

Subject Comments During Interviews

Subject comments are listed by test group and period.

CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 1
I had a problem with the tracking device in my car last week. MDOT set me up with a replacement car until mine was fixed. The car is still fine. Car is fine.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 2
No comments.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 3
Two subjects reported that they do not feel confident about the windshield wipers. Otherwise, all control subjects said the cars are fine. Things are great except for a “quirky” radio. Everything is fine. Everything is fine.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 4
No comments.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 5
Overall, I was glad to participate. It was a great opportunity for me because DIRECT is a great idea. I like that DIRECT seeks input from commuters. Although I had no equipment in my car, I enjoyed the experience. I was disappointed to not have any technology in my car. Nonetheless, I became more aware of the technological possibilities out there. I was disappointed to have to be in a control group, but I liked the car.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 6
<u>General Impressions:</u> I was very impressed with the orientation and the facility at MITSC. I was glad to learn that the stuff at the control center is going on. This could lead to much safer road conditions and time savings. The program was well run. I hope that data collection efforts like this help provide information to drivers so that they can re-route. This project made me more aware of existing sources of traffic information. I am more likely to read traffic signs. Traffic isn't that bad here compared to other major metropolitan areas. However night construction would help. I think this project is very worthwhile and something that needs to be done. I-75 is wild sometimes because of the “gawk factor.” and something needs to be done to take care of bottlenecks. I'm a lot more conscious of what is out there now. The project is a good idea and should not quit. There should be more coordination between the highway department and the MITSC. The highway department seems to do construction on parallel roadways at the same time; they should rotate construction so that people have alternate routes to take. <u>Use of Traffic Information:</u> I don't seek out traffic information because it is very seldom useful. Most of the time, it is too late or about a different part of the metropolitan area. I regularly listen to commercial radio and occasionally re-route because of information I receive. For any system to beat commercial radio, it must be more accurate, give more information, and be more available. I watch the news each morning for traffic updates and take alternate routes accordingly. <u>How to Improve Traffic in SE Michigan:</u> To improve traffic in SE Michigan, there should be a mass transit system but that will never happen. Or widen the freeways by another lane, especially I-75 from downtown to Crooks in both directions. Many freeways are too narrow here. Adding an HOV lane would be good. Detroit needs a good rapid transit system. Ramp metennng is good. too.
CONTROL GROUP, PERIOD 7
No comments.
AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 1
I have heard the message once since the last time you called for comments. The voice is still blurry. There was no broadcast about the huge jam on I-75 Friday.

I still haven't received a single message.
I still love my car but the only message I ever received was about a "car fire" on I-75, south of I-696. It first came on last Tuesday and it is still coming on from that Gardenia tower. This message needs to be taken off or changed.
I called MDOT the first week and UM the second week because I have not heard a single broadcast.
I never received a message! I tried twice during each commute.
I never received a traffic message. I sometimes heard the annoying chime and test message. This was a joke--more trouble than it was worth. I could not wait to turn the car back in!
The system didn't function. I mainly heard test messages. I found that the broadcasts were Inaudible, late and repetitive. Only once (toward the end) did I receive an accurate message. But the same message was then aired for three days straight. They should be time-stamped.
I received no messages. I feel I missed out on a good experience. I never even heard a chime or a voice.
I received a total of only two messages. I never disengaged the switch. The messages were "good morning" from the first and last towers. Why didn't MDOT broadcast any messages about the on-going and obvious construction on I-94? The Canfield station gave the strongest broadcasts, though full of static. I wished that DIRECT would offer information as to why there are tie-ups and which alternate routes are available.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 2

I haven't received any messages.
Things are going great, but I don't understand how to work the radio. (I will have to examine the manual.) I heard the system's voice the first week, saying good morning and alerting me to an accident. I like it!
It's going OK. I have had interruptions 3-4 times each week. It has been helpful.
I have only heard 2-3 messages. They were test messages only, on Mondays. I am really disappointed because there have been traffic problems and I haven't been warned or informed. The voice on the test message is garbled.
No messages at all, not even a test message.
The system has its good and bad days. I love the voice but I have never heard it during my PM commute, regardless of whether I leave at 3:45, 4:00 or 4:30. When there is a tie-up during my AM commute to work, it told me it was because there was an accident. This is what happened on Friday. Although it was helpful to know why the traffic was slow, the accident had been cleared up by the time I got to its location. In addition to telling me why traffic was slow, it should talk more, even when traffic seems good. It should tell me if I can continue to expect smooth roads ahead. Yesterday (Monday) it made me mad because it only gave test messages and the wrong date.
I think things are improving. The responses are more clear and I receive them farther away--even near downtown. I hear most of the messages in the morning; I've received only three messages during my home commute. I get mostly test messages--maybe because there has not been much traffic to report.
I have yet to hear any traffic information. I only hear test messages. I hear them on Mondays and Fridays, often stamped with the wrong time. The messages are strongest and most clear as I near downtown.
I am still waiting! No messages yet, not even a test message.
I haven't received any messages yet.

Expectations:

I expected more messages. I heard only a few, mostly test messages.
I thought I'd have a system that would give me messages over the radio. I never got a single message!
I thought there would be an interruption of radio for traffic information whenever the freeway was jammed. Actually, I received no messages.
I thought the information would be clear once it came through the system. The broadcasts were fuzzy.
I was open-minded and didn't know what to expect. I was excited and thought it would be interesting. I received only one message during the test period, so was disappointed.

Compared to other sources:

Three-fifths of these subjects received traffic information from the radio and changed their routes because of it. One person received no information from any source, while another subject felt that DIRECT supplemented the radio information well. Still, none of subjects preferred DIRECT to their usual sources of information.

Likes and dislikes:

AHAR subjects liked being in a traffic study and having a new car. They disliked the infrequency and fuzziness of messages. They thought the messages should be time-stamped and clear.

Improvements:

The automatic interrupter was helpful but became annoying when it kept repeating itself. The volume was fine, but the broadcast was fuzzy. One subject never heard the chime. Another thought the system should explain why there are traffic problems, not just if there are traffic problems. All thought the messages should be time-stamped.
100% of AHAR subjects said that being involved in the study made them go about their commute differently. For example, subjects felt more aware of how to avoid traffic and learned to pay closer attention to traffic reports. However, 100% also said access to the DIRECT system did not change their commute.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 3

I received a test message today and another message (“Be careful on 75 today”) last week.
I’ve received test messages only.
I heard a test message today. Last week I heard another message reporting “No accidents” on 75.
I have heard the same message repeating itself day after day. Not even the date is changed. It sounds fuzzy.
I’ve heard “Good morning” test messages only—even in the late afternoon.
I have received a test message on Monday and a traffic message today.
I’ve heard test messages on Mondays and also heard a helpful warning about traffic conditions last week.
I heard a test message today. Last week I heard a message reporting “tie-ups” on 75S. Although this was helpful. it kept repeating, even after the Incident had been cleared up.
I’ve only received test messages (last Monday and today).
I have not heard any messages since last Monday.

Expectations:

1. I expected daily messages but received infrequent messages.
2. I did not get much information, so I figured I was in the control group!
3. I was not sure what to expect, especially after the lengthy survey we had to fill out. I ended up only receiving one clear message.
4. I expected the messages to be broadcast farther out than their limited range.
5. I expected an up and running, advanced system: I only heard test messages!

Compared to Other Sources:

Although no one preferred DIRECT to their usual information source, three changed their routes because of DIRECT.

Likes and Dislikes:

Subjects liked the interruption and override switch. They disliked the static and the infrequency of messages.

Improvements:

Make the messages less garbled. The broadcast needs a wider range.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 4

I’ve heard test messages today and last Monday.
I heard a test message last Monday but not today.
I heard a test message and a content message last week.
The Gardenia site is bad. An accident on I-696 was not reported last week.
I heard a test message today. Last week I complained to MDOT about so few messages; they explained that station 4 is faulty. I also had a flat.
I haven’t received anything!

Expectations

I expected more information including alternate route information.
I was disappointed because I expected that the messages would change more regularly.
I had no expectations so was not disappointed.

Compared to Other Sources:

Radio was considered a better source than DIRECT, although DIRECT was rated superior to TV because it is route-specific.

Likes and Dislikes:

Subjects liked the voice, interruption and override switch. They disliked the repetitive and infrequent, “stale” messages.

Improvements:

Make the messages more up-to-date and detailed.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 5

I had three tests (although not on Mondays) and a message about an accident at 11 mile (but I did not see an accident there).
I have had a few messages about incidents, though they have not been helpful. I have not heard any test messages.
I have heard one test only; it was on the first Monday.
I have heard a few sporadic, unclear messages.
The messages about incidents are improving but are fuzzy and repetitive. It often takes two attempts at dialing before a message is aired.
I have received several messages since the first status check. Some of these messages have been helpful, but some have not.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

I was not sure what to expect. I never got a message during my AM commute. This was disappointing because I would have liked to have known the traffic situation before (or at least during) my commute.
The concept of this DIRECT system is good, but it needs improvement. It is a good idea to cue in the car, but the current

state of the system is pretty useless. The band of transmission is not broad enough; I did not receive information until half through my commute.

The system needs a lot of work if it is to become effective. It is not clear enough.

Compared to Other Sources:

Radio was considered a better source than DIRECT by all subjects.

Likes and Dislikes:

Subjects liked the interruption and the concept of the system. However, they disliked how unreliable and unclear that the messages are.

Improvements:

Subjects suggested that the band of transmission be broader and the messages be more up-to-date.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 6

Everything has been fine. I have heard some messages, and I went in for the reprogramming.

My car has been reprogrammed, and things are great. I have heard both one test message and one helpful message.

Everything is great except that I have had only one message.

I have heard both test and content messages.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

I got a lot of old messages. Once I got a message at 6:30 about a 5 am incident. The message said that details would follow, but they never did. Another time, I encountered an incident but never received a message. However I did use the information to divert on a few occasions.

I heard the same message for 3-4 weeks. I did use the information to divert a few times.

It was fairly unreliable. I got old messages, inconsistent transmissions, and the reception area was too small to get the information soon enough. I got good information a few times, but for the most part, I couldn't avoid traffic by using this system.

There was one Incident that was repeated for -1 month. I expected to get daily messages within 30 minutes of an incident. WWJ would often announce incidents yet the system wouldn't. I changed my route a few times because of the system. When it worked, it was great.

Compared to Other Sources:

AHAR has some bugs to work out before it's as good as commercial radio. I would get messages about incidents that were already cleared or get messages when it was too late to divert.

I prefer commercial radio.

Can't get this system to the par of commercial radio because it's restricted by transmitters. The radio gives information on a wider area of traffic.

My two choices are commercial radio or AHAR. I like AHAR better because commercial radio is so general and broad.

AHAR covers my area and tells me how long the incident might last.

Likes and Dislikes:

I liked the interrupt feature, but did not like receiving old messages.

I didn't like receiving old messages and I didn't like the interrupt feature because it cut it too frequently.

It was convenient to have the interrupt feature, but inconvenient to stop getting messages.

I like the Interrupt feature, and I liked getting information that was specific to my area. But I would rather have no message than continue to receive an old message.

Improvements:

Need quicker delivery of information and provide a way for users to call in and report incidents.

Give information earlier. Keep the information current.

Provide better information on alternate routes and their traffic conditions. Need to get the information sooner so that I can re-route.

Keep the information current or don't put any message on at all. Take off old messages once an incident is cleared and put the test broadcast back on, or nothing at all.

AHAR GROUP, PERIOD 7

I am receiving test messages but it is repeating the same message for several days

Repeats incident message for several days. Vehicle brake squeeks, seat won't adjust properly.

I have not been getting any test or incident messages. I haven't gotten any AM messages in 3 weeks and never any PM messages. Sometimes there are old messages on the server.

I have been getting test and incident messages. I have gotten 1 or 2 incident messages in the PM. The messages are often cut off - operator should push the button, wait, say something, wait, then release the button.

I have been getting test and incident messages. I would like to get a profile of my driving history

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 1

The car is great, but half the time the system is not working. When it is working, it usually sends out just a test message. However, I found it helpful one time. It gave me a message about a jam near Caniff.

The car is fine. I almost always hear a test message. Once it gave a helpful message; it was something about an accident on I-696.

The car is fine. The messages are rare. When they are active, they are not aired at the night time. For example, there was a repeated message about a morning accident that was still being played in the afternoon and evening. Additionally, a message about wet pavement kept airing when it was not raining.

I heard one broadcast only, saying "This is a test".

I've heard a few broadcasts. They were for northbound traffic but I was southbound. During the last few days, traffic has been exceptionally heavy but I have not received any messages.

I expected to receive quality traffic information. However, if I received any message, it would be repeated for at least a day. This was not relevant to my commute, so the study is a joke. The always outdated, hardly available broadcasts need to be more timely and relevant. I always looked for the lights and had no difficulty locating them, but I found it irritating when the messages would fade in and out.

I expected a reliable system and was disappointed when the system would not work for up to five days straight. The frequently aired test message was also irritating. The lights were easy to locate. The system is a good idea--it just needs to be reliable, consistent and updated, to warn me of delays.

I received a few helpful messages, but they were not given to me far enough in advance! On average, I received one or two messages per week, mostly about construction or the weather. Lights are OK but need to be bigger and brighter. I want to be warned of delays quicker, so that I have time to take an alternate route and avoid the jams.

I received messages two times per week. I liked having easy access to traffic information and was relieved that I didn't have to do any "work" to get it. For this reason, I prefer DIRECT to other sources of traffic information. The system does have its bugs though: there need to be more messages aired, and I need to be given enough time to take an alternate route. Tuning the radio and hearing static was annoying.

I had hoped for a high-tech, interactive system. This one was passive and not precise. I received a few messages about construction (e.g. expect delays) but never any messages about how traffic was moving! If DIRECT wants to compete with radio, it must be more frequent, reliable and must indicate how traffic is currently flowing ahead. I found that tuning the radio was easy. The broadcasts were weak (until I was actually on the highway) and the light boxes were difficult to spot.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 2

I have only received one message. It was outdated.

I haven't received any messages!

I haven't received any message except for an irritating "Good morning" message on Monday AM then static on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, then nothing (not even static) on Fridays.

I haven't received anything! I am very disappointed because the traffic has been atrocious and I have not gotten any help to avoid it! I only saw the lights once; I have the switch turned on but haven't receive a message.

I haven't received any message--just static and "this is Monday morning". I haven't seen any lights.

I have never been so disappointed in my life. I thought that after the last time you called, the system would be fixed. But I still have not received a single message, even though traffic has been bad. This morning was terrible from 8:20-8:55 AM on I75. I usually hear only static, but once in a while I hear a test message with a time-stamp that is two days late.

I hear only static, not messages. I haven't heard a single broadcast since the study started.

I received a message the day after you last called. It was phenomenal because it was the first message ever. It was about an accident in the early evening. I was excited because I thought this meant that it was working. But it never worked again.

Now all I hear is static, not even test messages.

I still hear the messages on Monday only, except for one time I heard a message on a Thursday. The message aired about an accident on 75, south of Adams. It was frustrating because it did not tell me when the accident occurred or was reported.

I wanted to know how timely the report was, so that I might predict if the road had been cleared by the time I heard it. The voice on the message has gotten much friendlier. Now he says "Have a wonderful day" rather than "Have a good morning."

I haven't heard any message since the last time you and I talked. It seems useless for it to be so quiet, but maybe it's because traffic has been slow and there is nothing to report.

Expectations:

I thought I'd get regularly updated traffic reports. I only received one or two, and they weren't accurate. Furthermore, they were not updated for days at a time.

I expected to hear more information. I was disappointed because there wasn't much traffic information from DIRECT.

I expected to receive more traffic information, but the equipment didn't work.

I expected active participation; my experience was passive participation.

I had no preconceived notions. I tried to use the system but couldn't see the lights. It was frustrating.

Comparison to other sources:

100% of LPHAR subjects preferred another source of information over DIRECT. Two subjects added: "Maybe I'd prefer DIRECT if it were up and running, but nght now I don't know."

Only two of the five subjects changed their routes because of traffic information. Their source of reliable information was commercial radio. Although three of the five said they received some traffic information from DIRECT, they did not change their routes because the messages seemed outdated.

Pros and cons:

The LPHAR subjects did not like anything about the system. However, they liked being in an educational. awareness-raising study and liked the car. They disliked the fact that LPHAR did not work, and its light boxes were difficult to locate. One subject added, "It was very frustrating."

Improvements.

The system could be improved by first getting it up-and-running and making the lights more visible. The messages should not be repeated into the next day. The radio was easy to tune because they kept it preset. Three subjects said they were never able to locate the light boxes.

Although no one believed that access to DIRECT made them go about their commute any differently. three subjects believe that involvement has had an impact on them. In particular, they are more aware of traffic on their commute and feel reassured that the growing traffic problem is being addressed.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 3

I received one test message last week, but none today.

I missed the lights today but looked for the lights last week and saw nothing.

I haven't received or seen anything, probably because there hasn't been much traffic.

I have not received anything but static.

I've spotted the lights and have received a few helpful messages.

I still haven't received a single message.

This morning I heard a test message. Two weeks ago, I heard information about traffic back-ups due to ice. Other than that. I've received nothing but static.

Since I had not been receiving any messages, I got a new replacement car. Then I saw flashing lights last week (without picking up a message) and received a test message this morning.

Expectations.

1. I thought I'd get more frequent messages.

2. Broadcasts were few and far between.

3. I thought I'd be getting actual traffic information.

Compared with Other Sources.

No one preferred DIRECT to usual sources of mformation, nor did they change their routes because of the information.

Likes and Dislikes:

The subjects liked the car only.

They complained that the system was not reliable and only aired a few "obvious" and old messages (e.g. "It is snowing.")

Improvements;

The system should be improved by airing more messages. One subject suggested that tax dollars for the project be decreased.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 4

I haven't heard anything except a test full of static.

Two test messages only.

Two test messages and one (not helpful) message about an accident.

I have had test messages, one outdated message, and one helpful message.

Test messages.

I pot an excellent message (details about an accident) on the 26th. but nothing except tests since then.

I received some test messages and a few outdated messages (e.g. 4:30 delays due to an accident are still being aired at 5:30.)

I've received occasional messages. They are late and not helpful. Most incidents are not reported.

I have been receiving the test messages and one other message which was outdated.

I received two messages but they were not too helpful. The one about sheet metal on the road keeps repeating. I also receive test messages.

Expectations:

I was impressed by the onentation and anticipated daily messages that revealed the location of current traffic problems.

I thought DIRECT would offer me alternate routes.

It was not as timely as I'd expected.

One message was repeated for four days straight; this was disappointing.

Compared with Other Sources:

Subjects believed the interruption was beneficial; however, commercial radio offers more timely and accurate information.

Likes and Dislikes

The subjects liked the potential that DIRECT has, although its current state is too slow.

It was suggested that MDOT treats DIRECT as a joke since they do not take it seriously enough to update messages.

Improvements:

The system should be improved by making the lights more visible and updating the messages more regularly.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 5

I heard one test message as well as one helpful message with location information.

One test only! (no content messages.)

I've heard one test and one helpful message (about an accident.)

I heard a clear test message and one other time-stamped message about an accident on I-75, north of I-496.

I heard a message, full of static, about an accident at Square Lake. I also heard one, clear test message.

The messages have been somewhat helpful, so the system has improved.

I have not heard anything useful --just test messages.

The lights flash well, but there are very few messages and they are muffled.

The system is improving! I have been warned of back-ups on I-696 and 8 Mile.

Things have definitely improved. The messages are getting stronger.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

My expectation was that this would be superior to commercial radio. However, I found that DIRECT is far less reliable and should not be pursued any longer by MDOT.

I was excited but did not know what to expect. I found the system to be valuable. I hope it will become available to the public.

I expected a lot of technology. This was not very technological, yet I learned about the future possibilities for traffic control.

I found the system worthless and full of problems.

Compared with Other Sources:

Subjects were mixed in their review of LPHAR. Some believed the interruption was beneficial; however, most believe that commercial radio offers more timely and accurate information.

Likes and Dislikes:

The subjects liked the potential that the system has but disliked its current state.

Improvements:

The system should be improved by updating the messages more regularly and making their content more reliable.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 6

I have only seen the lights blink and heard a report once. Hopefully it's because the traffic has been clear.

Things are fine: I had one message on 7/31 which was helpful enough (about an accident at I-75 S at Warren) to cause me to take an alternate route. However some messages are repeated into the next day. It's good they are time-stamped so I knew it was old.

Things are great; I am hearing messages and went in to get reprogrammed.

I do not hear many signals. During the week of Aug. 4, I heard nothing.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

I thought that there would be a lot more communication on the system. I didn't get information on I-75 until I was already in congestion, and then I didn't have anywhere to go. There were no reports on construction at all. Also, the same messages were repeated from day to day.

My overall impression was not good. I tuned in once when I was stuck in traffic and then I got nothing. I didn't know if the system was not working, if I was out of range, or if there was no message. But the concept is good. I would like it if when I tuned in, I knew that it was at least working even if there is no incident to report.

One of the first days that I had the car, I got a message so I re-routed. That was the best message I ever got. There were a few other timely, useful messages but I was disappointed when the repaving started and there were no messages about it. So I got on I-75 at my usual entrance and it was like a parking lot! I would also have liked a message when the paving was done.

There were very few traffic tie-ups during the 2-month period. The information that was on the system was timely, but then left on the system for days. Also, I never saw the flashing lights - maybe they weren't working.

Compared with Other Sources:

The WWJ is a lot better.

I prefer commercial radio.
WWJ is better. LPHAR needs to be more reliable in getting messages to the driver.
Unless the system improves greatly, it's not worthwhile. Commercial radio provides the same information.
Likes and Dislikes:

I didn't like it. You couldn't tune in before leaving for work. But I did like having immediate access once on the road rather than waiting for the commercial radio updates every 10-15 minutes.
I didn't like having to manually tune in to the system. There was no default message.
I liked the "on demand" service and the "all clear" messages. But old messages were not always cleared, there were no messages about construction, and the information (lack of it) wasn't always reliable.
The flashing lights didn't work. There was no constant transmission when there were no problems. Just to let you know that the system is working. There was no construction information given.
Improvements:

Add another station to give constant reports in addition to 1610.
Add a default message. Give drivers a number to call in to report a problem or talk to someone.
I'm not willing to pay for this because there are alternatives that are commercially available. The service shouldn't cost anything since it's already being provided by another source.
The system is heading in the right direction, but the quality of information needs to be improved.

LPHAR GROUP, PERIOD 7

Messages are not clear, hard to understand.
I haven't been driving on Mondays recently. I have gotten some incident messages.
I have gotten test and incident messages.
I have gotten test messages and a few incident messages.
I have gotten test messages and once in a while, incident messages.

PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 1

I am having tons of problems with my phone. I press the top left button, then push "send" and 75 as my destination. Instead of getting information, I am booted back to the original "Welcome to DIRECT" message. I called MDOT about this problem on Friday. He said he was aware of the problem and was trying to fix it. I was delighted on Monday when I finally heard a message for the first time. I assumed the system was fixed. The message was about delays on 75. That information helped me because I was able to select a new route based on the warning. Unfortunately, today (Tuesday) the system is back to the old problem and is not working for me.
I heard the broadcasts Monday and today. A blurry voice said something inaudible, then I heard "...everything will be fine."
I have noticed sporadic improvements. For example, last week a message informed me of a traffic problem quickly enough so that I was able to get off the highway. But most of the time I only hear "Welcome to DIRECT" when I press 75. Out of curiosity, I have tried to select other highway destinations then hear "No known message at this time." I almost got into an accident recently so I pulled over and called the 911 feature. I thought I had been hit in the pile up and I wanted to report it. I did not get a quick response but eventually reached the MI State Police. It turns out that I had not been hit, I just felt the impact. It is unfortunate that I had not been warned of the accident and pile up. The cell phone should provide me with a way to get a hold of MDOT directly.
I heard blurred messages the past two mornings. I get tests a lot and noises that sound like a taped message rewinding. I received only 3-4 messages. They weren't even relevant (updated). I dialed several times per commute, looking for information about what lies ahead on the freeway. DIRECT was almost always in testing mode. I never heard a busy tone. The system should have been updated at least daily or twice daily. I found the menu system easy to use.
I was disappointed in how many glitches there are in the system. The messages did not reflect the accurate situations on the road. The menu system was easy and usable. I received a busy signal a few times. I like the idea of easy access to traffic information but the system needs to be accurate and dated. It should tell me when it was last updated so I know whether to expect problems.
There were too many "Welcome to DIRECT" messages, so I always listened to WWJ while trying to dial up three times per commute (6 times daily). This whole thing seemed disorganized although UM was always nice. For example, 911 did not work when I had a flat. If you give us instructions and procedures for the system, they should work! The system just did not function. Date the messages. Most importantly, just get the system working! This is a waste of tax money if the system being evaluated does not work.
The system often did not work. There were repeated messages and nothing was dated! What's the point? I wanted to know when things were going on. I had to rely on 950 AM instead. I received a busy signal when I pressed "75"; this was annoying.

PHONE GROUP PERIOD 2

I have only received one message (delays due to an accident). I dial up several times during each commute. I have received approximately six messages, saying "This has not been updated." It is really disappointing because I thought we were supposed to get traffic information. When will it be "updated", if ever? I haven't received any messages. I try four times each commute. I was mad this morning because there was a huge accident on I-94, it was all over the radio, but DIRECT route 94 selection did not broadcast it. I received only one message. It was about an accident at 7:20 at Big Beaver. I liked that they said "it should be cleared up by 8:00". Usually, the only message I hear is "This system has not been updated" or I hear the test message. I still have not received a single message although I check the system regularly, 4 times per commute. I also dial-in whenever traffic is heavy, to see if anything is being reported. For example, I called in during last Monday's traffic jam. The system usually just kicks me back to the main menu ("Welcome to "Direct") once I press "75." I have not heard a traffic report since the last time you and I talked. On Mondays, it says "This is Monday, drive carefully." The system is never updated. Sometimes I just keep getting kicked back to "Welcome to Direct" or "Please enter your route" whenever I press my route 75. I am sick of that! I have heard a total of four reports. One was a test message, one was a message about the weather, and two were about an accident and a slow-down. Otherwise, I usually dial up and get "Welcome to Direct" and get kicked to main menu once I press "75" To my surprise, I received one of the messages when I was in my driveway-- a long way from downtown Detroit. That was neat!

Expectations:

I expected the instruction card to be accurate and easy, but I did not get much information from the phone. I expected more traffic information. I did not receive enough. I expected more frequent messages. I received a total of 3 or 4 messages. I thought there would be new reports, twice daily. There were only a few reports total. I expected a sufficiently working system, but the system did not work.

Compared to other sources:

Four out of five said they relied on radio for traffic information while one subject sought information solely from DIRECT. Two subjects changed their routes because of traffic information (from the radio only). None of the cellular phone subjects preferred DIRECT to their usual sources of information. All subjects enjoyed being in the study. They liked thinking about alternate routes, on-demand and route-specific information, and using a new car. However, they disliked the system. In particular, they said it's not "high-tech" enough and did not air updated, time-stamped broadcasts. One person complained about getting kicked back to the main menu after entering the route.

Improvements:

Although everyone agreed the menu system was fine and easy, the subjects said the system could be improved. More frequent and time-stamped messages, less busy signals and test messages, and new messages (at least twice daily) could improve the system.

No one thought that being in a study or having access to DIRECT made them go about their commutes any differently.

PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 3

Last Tuesday or Thursday, I heard two helpful messages: "75 looks bad" and "No accidents ahead". I also heard a test message today. I heard two messages last week and one today, saying "Be careful." The messages are fuzzy and hard to hear. I keep getting kicked back to the main menu. I haven't really received many messages, just test messages. I-75 is always slow, so maybe that's considered normal and explains why DIRECT hasn't been giving out specific messages. However, today there was a stalled car that really held up traffic. DIRECT should have said something to warn me! Another complaint I have is that the voice seems too close to the microphone because I hear too much static. Most days, it doesn't work. It just kicks me back to the main menu. I have received a total of three messages. One was, "Be careful in congestion today." Test messages only. I haven't received any messages. No messages; just test messages (except this morning I heard nothing). I hear too much static. This morning I received a muffled, inaudible message. Last week, I heard one clear, helpful message about the location of congestion. On most days, it doesn't work (average of 2 times per week only).

Expectations:

- 1 I expected more information than I got.
- 2 I had been excited, but disappointed that the phone did not give much information.
- 3 I expected more messages. I got only a few messages and they were of poor quality.
- 4 I thought I'd hear a lot of traffic information but only heard three messages.

Compared to Other Sources:

No one preferred DIRECT to other sources. All preferred to change their routes according to commercial radio, although two subjects did use DIRECT information to change the route.

Likes and Dislikes:

The subjects found it interesting to learn about traffic solutions and technology. They found it easy to use. They did not like the small number of messages or the poor quality. Furthermore, they found that using the system was unsafe because they had to look away from the road.

Improvements:

The system should be made more updated, reliable and less dangerous (so the driver does not need to look away from the road to access the system).

PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 4

Yes, I'm getting both test and content messages.

"No new messages" repeated all Thursday and Friday.

Two test messages and one content message (about an accident.)

Two test messages and one message about traffic.

I am getting messages, Also, I had to get my windshield fixed.

Yes, I am getting both test and content messages.

I am not getting anything! After entering 75, it kicks me back to the main "Welcome" message rather than saying "No new messages."

I have had messages, but they are not helpful.

I'm getting the messages. Also, I had to have my windshield replaced.

Expectations:

I expected it to be fun, and it was!

I expected more information than I got, but the phone was convenient and easy.

I had been excited but became disappointed once I saw it was not reliable. I could hardly ever get through; it always kicked me back to the main menu!

I was surprised that some tie-ups were never reported by DIRECT. I could never leave a voice mail because the mailbox was always full.

Compared to Other Sources:

DIRECT is more convenient but less reliable than other sources such as signs and the radio

Likes and Dislikes:

They found DIRECT easy to use and usually accurate when working. Nonetheless, DIRECT was too often not updated.

Improvements:

A general theme is that the messages should be updated more often!

PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 5

I haven't heard anything except a few tests.

I attempt to call the system constantly. I have only heard a few messages, but no tests.

It didn't work at all during the first week. Since then. I've had one message about the location of a tie-up.

I've heard two messages about accidents and one Monday test message.

The few messages I have heard have not been updated often enough. I have heard no tests.

Things have not Improved. I have not heard anything helpful.

Things are improving. I am now hearing both tests and (a few) messages.

Things are only mediocre. I usually hear "not updated at this time" or a useless message that is at least 2 hours old.

Things are definitely Improving since the last status check. I have been receiving more information from DIRECT.

The system is ridiculous--it has not improved at all.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

DIRECT was a big disappointment. I thought it was supposed to help my commute but it did not. The technology is a good idea, but DIRECT just does not work at this time.

I was glad to have been chosen for DIRECT! The only problem I saw is that there was too little information. For instance, I only received two messages although I dialed often.

I had no expectations. I found that the system improved though was flawed.

The phone system did not work. Whenever I was in a traffic jam, I would dial up and hear "There are no problems at this time" from DIRECT. This was frustrating!

Compared to Other Sources:

DIRECT is more convenient but less reliable than other sources.

Likes and Dislikes:

They considered the system a great concept. Nonetheless, DIRECT was unreliable and too often not updated or working at

<p><u>Improvements</u></p> <p>The system should provide a message to commuters whenever they dial up, rather than kicking them back to the main menu.</p>
<p>PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 6</p> <p>There is usually a busy signal, or it kicks me back to the main menu when I dial in. I have had one message. I have not heard any message because I only get kicked back to the main menu. I press 75, hear "Welcome to DIRECT" then get nowhere.</p> <p>Only once has DIRECT been helpful. Usually I hear no message.</p> <p>I have not heard many messages. I keep getting kicked back to the main menu.</p> <p>The phone was useful one time (during the first week) but has since been useless.</p> <p><u>Expectation and Overall impressions:</u></p> <p>I expected to get daily updates on tie-ups and route information. I only got one message (that was wrong) other than the test messages. Old messages were left on the server. I could never leave a message because it was always full. In the PM, it would accept I-75 as a route number.</p> <p>I expected the system to provide something of value, but it didn't. It's obscene that we're spending money on something as wasteful and primitive as this. Even when it did work, the presentation was really poor. I called and got a state police dispatcher for 2 weeks rather than the system!</p> <p>I expected to be able to work around traffic problems; save time and frustration. The system absolutely did not meet my expectations. It was only updates 5 or 6 days out of 8 weeks. When there was something there, it stayed there for days. This is a tremendous waste of tax payer money.</p> <p><u>Compared to Other Sources</u></p> <p>I went back to using WWJ; this was a waste of time.</p> <p>Commercial radio is absolutely better. The system is so bad that the comparison is ridiculous.</p> <p>Commercial radio is more useful because the updates are there. This system could be more useful if it works because it is route specific.</p> <p><u>Likes and Dislikes.</u></p> <p>The system was inaccurate and not timely in availability. I want to make route decisions as I leave my house in the AM. The system didn't work. It was unreliable.</p> <p>If the system worked, it could have been a valid and pleasurable experience. It has great potential to be useful, but there was rarely ever anything there. I was never able to leave a message; the mailbox was always full.</p> <p><u>Improvements</u></p> <p>Give 5 minute updates and be accurate and reliable. Also provide information such as the duration of the delay. Fire the person who does the phone updates!</p> <p>Expand the system so that it covers the whole metropolitan area (have to know the conditions of alternate routes). Be more attractive in the presentation of information. Be timely. There always has to be a message even if there are no problems. (The system would refer you back to the menu if there were no messages.) Also, I prefer passive technology.</p> <p>The system needs to be current and updated. Give the time of when a message was posted. The system would be useful but it is completely invalidated by not being updated.</p>
<p>PHONE GROUP, PERIOD 7</p> <p>Keeps repeating messages not updated. Press send button -press 75 then 5 not working, continual busy signal.</p> <p>Not sure if it is working , no messages received.</p> <p>No valid information not being updated.</p> <p>I have not been getting test messages. The volume does not go up high enough to be able to hear over road noise. I have gotten some incident messages. But many messages are old or the server is not being updated. Often, when I enter 75 as the route number. it keeps asking me for it again.</p> <p>I have been getting test messages and maybe 1 incident message.</p> <p>I have been getting test messages and incident messages, but not many.</p> <p>I have been getting test and incident messages. But the reports are poor. It is difficult to hear the operator. I can't count on the messages. Often there is no message even though there is an incident. There have been no construction messages.</p> <p>I have been getting test messages and a couple of incident messages.</p>
<p>RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 1</p> <p>Still no messages. Due to my complaints, MDOT came over to make some adjustments. He said that everything would be OK, but I still have not heard anything.</p> <p>I heard the first message on Monday. It was just a test message. They had come out to fix the equipment last week. I talked to MDOT again today and he said no messages would broadcast after 9:00 am.</p> <p>Messages were aired yesterday and today. Today's was about an accident. The information helped me change my route.</p>

Then there were updates that included the time. It had been 25 minutes since the last update. I found this helpful to know. Later, the messages said "Stay tuned for an update later" so I did stay tuned. Sure enough, more updates were aired. This was impressive.

The system has been good. When there have been traffic problems, the system has advised me. For example, I was warned to expect delays on 7.5 at 3:40 pm one day. This information helped me. Since taking my car in last week, I am now able to receive the Monday test messages.

During the first two weeks, the system didn't work. Once it did begin to work, there was a lot of static. I always had it "on" and received some information about delays. The annoying repetitive messages need to stop!

I did not get as much traffic information broadcasts as I would have liked. I always had the switch "on", seeking information about delays. But I had to turn it off for a while, whenever the messages got annoyingly repetitive.

Although I liked the idea of an on-demand system, I could not trust the information that this system delivered. The chime and volume were fine but the repetitiveness was horrible!

I thought this would be more helpful and interactive. It took three weeks to get it going, then the messages were sporadic. Often the system would repeat the same message every 15 seconds instead of e.g. every 5 minutes. This was annoying! I could tell that the messages were old--what good is that to me? The old, seemingly pre-recorded messages were pathetic

I tried to access it every day, but I never got any messages!

I heard only a few vague messages that weren't even timely. How do I know when an accident or jam occurred? I would always hear the same messages repeated, so I'd turn the switch off for a while. Often the same message would be airing one day into the next, so I know it was neither accurate nor updated. This system did not help me at all.

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 2

I have heard a total of two reports. There has not been any unexpected congestion so I assume that is the reason for so few broadcasts. I hear the Monday AM test messages; they are full of static until I near the west side. The west side is the only area where the messages come in clear.

Expectations.

I expected more accurate information and more regular broadcasts. Only once did I get information about an accident; DIRECT informed me but did not guide me around it.

I thought I would hear messages that would indicate why there are traffic problems. I heard three messages.

I expected to receive traffic information daily, regarding the condition of my commute. I didn't receive regular messages. DIRECT compared with other sources:

100% received traffic information from sources other than DIRECT and preferred those sources (TV and radio) to DIRECT. Two changed their routes because of the information they received.

Likes and dislikes:

Subjects liked that DIRECT information was specific to I75 and "exciting" when it worked. They disliked its "irritating" interruptions, chime and lack of messages.

Improvements:

Subjects suggested it could be improved with an "on-demand" feature or a less annoying interruption, more messages and better reception

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 3

I have not received any messages, so I took the car into MITSC to get it checked today. MDOT tested it and told me it should be fine. The problem is that there just haven't been any incidents to report. I wish I would get a message saying, "no incidents" so I know it's working.

I received a test message and one traffic message on the snow day last week ("Be careful"). I thought I'd receive more information today since traffic was slow and I saw a state trooper ahead.

I received my first message last Wednesday or Thursday. It was a warning about the slippery roads. Later that week, I received "test" interruptions that consisted of static only, up until Grande Boulevard. I never received a test message today.

I've received test messages only.

Most of the time, I don't get any information. I think the delivery of the system is excellent, but the accuracy of the information is lacking. I get some test messages and have received two "specific" messages. One was a "Be careful" warning last Wednesday. The second was a report about an accident on 7.5 at 94, Friday at 3:15. The message was not accurate because it warned of a back-up on 75, when the back-up was actually on 94.

I've received the test messages and one message about the paving crew. It was a useless message because it did not give details e.g. how far it's backed up. The quality is poor and full of static.

I'm still receiving messages less than 50% of the time. They are usually not meaningful. The subcarrier is effective but inconsistent and lacking in content.

I usually receive interruptions but no voice. On one return commute, I found myself upset because things were backed up but I didn't receive any explanation. The messages I do receive are repeated a long time and too late. For example, a message on Jan. 27 was aired well after things had already been cleared up and traffic was moving.

I'm not receiving any messages.

I received a few messages about the snow storm and two accidents. I also receive Monday test messages.

Expectations:

1. I expected that the system would be better than commercial radio. Actually, it proved to be worse!
2. I expected to receive more information. Often, I'd be sitting at a traffic jam yet hear nothing from DIRECT to explain the traffic.
3. I expected more frequency of information. I received messages that had not been updated.
4. I expected both quality in delivery and in content. I received information less than 30% of the times I wanted it. I received messages, but without any meaningful content.
5. I expected to have access to traffic information. I think I got what I expected!

DIRECT as Compared with Other Information Sources.

100% said they preferred their usual sources of information (namely, commercial radio) to DIRECT. Two of the five subjects changed their routes because of information received from DIRECT.

Likes and Dislikes:

The subjects liked the idea of getting accurate and constant information via interruptions. They liked contributing to improvements in traffic and being in a study. One subject hated "nothing" about the experience.

They disliked the lack of content in the messages and the fact that "it didn't work." One subject disliked "nothing."

Improvements:

Make it at least as updated, frequent and reliable as commercial radio.

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 4

Two test messages.

One test message.

I have received only one message in April (about an accident--outdated).

One test message.

I received two messages about incidents as well as one test message. I got into on accident 4/1 1.

I've received a few messages. Only one has been helpful: it warned me not to take a detour due to delays.

Every Monday, I get the test messages. but that is all I get. The messages are full of static, especially north of 8 Mile.

I've heard only one April message (there were 3 in March.) It was about an accident and was outdated.

I received one helpful message last week and a test message. I had a minor accident last week and informed MDOT.

Expectations.

I was excited at the start of the project but did not know what to expect.

I expected more traffic. but there was never much.

I had no expectations at the start of the project, yet I became disappointed by DIRECT.

There was too little information aired to make me happy about DIRECT.

I expected a system better than commercial radio. so I became disappointed.

DIRECT as Compared with Other Information Sources

Subjects agree that DIRECT is good because it is route-specific; however, commercial radio proves to be superior since it gives more accurate and timely information.

Likes and Dislikes:

The subjects liked the idea of getting constant information via interruptions.

They disliked the late messages. Information is not broadcast early enough to allow a commuter to take an alternate route.

Improvements:

Subjects suggest making DIRECT messages available to a broader range (not just I-75).

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 5

I have heard a few test messages and one warning about Southbound I-75 by Jefferson.

I had two messages about accidents. but didn't have the time the accident was expected to be cleared. No test messages.

I heard one test last Monday, and a few messages about incidents. They are not helpful since they pertain to northern areas only and are very fuzzy.

I have received a few helpful messages e.g. about an accident at Grand, but no test messages--only static on Mondays.

I have had one Monday test message only. (No informational messages.)

I've had two fuzzy messages during the week of June 9 but none since then.

The messages are getting better!

I have been receiving many messages. They are higher quality messages than they were at the beginning of the test.

I usually do not hear Monday test messages but have heard excellent traffic information.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

I expected more messages. I found that the system aired only a few messages, and they were very fuzzy.

I had higher expectations than the reality of my experience. It was a disappointment.

This has been a beneficial experience for a non technical person like myself to see the development of a system that will help drivers. Nonetheless, I think the system needs to be improved. It is too loud and fuzzy.

I expected to hear something before I got downtown, yet never got a message until it was too late to change my commute.

DIRECT as Compared with Other Information Sources:

Subjects liked that DIRECT is route-specific; however, commercial radio proves to be superior since it gives more accurate and timely information.

Likes and Dislikes*:

The subjects liked the idea of getting constant information but were disappointed by how infrequent, late and inaudible the messages were.

Improvements:

Subjects suggest making DIRECT messages available to a broader range, more frequent, and of better sound quality.

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 6

I have not received any type of message.

I have only received one test message and one content message.

I have only heard one test message. I assume this is because traffic has been clear.

Expectations and Overall Impressions:

I liked the system; it was very useful and reliable. I think there may have been a problem with my antenna because I didn't always get good reception.

I expected the system to better inform me of tie-ups - sooner than commercial radio. I was disappointed because I thought that it would provide quicker, more accurate information. It's going in the right direction. The technology is good but the delivery isn't good, yet.

The thought the system was well explained. I knew I wouldn't get construction information, only exceptions to normal traffic. But I had some problems with the radio. It would cut in and out for just a few seconds but I didn't get any messages. The information wasn't as useful as I had expected. I would get a message that there was a problem, but no how to re-route.

I expected the system to be reliable and consistent, and give information about the length and location of incidents. The system did not meet my expectations. It was very inconsistent. It rarely gave information, the information got old, and it was very staticy.

DIRECT as Compared with Other Information Sources:

RBDS is more successful. I got home more reliably and I got information before it was available on commercial radio.

I prefer commercial radio.

The system could be better than commercial radio if alternate routes are given. It is better in the fact that the information is just for your route.

I prefer commercial radio.

Likes and Dislikes:

I liked the interrupt feature and the shut-off switch to avoid repetition.

The system was staticy and inaudible most of the time. The interruptions could have been less frequent. Manual tune-in might be better.

I liked knowing the time and date of the incident. But it should also give a message when the incident is cleared.

I liked the interrupt feature, but it interrupted too often. It should interrupt only if something is new. It didn't give enough information.

Improvements:

I would have liked more information - duration of an incident, how to get around it, clearance time, time of the incident, etc.

MDOT should be able to notify you sooner, especially since they have the control center at MITSC. Make the system more dependable.

System should give alternate routes. It was useful but not in a constructive way to those who aren't familiar with the area. Also, it should give a message when all is clear.

Give better information - duration and location of incidents. Interrupt less often.

RDS/SCA GROUP, PERIOD 7

No test messages or incident messages.

Test does not come on until she gets to work.

Car is a gas guzzler.

I get test messages sometimes. I have gotten a few incident messages. The messages don't seem to reach past 12-mile. I have gotten test messages but I haven't been driving on Mondays recently. The last incident messages I received were on 11/5 and 10/30. The message said "traffic" and that was it.

I have gotten test and Incident messages. There were many accidents on 11/12 but no message on the system when I was using it.

I have gotten test messages and very few incident messages. I've only gotten one in the PM and when I got there, it was clear. There is a lot of static. I shut it off most of the time because I can't hear anything but static until I get downtown.

I have gotten test and incident messages. It was especially useful on 1 1/12.