha

Design: Christian Rocha and Alex Cerilla

Development/Coding: Joe Simpson, Kevin Woo, Christian Rocha

The How to Ride section takes center stage – below the robust banner ads and next to the popular Trip Planner – to offer online users instant access to bus and rail routes, timetables, maps, passes, rider guides, and commuter services such as vanpool and carpool. Color-coded buttons call attention to information about service delays, real-time traffic and email sign-ups for updates.

Webmaster Joe Simpson, who helped develop the new homepage, said the visual design is a friendly approach to the metro.net experience. The web team worked with Systems Technician Doug Anderson to reduce the size of the Trip Planner, which opened up more space on the homepage.

“It’s more graphically based. It has a lot of rollovers, which means that when you roll over a part of the page with your mouse, something happens,” said Simpson, who added that the last metro.net redesign was almost six years ago.

The dynamic new homepage also will change and rotate its color banner, images and select information throughout the day.

The homepage makeover is the first in a series of ongoing changes to metro.net in an effort to cultivate a new relationship with Metro customers and online visitors.

“The idea is that every time you visit metro.net, there’s something new and different on the homepage that keeps you coming back,” Tran said.

• Photo by Ned Racine