Keeping London moving

With 250 million visits a year and over 20 million visitors a month, TfL’s new award winning website is one of the most complex transport sites in the world. TfL asked us to work closely with the in-house TfL Online digital team to transform it from something on which you plan a journey from your desk, to a personal travel assistant providing information to any device on the move.

The challenge

Phil Young, Head of Online at TfL says: “What people really wanted was a great journey planner with maps, live travel information, localised and personal content – all on their device of choice. We needed to be great at catering for mobiles, tablets, laptops and desktops.” That was our challenge.

What we did

Together with the TfL Online in-house digital team, we completely redesigned and overhauled the TfL website to make it fresher, bolder and more intuitive; to provide the best digital experience for users across all devices, enabling them to plan their journeys on the go. New functions include: live travel information from across the network from ‘Boris bikes’ to the tube; personalisation to enable users to save their most used stops; a live arrivals service providing predictions for more than 10,000 bus and Tube stops; and an interactive version of the London Tube map.

By using a scalable, cloud hosted infrastructure, we also ensured that the site is robust enough to deal with huge surges in demand during adverse weather or other unexpected events, but is also as cost effective as possible. Through the creation of a single, consolidated API the new website supports TfL’s open data policy, providing developers with a single source for all TfL data, enabling them to create transport apps and improvements in areas such as accessibility of information for disabled transport users.
The results

In the ten weeks since the new site was first launched, Journey Planner visits increased overall by around 10% and mobile and tablet usage was higher than ever before at 54%, rising to 65% over weekends. The site also successfully dealt with a huge surge in demand during the tube strike in April – the first ‘real life’ test of the system. In addition, the site is now more cost effective to run on new cloud infrastructure despite richer content and higher traffic.

The future

A site like this never stays still and we are working with TfL to evolve their wider web presence across mobile, tablet and desktop and on the integration of National Rail information on the site as well as greater personalisation and alert features.