

[Metro.net](#) (web)**Resources**

- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)
- ▶ [Bazaar](#)

**Metro Info**

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
- ▶ [Help Desk](#)
- ▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

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The Creative Services team of Lan-Chi Lam, Doug Goodwin and Sharie Powell, partnered with Service Planning Analysis team of John Fitzgibbon, Susan Phifer, Peishan Wang, Jesse Simon and Rollin Baker, along with Customer Relations team of Gail Harvey, Alonzo Williams and Doug Anderson to corral the massive range of transportation data into a digital downstream. Pictured here, from left, are Peishan Wang, Susan Phifer, Rollin Baker, Lan-Chi Lam, Doug Goodwin, and Sharie Powell.

## Google's visual trip emerges from Metro's mountain of data

(August 6, 2009) Google is now offering Metro bus and rail as an alternative form of transportation in the Google Maps application. Google Maps offers users the benefit of their mapping services in 12 different languages, plus all the imagery of a visual trip in advance of the actual ride on Metro.

Last month Metro began making transportation related data available to the public via a developer site on *metro.net*. The site, [developer.metro.net](#), was critical for sharing transportation data on the web.

Metro's developer site is an innovative digital gathering place where individuals and entities alike can access and transform Metro's transportation data into a myriad of uses and applications.

The site includes a variety of types of data including "Trip Planner Info Feed" web services, which provides information from 65 transit agencies needed for regional trip planning, Geographic Information System (GIS) data from Metro's routes, and Metro's latest route, stop, and schedule information in the GTFS

format. The site was also designed to foster a community of developers who work with transit data and includes a blog to allow feedback.

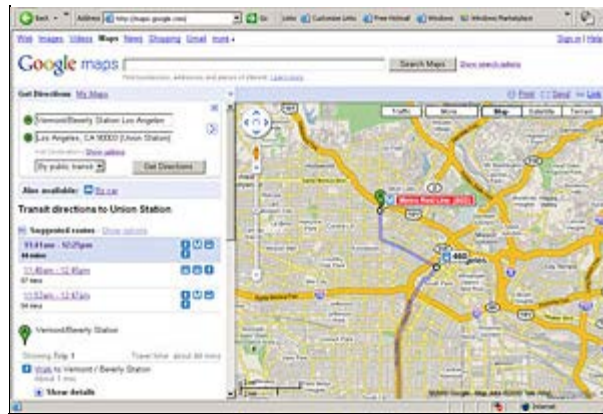
"The site is already proving to be extremely popular with well over 10,000 page views and coverage on several websites and blogs. Creative Services have also received requests from agencies across the country about how we put the developer site together," said Lan-Chi Lam, Creative Services manager who helped develop the site and managed the project through to the Google agreement.

Before there was the development site, there was data, accessible only by requests that had to be fulfilled and delivered one by one. There just wasn't any place where planners, web developers, agencies, and even Google, could easily access.

"The 2.5 million or more points of data generated by Metro's bus and rail system is the heart of Metro's scheduling system," said Susan Phifer, Service Planning Analysis manager.

Every move that's made by every Metro bus pulling up and exiting the 15,000 or so bus stops in Los Angeles County is a point of data. The point of data begins its digital life much like a salmon swimming upstream.

Schedule makers and support staff at the service sectors, who maintain and facilitate the data, update a central database with new and changing information, such as restrictions at certain bus stops, changes in fare, boarding restrictions, and the biannual service changes known as the "shake up."



Try Google Maps to plan a trip on Metro. Click on the link in the [Trip Planner](#) box at *metro.net*. You can also visit [www.google.com/transit](http://www.google.com/transit) or access Google Maps, the free online mapping service provided by Google, at [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com). Click 'get directions' and select 'by public transit.'



Customer Relations team: Director of Customer Relations Gail Harvey, Communications Manager Alonzo Williams and Sr. Departmental Systems Analyst Doug Anderson channeled Metro's Trip Planner data into a web service.

In order to mature into the amazingly complex bus and rail scheduling system, the points of data make a quantum leap to a central database in Hastus, an integrated and modular software solution for transit scheduling, operations and customer solutions.

As the points of data merge into perfectly logical channels of transit information, Hastus exports transit operations data that provides for operation of the Automated Transit Management System, transit network planning, customer information, and performance analysis.

Before all that data became available on the developer site, said Phifer, transportation planners had to transmit the material manually — a "one-off" — to each system that required the data, such as the City of Los Angeles Signal Priority System.



Spatial Analysis Project Leader Jesse Simon adds the geographical component to the database.

"Preparing, compiling, packaging, then sending the data can be a manual and arduous task; this site serves as a repository for commonly requested data to aid that effort," Lam noted.

It took a transit village, so to speak.

"The developer site was a significant step for us as an agency and involved multiple departments across the agency," said Maya Emsden, DEO, Creative Services. "We worked with Service

Performance Analysis, Customer Relations, County Counsel, and the CEO's office to make this happen. It couldn't have been done without this teamwork."

The Creative Services team, which also includes Doug Goodwin and Sharie Powell, partnered with Service Planning Analysis team of John Fitzgibbon, Susan Phifer, Peishan Wang, Jesse Simon and Rollin Baker, along with Customer Relations team of Gail Harvey, Alonzo Williams and Doug Anderson to corral the massive range of transportation data into a digital downstream.

County Counsel Joyce Chang provided the terms and conditions language for the overall developer site and represented Metro in the legal agreements with Google.

*Anderson*

*—from Gayle*