



A case study of 'grass roots' innovation:

FixMyTransport

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1 Aims and scope

This report is written by Loughborough University, and forms Deliverable 38.3 from the IdeasInTransit project. It presents the main findings from the initial and final interviews which were completed with the innovators within Workpackage 38, and also presents preliminary findings from the user-centred analysis of FixMyTransport by Loughborough University.

2 Initial innovator interview

This interview was undertaken with Paul Lenz and Tom Steinberg of mySociety on 6th July 2011. mySociety had received £27,000 funding from GeoVation® to develop FixMyTransport.

2.1 Aims

The aim of the initial interview was to understand the innovator perspective early on in the innovation process.

2.2 Confidentiality

It was agreed from the outset that there were no issues to do with confidentiality or commercial sensitivity within this first interview.

2.3 The problem space

FixMyTransport – Anywhere (as it was originally termed) is tackling the problem of members of the public reporting public transport issues when they are out and about (i.e. when they are actually using the transport service). These problems can include dirty seats, late trains, vandalised bus stops, poor signage etc. Presently the barriers to reporting issues with transport are too high for the majority of the population. FixMyTransport – Anywhere aims to make it easier for members of the public, and particularly those who are less confident about reporting such issues, to send problem reports to the ‘owner’ of the issue. By enabling easier reporting of transport-related problems by a larger proportion of the population, pressure can be brought to bear on transport operators to improve their services. In addition, FixMyTransport – Anywhere will enable the public (and again particularly those less confident) to feel empowered to more actively engage in society by making their voice heard.

FixMyTransport – Anywhere will be a mobile version of the FixMyTransport website. It will be a problem reporting tool that will run on a number of different mobile platforms. By incorporating GPS-based location, it will enable a member of the public to select a specific transport mode and problem category, and then use a series of simple, push button based interfaces in order to specify the issue they wish to report. For example if a traveller wanted to report an issue with a particular bus stop, GPS would approximately locate the individual, and present the bus stops that were at or near the traveller’s location. They could select the specific bus stop of interest, and select the problem category and specific issue. It is hoped that the majority of problems can be specified using a few clicks on the mobile app, without resorting to a free text option which will also be provided. The problem report will then be sent to the problem ‘owner’ eg local authorities for damaged bus stops, bus operators for dirty seats etc. The individual(s) who reported that problem would then get feedback from the problem owner to tell them if/how their problem is being resolved, and given further advice if no action was being taken.

The root causes of the problem being addressed by the app are those that are symptomatic of any large organisation with limited resources, a combination of one or more of: insufficient funding of transport, inefficient organisations, ineffective information flows to, from and within the organisation, poor management processes, and lack of effective feedback loops between service suppliers and customers. Within transport in particular, there is also a lack of incentive to actually improve the situation, due to a relative lack of competition for customers, and only a weak link between performance levels and financial success of the transport provider.

Tom and Paul are motivated by their personal frustration with the performance of the UK transport network. Paul used to be a long term commuter, and is frustrated by the failure of basic aspects of the public transport network, and the inability to put in place simple common sense solutions to problems. An example given was that 3 out of 6 ticket machines at Oxford Station were out of order, and that although there were staff available, they were not selling tickets using the handheld ticket machines. They recognize that rather than being a mere inconvenience, transport problems can sometimes have huge impact of peoples' lives. FixMyTransport – Anywhere is also an element of a wider mySociety agenda, mySociety being a project of registered charity UK Citizens Online Democracy. The motivation behind mySociety is to provide tangible benefits to the civic and community aspects of individuals' lives. They do this by building websites and demonstrating how the internet can be used to improve lives.

Rather than satisfying an emerging demand, FixMyTransport – Anywhere is capitalising on a technology-driven opportunity. Tom believes firmly that emerging technologies can provide societal opportunities that may not have even been even been anticipated – i.e. that technology does not always emerge as the result of identifying a need. In the case of FixMyTransport – Anywhere, the opportunity has arisen due to the emergence of smartphones, and the increasing growth of the internet.

2.4 History and development

FixMyTransport – Anywhere is a mobile development of FixMyTransport, a website under development that allows reporting of transport-related problems. FixMyTransport – Anywhere came from a biennial public call for proposals that mySociety runs. It was proposed by someone who used to work for mySociety, and was picked as the best from about 100 rival ideas. The funding from GeoVation has been key in enabling a complete redesign of FixMyTransport for the mobile platform. They intend to release FixMyTransport – Anywhere early, in a relatively immature form, as they do with all their projects. They will then iterate it, being highly responsive to the feedback they get from the public. Due to the highly agile nature of its development, the final form it may take (e.g. in 12 months time) is as yet unclear.

The main barrier to its success is public awareness – telling members of the public who are potential users that it actually exists. A secondary barrier (but one that could be overcome through resourcing) is ensuring that there is a comprehensive data set of contact details, so that problems can be reported successfully.

mySociety tends to develop the non-profit projects (such as FixMyTransport) without recourse to detailed written specifications. The programmers/developers (who form the majority within mySociety) take the lead with software development, and the managerial functions act as a way of

supporting and enabling, rather than directing, the developers. Rather than detailed plans, the developers would keep very detailed, personal 'to do' lists.

There are two basic principles/theories that underpin FixMyTransport – Anywhere:

- Individuals cannot type well on a mobile device, and that in order to maintain a good user experience, interfaces need to be based around simple button presses.
- That individuals on their own have relatively little influence with transport companies. However, there is a whole range of small problems with transport that would get resolved if smaller groups (eg 5 to 10 individuals) club together to report them.

2.5 People involved in the development of the innovation

Tom Steinberg will be project manager (in a loose sense of the word). The lead engineer is Louise Crow, and her assistant engineer Dave Whiteland. They may bring in one or two other members of the development team as required, and probably employ a third party design company to design the visuals (not the content or functionality) of the interfaces.

They have already been in contact with a number of transport campaigning groups in order to let them know that FixMyTransport – Anywhere is being developed. They hope to form partnerships with some of them, but the nature of these relationships is as yet unclear. mySociety are also trying to build relationships with transport companies so that they are not too shocked when FixMyTransport – Anywhere actually becomes operational. They also hope to have good working relationships with media and commercial partners as development progresses. They have a more formal media engagement plan, which they are working through at the moment. The aim with the media is to have it seen as an ongoing human interest story, rather than just a one off single use story.

2.6 Stakeholder/end user involvement

The main stakeholders are

- Members of the public who use the app to report problems
- The mySociety core team of coders
- The volunteer groups who they expect will help to run and maintain the site
- Transport campaigning groups
- Transport companies
- Transport regulators
- Commercial companies who will be interested in the data
- Local and central government

They have made a conscious decision not to get stakeholders involved directly in the development of the app, due to the challenge of getting it to work within the transport sector. They are concerned about the resulting 'design by committee' and also the potential loss of focus by having to take into account too many differing opinions. Their approach is to focus on the needs of their core users (transport users), and then to consider how it may work for other stakeholder groups.

The most important message being conveyed with FixMyTransport – Anywhere is to the transport users: ‘use it, it works’. They also hope that the message to regulators will be clear – they would like to get them engaged in it, as a means of helping them do their job more easily.

2.7 Financial/commercial

The funding from GeoVation has been key in enabling the development of the mobile version of FixMyTransport. The aim of the funded phase is to develop it to a reasonable beta. A successful beta is informally as follows:

- It ‘does the job’
- Most people are happy with it
- Most people can probably suggest improvements to it, but these are ‘nice to haves’ not essentials
- There are no fundamental barriers to its take up by public transport users.

It is hoped that at the successful beta stage, the kinds of changes needed would involve one or two days development, followed by ongoing maintenance of the site. By the beta stage, it shouldn’t require much additional resource – it should be at least 70% there.

Their longer term business model is based on individuals continuing to want to fund them as a charity, and organisations wanting to buy commercial products from them. The general aim with FixMyTransport – Anywhere is for it to be perceived as a ‘good’ project which encourages support of the charity. It is anticipated that there will be some commercialisation coming out of FixMyTransport – Anywhere, either from the vast amounts of data which will be accrued, and/or turning FixMyTransport – Anywhere into a product that can be sold to organisations such as local authorities.

2.8 Technology

GPS is a key technology - it would be virtually impossible to make it work without GPS enabled smartphones. In addition, the phones need modern web browsers and a data connection. The key technology challenges are likely to be: coping with GPS jitter, coping with bad data in their database (eg bus stop locations) and dealing with cross mobile platform compatibility.

2.9 Having impact on society and transport

For all of their sites, mySociety are looking to define 3 key metrics that can be used to assess the performance of their sites month to month, or year to year. These metrics are still to be defined, but for FixMyTransport – Anywhere, will be based on:

- Reach – the number of people who have used the app, but with particular focus on new users who have got involved.
- Impact – the extent to which the app actually helped people. This metric would have to take into account factors such as the number of people who are impacted by particular problems, severity of problems and the desire of passengers to report problems.
- Value for money – the reach and/or impact metrics divided by the cost of providing the app

In addition, mySociety have a number of internal metrics that will be used to assess how successful they are being. At a micro level these include: the number of problems reported; number of people creating campaigns; number of people signing up to campaigns; the response rate received. At a

macro level, a success metric will be whether they are seeing improvements in services. Because some issues with services are less quantifiable and more nebular, rather than direct measurement, other possibilities include, for example, an analysis of number of problems reported versus the punctuality of a service.

3 Final interview

This interview was undertaken with Paul Lenz of mySociety on 18th July 2012 after the launch of the mobile responsive version of FixMyTransport.

3.1 Aims

The aim of the final interview was to reflect on the activity undertaken by mySociety during the innovation process, and to make comparisons with the findings from the initial interview. The most relevant aspects are reported below.

3.2 Confidentiality

There were no confidential aspects to what was discussed.

3.3 Main changes in perspectives or outcomes since the outset

There were some slight departures from their original plans, as follows:

3.3.1 Shift away from a mobile ‘app’

mySociety had originally intended to produce a separate mobile application, based on a decision tree. This was based on the premise of allowing people to report problems using a mobile device, but without having to type text in. However, initial work to make the existing site more mobile responsive made them realize that it was not possible to neatly categorise problems that people were reporting, due to their huge diversity and the different ways in which problems can be described. They had set themselves a target of 80-90% of problems being reported with little or no text input. However this proved to be quite infeasible.

In addition, having studied the reports that individuals generated, it became apparent to mySociety that some individuals actually wrote quite lengthy comprehensive descriptions of what the problem had been, and appeared to find this quite cathartic. This willingness to write more detailed descriptions was in comparison to other sites that mySociety have produced, eg FixMyStreet. The problems encountered with FixMyTransport were not just physical problems, but had real personal and emotional impact, which individuals wanted to describe in more detail.

These two issues led mySociety away from developing a discrete mobile app, and instead put resources into making the existing website much more mobile responsive, allowing free text input of problem categories rather than using a pre-defined decision tree.

3.3.2 Importance of the geo-locating aspect and showing other local problem reports

In addition to above, there were two key changes they made to the website. mySociety made the geolocating of problems work better, and also designed the website to show other local problem reports. These changes have increased the percentage of visits via mobile devices from 17% immediately before these changes were made, to 31% about six months later. In addition, when

studying the growth in traffic since making these changes, 55% of that traffic growth has come from users on mobile devices.

3.4 Main issues they faced

Due to their experience in developing similar websites, there were no *major* issues that they faced during the development process.

3.4.1 Difficulty in doing a 'soft launch' to a public group

An interesting, ongoing issue was raised. The alpha testing phase (with a closed group) focused mostly on getting the technical aspects of the site to work. It was only when they went to beta testing that they were able to get feedback from people who were not necessarily very internet-savvy, and had not tested lots of these sites in the past. This was then they felt they got feedback from 'genuine users in the street'.

However social media has made it difficult to do a *limited* soft launch to a more diverse range of people in order to get widespread user feedback. mySociety described how social media like twitter can result in 5000 to 10,000 people visiting the site in a single day, as a result of just one person having several thousand twitter followers. This can be embarrassing if there are major flaws in the site. The other alternative is closed testing with a more diverse group in a controlled environment, but this is very expensive. This managed, closed testing also defeats the purpose of wanting people to use it 'in the wild', to find out how people actually interact with it in a realistic situation. The key issue from mySociety's perspective is striking the right balance between (1) launching a site prematurely to get user feedback, but risking it being rejected by the users because it does not work properly, and suffering reputational damage; and (2) being too locked into a development path and launching something that is polished, but does not meet real user needs. They felt they struck the right balance with FixMyTransport – because they did not prematurely launch a mobile site that did not meet user needs.

As a result of the experience they have gained, the approach mySociety are going to take with their next site is to pare it back to the very basic functionality that is needed to be useful to a user, and make sure this is really robust. They will then launch this in the confidence that what is available does not have any major flaws, but may lack some of the features needed. Based on this wider public feedback, they will then add the more sophisticated aspects of the site and launch a revised version.

3.5 The most positive outcomes

There were many positive outcomes from the GeoVation process, including:

3.5.1 The ability to develop and launch the site, within budget

mySociety launched the mobile-responsive FixMyTransport site only a month after their proposed launch date, and came in below budget. This was due to their relative experience in developing these kinds of sites, and the switch from a new application to a modification of an existing website.

3.5.2 Confidence in acting on user feedback

As described above, the original plan was to base a mobile application around a decision tree design, to enable individuals to select the exact category of problem they wanted to report. Although it was a difficult decision at the time, mySociety are pleased that they felt able to walk away from their

original plan that they ‘had invested quite a lot of ... time and passion into’, and had ‘thought this is the way to go’. They took a step back, and listened to the user feedback they were getting, and then made technical decisions based on that user feedback. As a result (although they recognise that there is not a proven causal link), they have seen traffic, and particularly mobile traffic grow.

3.5.3 Recognition of the importance of the campaigning aspect of FixMyTransport

Early on, mySociety recognised the importance of the campaigning aspect of FixMyTransport (rather than it only being a tool for individuals reporting a single issue to the operators). Although this has increased the complexity of the site, this functionality has been successfully incorporated into the FixMyTransport.

3.5.4 Contacts and networking post GeoVation

Many useful contacts were made by mySociety with other similar and complementary organisations who took part in GeoVation, and some of these have resulted in joint bids for work, and ongoing partnerships. In addition, as a result of developing FixMyTransport, mySociety has developed relationships with transport user groups, transport press, independent watchdogs, and a large number of interested volunteers who are keen to help in the success of FixMyTransport and mySociety more widely.

4 User-centred evaluation of FixMyTransport

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Background

FixMyTransport was developed with the help of funding through GeoVation. Loughborough took the opportunity to use it as a research vehicle, with the aim of assessing it from an end user perspective. In particular, this was a unique opportunity for Loughborough to gain access to data contributed by end users within a transport domain, and for mySociety to also benefit from a user-centred analysis of FixMyTransport, at minimal cost to them.

4.1.2 Aims

The aims of this work were to undertake a user-centred evaluation of aspects of FixMyTransport. The specific objectives were:

- Understand the impact that FixMyTransport has on individuals making transport related complaints
- Establish the characteristics of popular campaigns
- Identify areas where FixMyTransport may be improved

4.2 Method

There were three main strands to this work.

1. mySociety provided a full dataset of the complaints contributed via FixMyTransport. With this data, the campaigns were analysed by looking at the 35 ‘most supported’ campaigns and matched campaigns that received less support. There were 35 campaigns that attracted 10 or more supporters, and given the time and resources available it was felt that this was a

suitable number for closer investigation. In order to ‘match’ campaigns that received less support, this was done in two ways. One comparison was made by matching 35 campaigns which attracted only 1 supporter, on the basis (as closely as possible) or Problem ID number (that is, length of time since the campaign was posted, since Problem ID numbers are issued successively) and mode of transport. A second comparison was made between the ‘most supported’ campaigns and campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter that were (as closely as possible) matched according to the type of problem described. It was not possible to find matches for all 35 of the campaigns that attracted 10 or more supporters, so this comparison was made with 29 matched campaigns.

2. An online questionnaire was developed, in consultation with mySociety. The link to this was included on the FixMyTransport website, where members of the public were directed to six weeks after their initial problem complaint. They were invited to take part in the online survey, which was hosted by BOS (www.survey.bris.ac.uk), and managed by Loughborough University. The survey included an identifier so that the survey results could be linked to the original problem report.
3. Finally, the online survey also acted as a recruitment tool. Survey respondents had the option to leave their contact details, so that short follow up telephone interviews could be completed with a selection of respondents. These took about 15 minutes and participants were given a shopping voucher as way of thanks. The interviews were designed to follow up specific questions within the survey, and in particular, to determine the *reasons* that individuals gave for particular answers.

4.3 Results – analysis of problem types for supported/non-supported campaigns

Problem described	Instances (campaigns with 1 supporter) n=768	Instances (campaigns with 10+ supporters) n=35	Problem described	Instances (campaigns with 1 supporter) n=768	Instances (campaigns with 10+ supporters) n=35
electronic display needed	16	1	bus stopping in cycle advance stop box		1
electronic displays inaccurate	7		ferry pier closing		1
Info unavailable/out of date/requested	79	1	allow cycles on trams		1
vehicles parked in bus stop	5	1	location of companion seat		1
timetabling issues	88		ticket machines (lack of/problems)	10	2
late running of service(s)	90		wi-fi request/problem	2	3
body part trapped in closing door	3	1	access to train cycle storage	5	1
out-of-date bus stop	7		on-board toilet problems	1	1
poor driving/rude staff	93	1	footbridge needed/problems	2	1
overcrowding	85	1	crowded platform	1	
routing (including unexpected)	77		seat reservation issues	2	

changes of route on-journey & late changes of destination)					
pricing	13		no refreshments available on-board	2	
failure of bus to stop to pick up/put down	49		car park issues	5	
positioning of bus stop	17		internal vehicle layout	2	
service failed to turn up/cancelled	72		integration between modes needed	2	
shelter needed	23	1	station toilet issues	3	
shelter damaged	6		last-minute change of platform issues	5	
vehicle noise	5		station improvements needed	2	
smoking on bus/at bus stop	4		issues with barriers	2	
heating on vehicles	13		luggage space on vehicles	3	
obscured view from bus stop	3		station lighting	2	
old vehicles need replacing	14		leaving early	3	
access	15	6	escalator direction	1	
dog not allowed on	1		drunk passengers	1	
brick thrown at bus	1		flytipping at station	1	
leaking roof of vehicle/waiting area	3		maintenance	1	
people should buy ticket before get on	1		grit needed/slippery station	2	
seating needed at stop/station	4		platform phone broken	1	
broken down vehicle	10		layout of station	1	
Idling causing noise/pollution	1		slow running	2	
cycle racks needed	3	4	alarm continually sounding	1	
Stop/station needs cleaning	3		door did not open to allow exit	1	
online refund issues	2		unidentified person asking questions	1	
fouling/vomit/urine	3		announcement problems (volume/availability)	8	1
positioning on platform	1		signage problems	5	1
compensation request	7		ticketing problems	10	2
entrance/exit gate issues	6	2	Oyster problems	10	

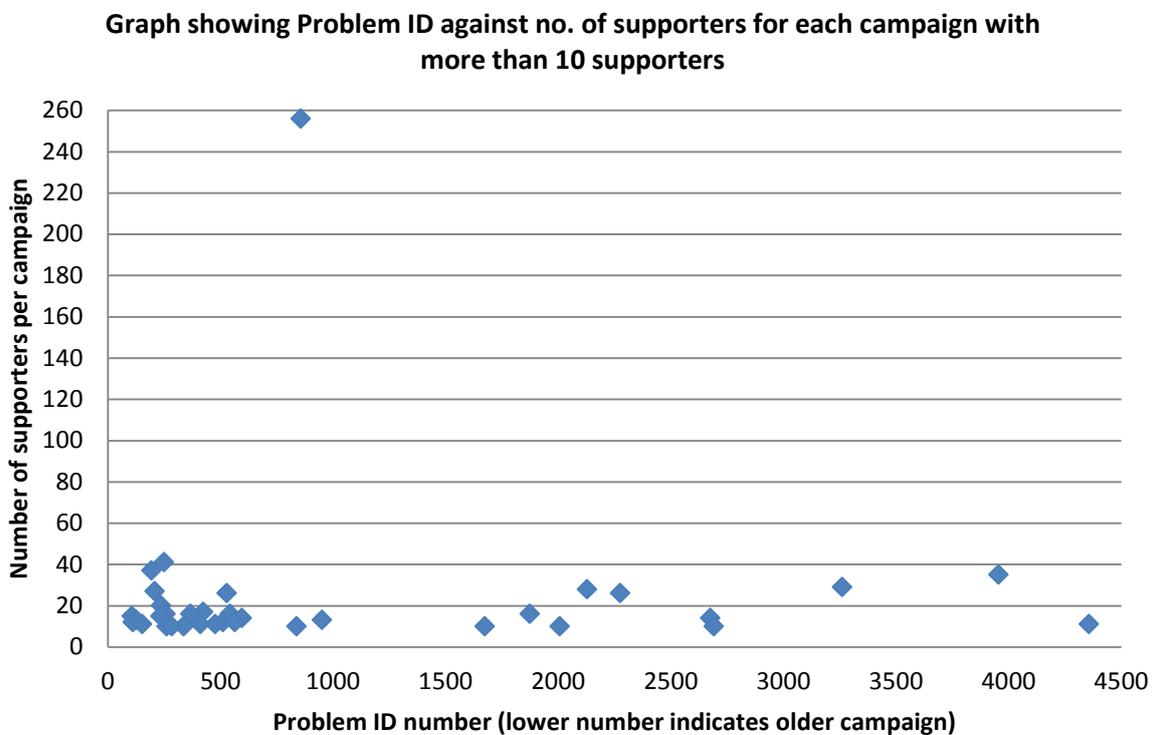
This table includes the absolute values, the counts taken of how many times different problems were described (the totals may be more than the 'n' as some campaigns describe multiple problems). It can be seen that, if there were some way of combining campaigns that concern related problems but only have 1 supporter in to some kind of 'meta campaigns' then the number of supporters for these combined campaigns would take them into the 'most supported' campaigns.

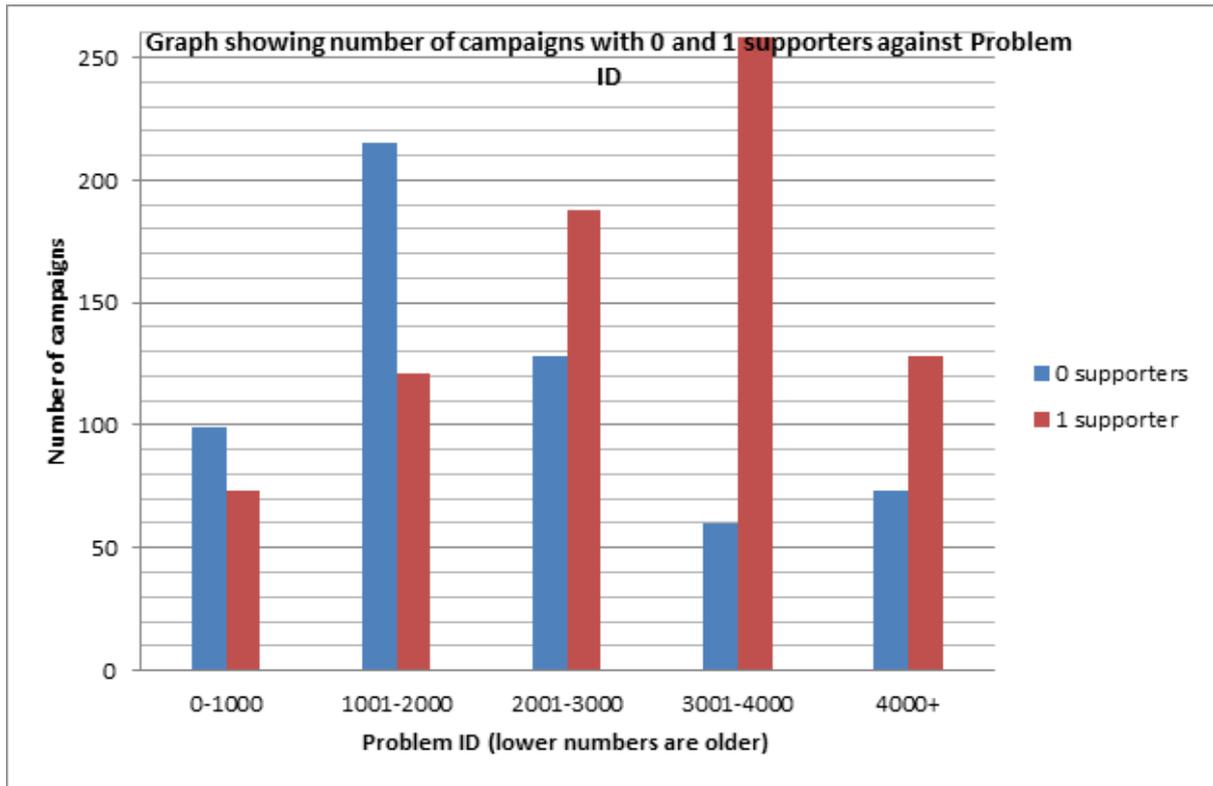
4.4 Results – analysis characteristics of supported/non-supported campaigns

For the 'most supported' campaigns, in terms of length of time since campaign was posted and the number of supporters, it was found that:

- 20 of the campaigns had Problem IDs less than 1000
- 7 have Problem ID between 1500 and 3000
- 3 have Problem ID greater than 3000

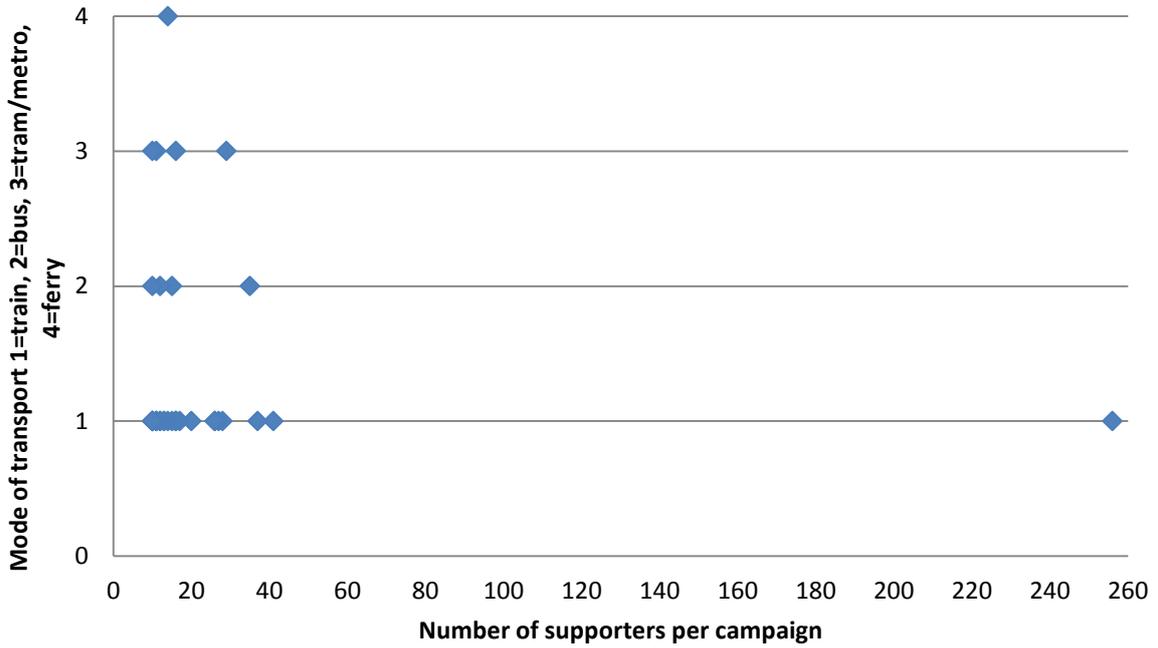
When looking at *all* campaigns with no supporters or only 1 supporter, there does not seem to be any relationship to length of time since the campaign was posted. This is in contrast to the same graph for the 'most supported' campaigns which showed a trend for increasing support over increased time since posting.



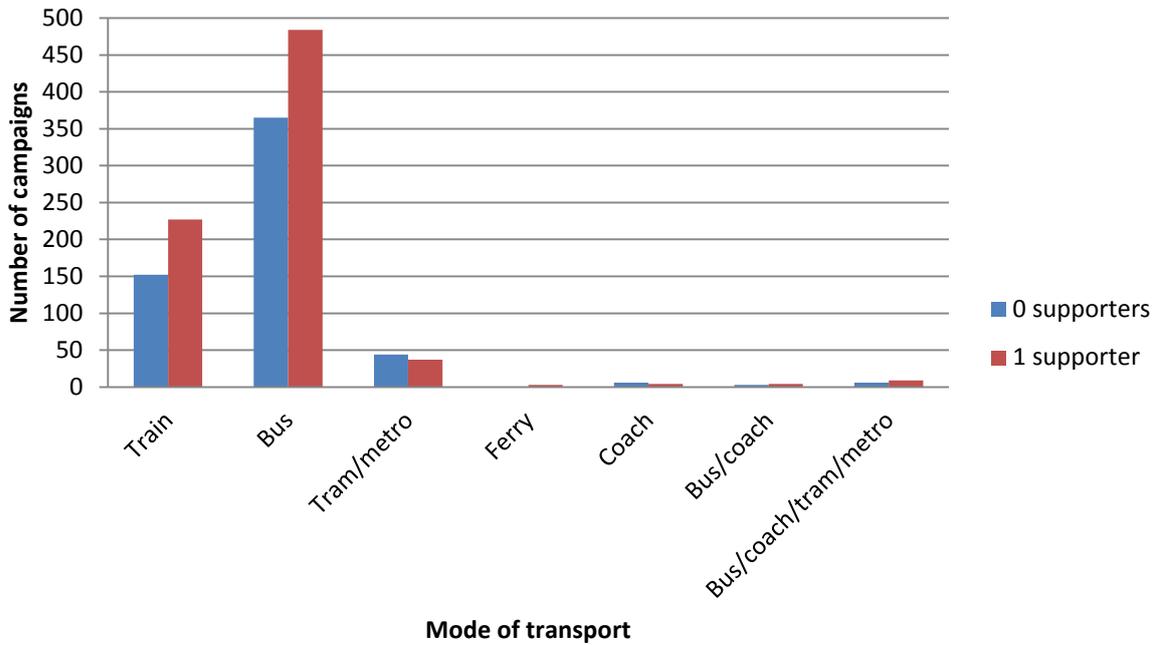


In terms of mode of transport, it was found that train was the mode of transport generating the majority of the ‘most supported’ campaigns, with 26 out of 35 campaigns. There were 4 for bus travel, 4 for tram/metro travel and 1 for ferry travel. When looking at *all* campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter, however, bus issues form the majority of campaigns. This again is in contrast to the ‘most supported’ campaigns.

Graph showing number of supporters against mode of transport for campaigns with more than 10 supporters



Graph showing number of campaigns for each mode of transport for campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter



The 35 'most supported' campaigns were matched as closely as possible by mode of transport and then as closely as possible to Problem ID (so length of time since posting) to 35 campaigns with 1 supporter. The characteristics of the original campaign messages that were posted were noted in terms of: the length of the original post, the type of event that was described (was it a one-off occurrence or an on-going issue?), was the writing style factual, emotive (but calm) or not-calm emotive, and other aspects such as was there any legislation mentioned, did the campaign offer a solution to the problem, was there excessive/inappropriate placement of exclamation marks and capital letters, and so on.

	Characteristics	10+ supporters	1 supporter
Length of post	Short	26	22
	Medium	2	11
	Long	4	2
Type of event	one-off events/issues	6	5
	on-going issues	29	28
	mix one-off/on-going	0	2
Writing style	Offer solution(s)	18	14
	Offer negative solution	0	1
	calm emotive	10	14
Writing style	not-calm emotive	1	10
	factual	24	11
	Evidence of research	5	2
	Mention consultation/petitions	3	0
	Mention legislation	6	0
	Use of exclamation marks	0	4
	Use of capital letters	0	1

Table showing characteristics of campaign posts for 35 'most supported' campaigns and 35 campaigns with 1 supporter, matched as closely as possible by mode of transport and Problem ID

The types of problems that were described by the 'most supported' campaigns and the 3 campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter matched according to Problem ID number and mode of transport were also detailed, in Table 2.

Problems	No. of instances (10+ supporters)	No. of instances (1 supporter)
<i>At station/stop</i>		
Accessibility	6	2
Lack of cycle parking	4	1
Ticket machines (lack of)	2	3
Locked door for access/exit	2	2
Coaches block bus stop	1	
Lighting needed on platform signs	1	
Loud announcements	1	
Bus shelters needed	1	
Footbridge needed	1	
Footbridge problems	0	2
Ferry pier closing	1	
Countdown display needed	1	
Update about upgrade needed	1	1
Toilets at station	0	1
Fouling/vomit at station	0	1
Fly-tipping near station	0	1
Info screens not working	0	1
<i>On vehicle</i>		
Wi-fi requested	2	
Wi-fi problems	1	
Location of companion seat	1	
Train too short	1	5
Allow cycles on trams	1	
Access to train cycle storage	1	
Taps in toilets not working	1	
Smelly toilets	0	1
Door closed on child's arm	1	
Heating	0	1
<i>Staffing</i>		
Bus stopped in advance stop box	1	
Staff rudeness (ticketing)	1	2
Refusal to honour tickets	1	
Cyclists denied group ticket	1	
<i>Other</i>		
Timetabling issues	0	6
Oyster issues	0	1
Routing issues	0	3
Late trains	0	4
Cancelled trains	0	1
Ticketing/fares	0	2
Ferry refund	0	1

Table showing problems mentioned in 35 'most supported' campaigns and 35 campaigns with 1 supporter, matched as closely as possible by mode of transport and Problem ID number (totals may be more than 35 due to some campaigns detailing multiple problems)

Where no instances were found in this sample of 35 campaigns with 1 supporter this has not been recorded as '0' in the '1 supporter' column of the table, as just because there were no instances in

this sample of 35 there could of course be instances in the total sample of campaigns with 1 supporter.

When the 35 ‘most supported’ campaigns were matched according to the type of problem being described in the campaign, it was not possible to find 35 matches in the campaigns with 1 supporter. In these instances the search was extended to include campaigns with 0 supporters. However, there were still some campaigns where no matching problem could be found. This resulted in 29 campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter being matched to the 35 ‘most supported’ campaigns.

	Characteristics	10+ supporters	0 or 1 supporter
Length of post	Short	26	19
	Medium	2	4
	Long	4	6
Type of event	one-off events/issues	6	3
	on-going issues	29	24
	mix one-off/on-going	0	1
Writing style	Offer solution(s)	18	13
	Offer negative solution	0	
	calm emotive	10	7
	not-calm emotive	1	4
	factual	24	24
	Evidence of research	5	2
	Mention consultation/petitions	3	
	Mention legislation	6	1
	Use of exclamation marks	0	1
	Use of capital letters	0	3

Table showing characteristics of campaign posts for 35 ‘most supported’ campaigns and 29 campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter, matched by problem type

The fact that the ‘most supported’ campaigns were typically older campaigns (with lower Problem IDs) suggests that older campaigns are more likely to have gained more supporters. By contrast, no such effect was seen in the campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter. This suggests that the ‘most supported’ campaigns *do* have something about them that makes them more popular/more likely to be supported.

In terms of mode of transport, again differences were found between the mode most frequently cited in the 'most supported' campaigns and the campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter. It is suggested that this change arises from the fact that one train or train route will carry more people than a single bus or bus route, so a significant issue will impact on more people using that train/train route. But overall there are far more buses and bus routes than trains and train routes, so more people could be impacted by individual problems using buses than trains.

When the 35 'most supported' campaigns were matched to 35 campaigns with 1 supporter according to Problem ID number and mode of transport, it was seen that there was more not-calm emotive language used in the campaigns with 1 supporter, whilst there was not much difference between the numbers of campaigns offering solutions or being one-off versus on-going issues. This would suggest that the writing style and amount of research/mentioning other petitions/legislation etc. could be having an impact rather than the length of time since the campaign was posted or the mode of transport the campaign is about.

When comparison was made between the 35 'most supported campaigns' and 29 campaigns with 0 or 1 supporter matched by problem type, it was seen that there were more medium/long campaign posts in the '0 or 1 supporter' matched group, and again there was slightly more evidence of research/other petitions or consultation/legislation being mentioned, and less use of capital letters, exclamation marks and 'not calm' emotive language in the 'most supported' campaigns. So it is possible that short, to-the-point campaign posts, that avoid getting overly emotive and present the facts against a background of research/other support do the best.

4.5 Results – online survey

The section below presents the result from the online survey that users of FixMyTransport were invited to complete. Results are labelled according to question number within the survey. The survey was created using BOS (www.survey.bris.ac.uk), with data exported as CSV, and then imported into SPSS (stats package).

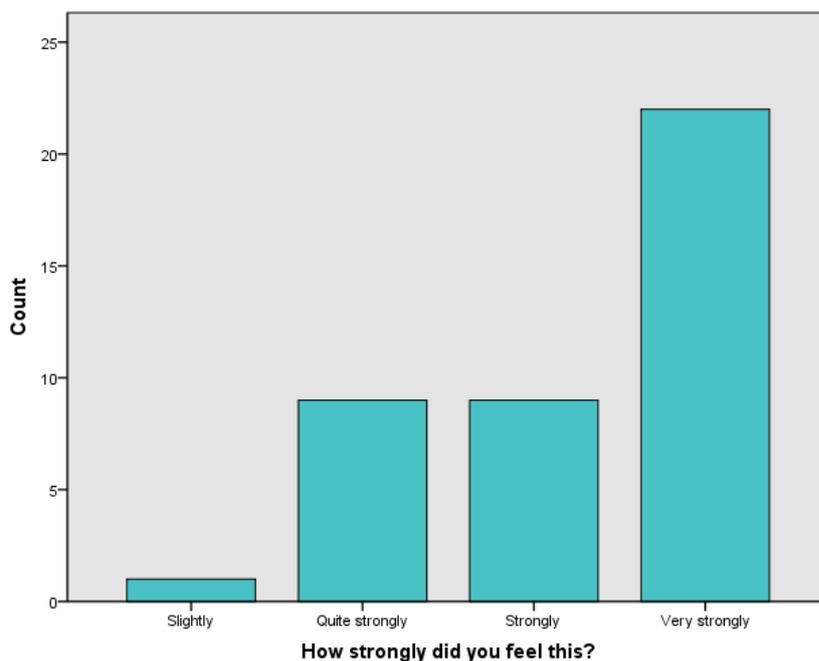
Section 1: The problem you reported

1. Think back to the specific problem you reported using FixMyTransport. How did encountering that problem make you feel at the time?

[Comments used to create a word cloud, using www.wordle.net]

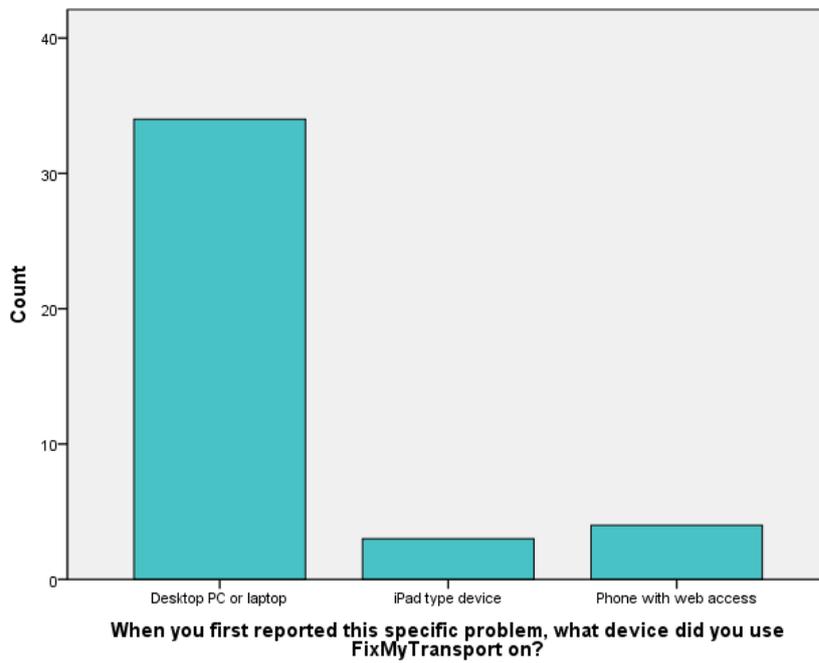


2. How strongly did you feel this?

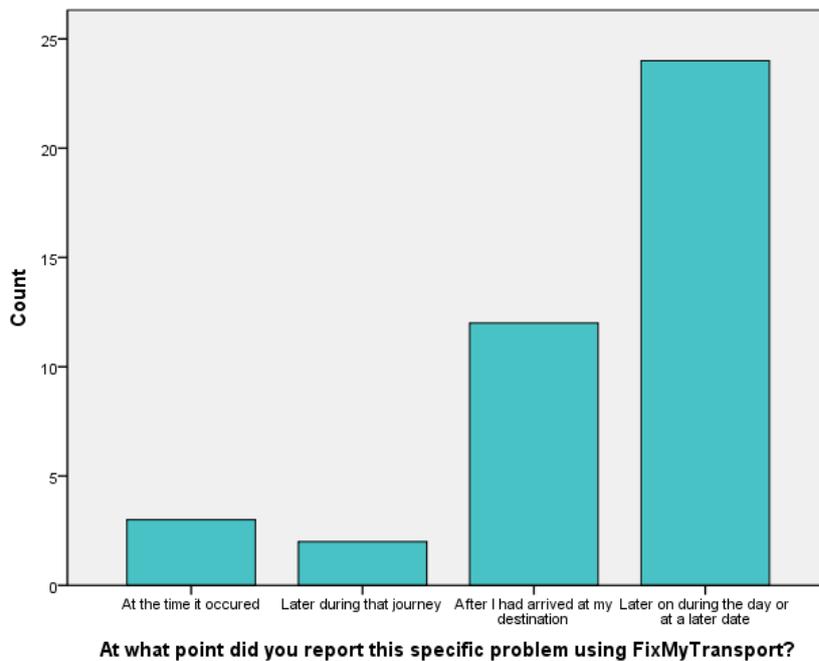


3. Where was the problem that you reported? [not analysed, used to cross check data]

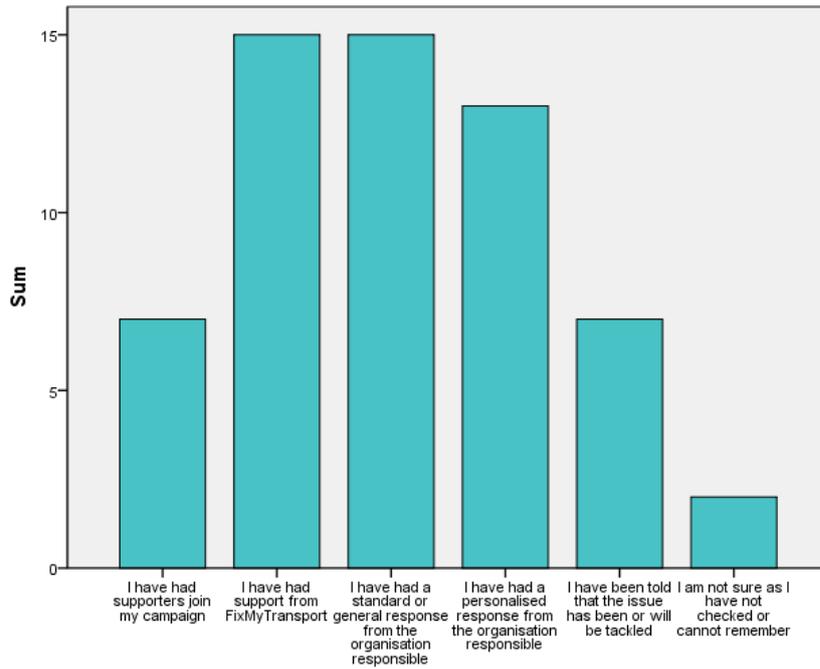
4. When you first reported this specific problem, what device did you use FixMyTransport on?



5. At what point did you report this specific problem using FixMyTransport?

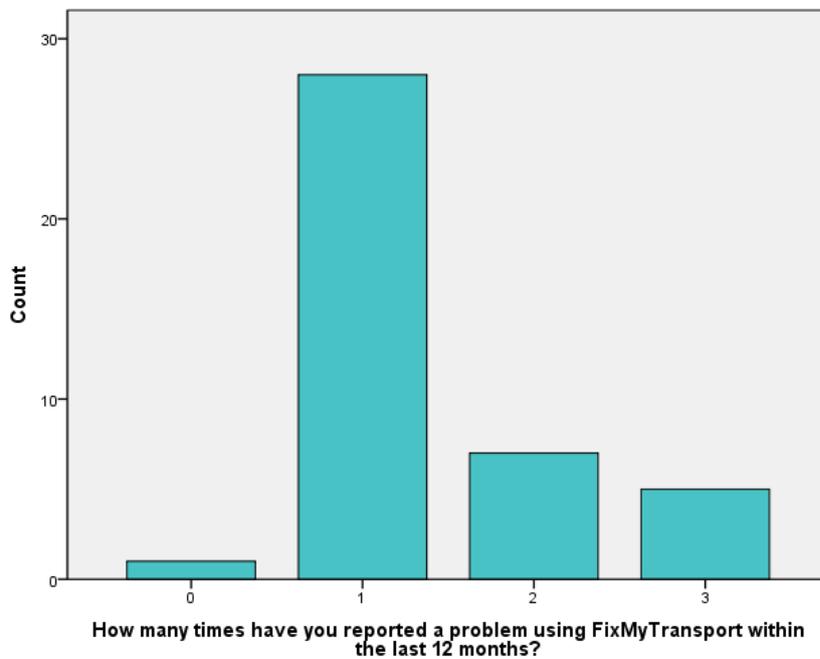


6. What response have you had to your problem report?

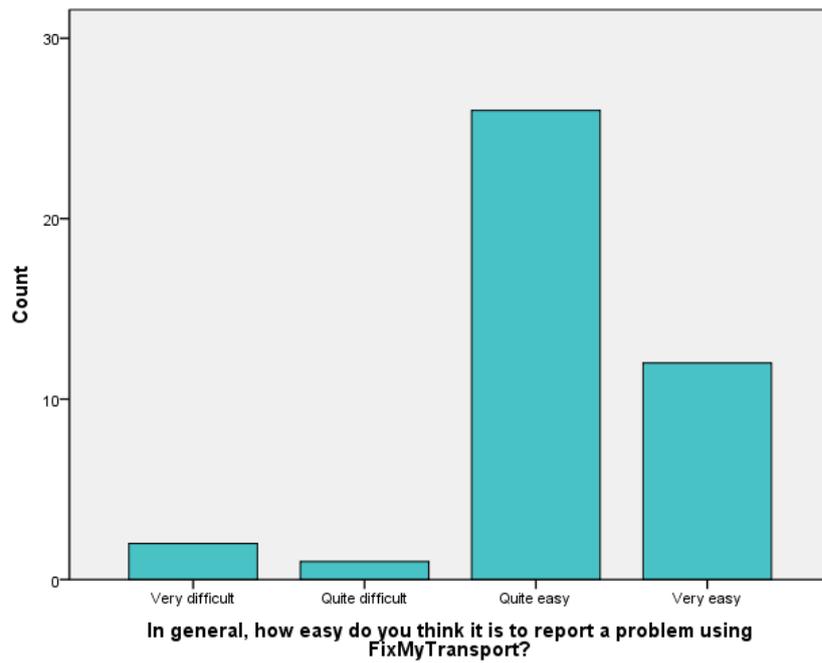


Section 2: Your views on FixMyTransport

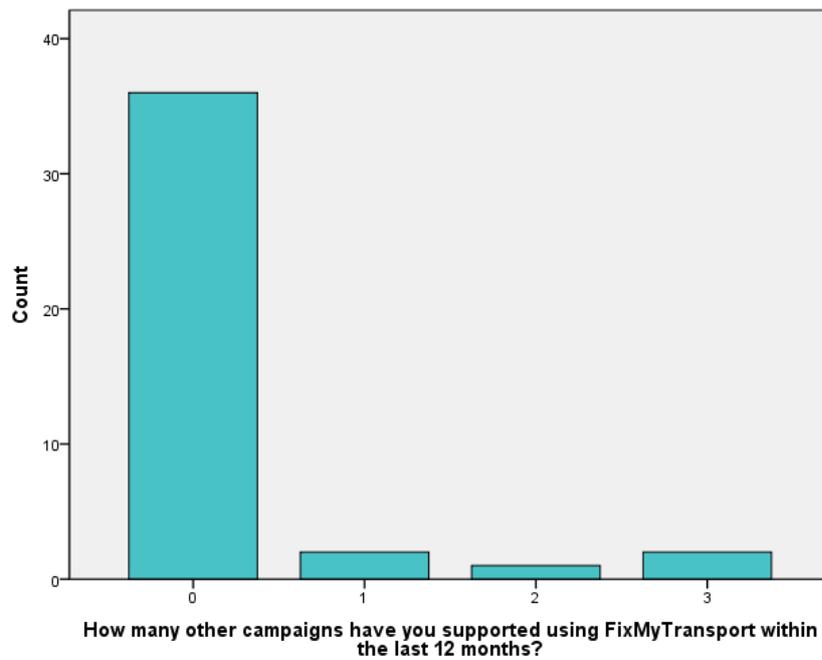
7. How many times have you reported a problem using FixMyTransport in the last 12 months?



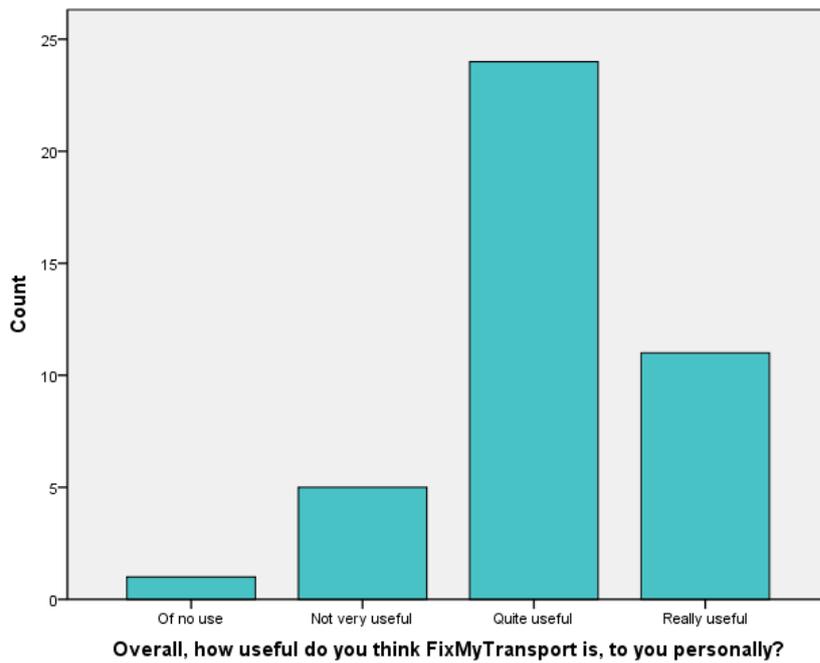
8.a. In general, how easy do you think it is to report a problem using FixMyTransport?



9. Have you supported anyone else's campaigns on FixMyTransport in the last 12 months? If so, roughly how many?



10.a. Overall, how useful do you think FixMyTransport is, to you personally?

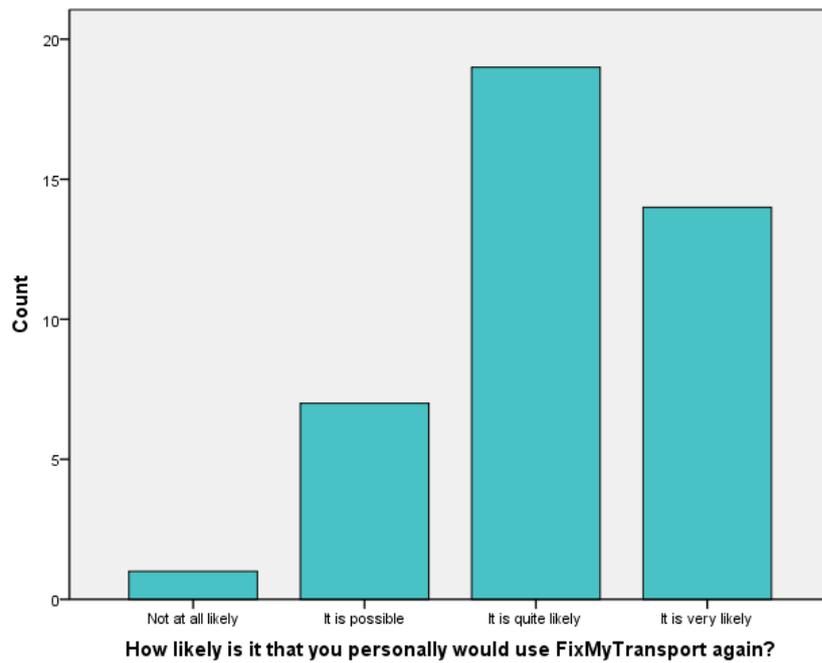


11. How did you first find out about FixMyTransport?

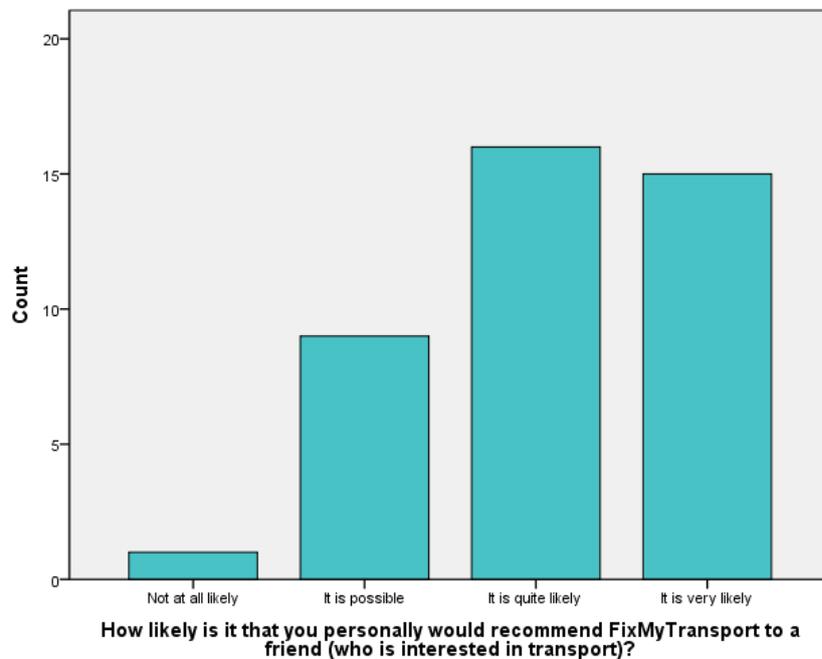
[Comments used to create a word cloud, using www.wordle.net]



12.a. How likely is it that you personally would use FixMyTransport again?

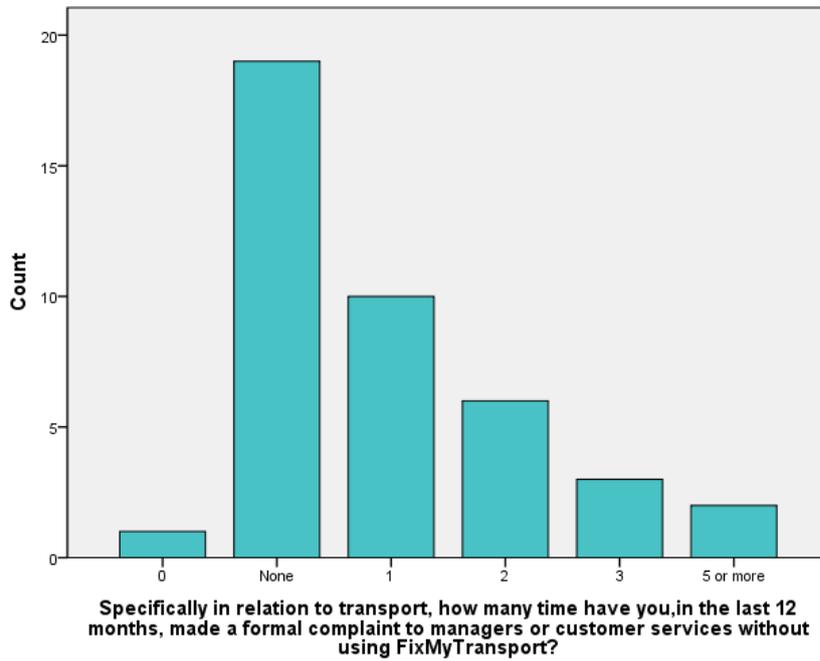


12.b. How likely is it that you would recommend FixMyTransport to a friend (who is interested in transport)?

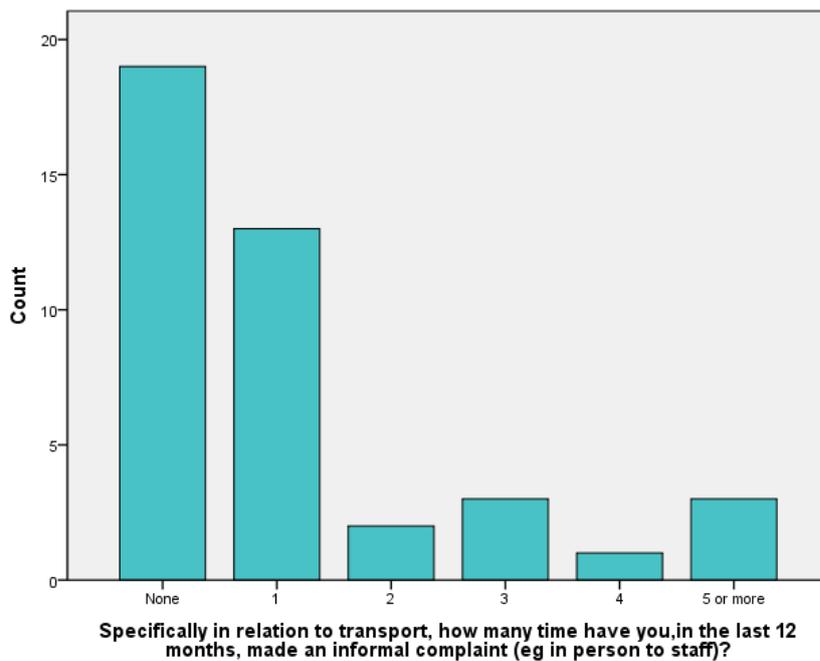


13. Do you have any suggestions for how to improve FixMyTransport? [Discussed below]

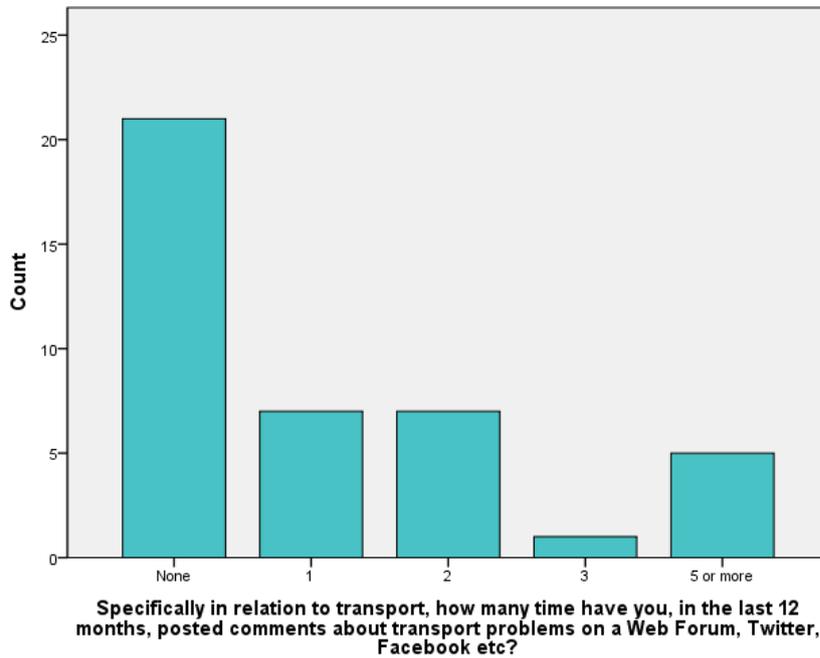
14.a. Specifically in relation to transport, how many time have you, in the last 12 months made a *formal* complaint to managers or customer services without using FixMyTransport?



14.b. Specifically in relation to transport, how many time have you, in the last 12 months made an *informal* complaint (eg in person to staff)?

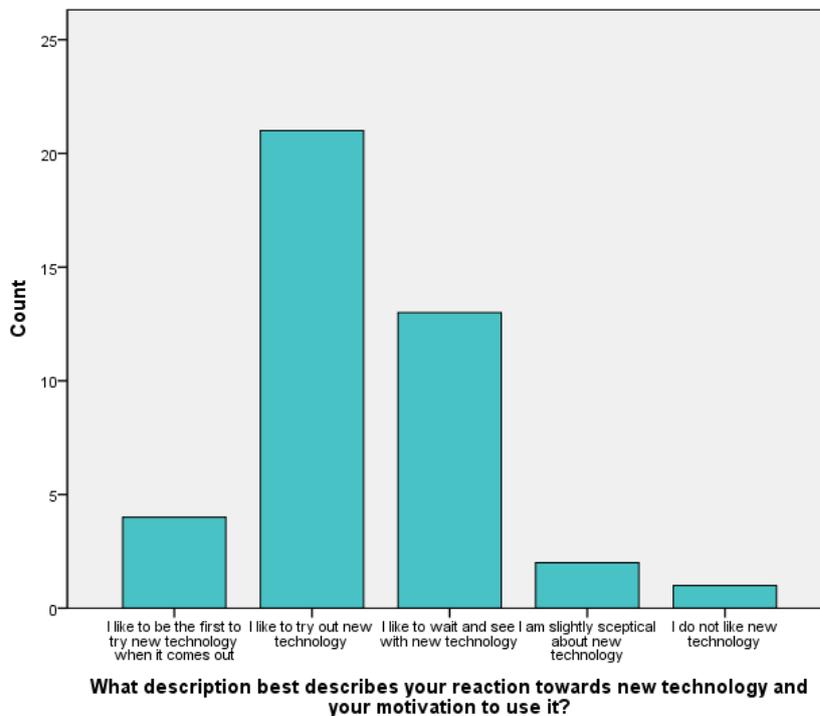


14.c. Specifically in relation to transport, how many time have you, in the last 12 months posted comments about transport problems on a Web Forum, Twitter, Facebook etc?

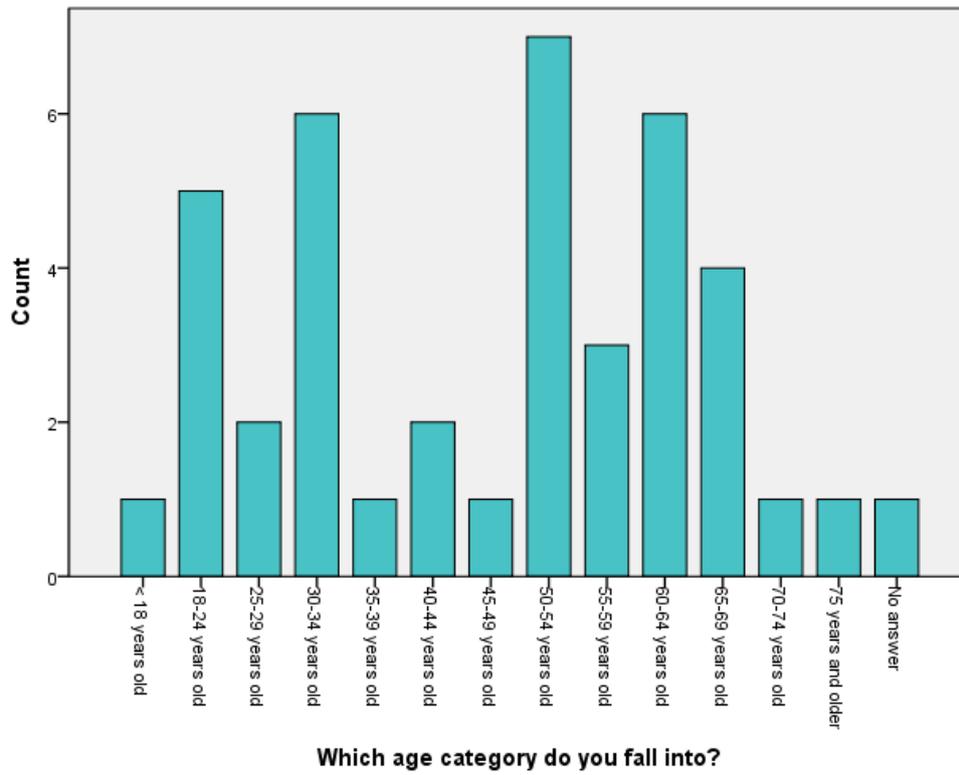


Section 3: Some brief questions about you

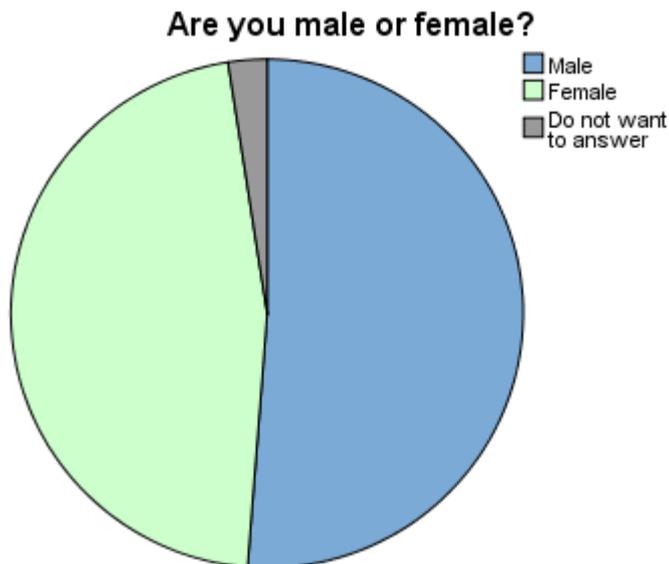
15. What description best describes your reaction towards new technology and your motivation to use it?



16. Which age category do you fall into?



17. Are you male or female?



4.6 Summary of findings from the survey and interviews

The main points arising from the survey and follow up interviews are as follows. Note that it is assumed that the sample who completed the online survey is representative of the total sample who used FixMyTransport. However, there is no way of verifying this due to the anonymity of the wider FixMyTransport responses. It is possible that the questionnaire respondents have greater engagement with FixMyTransport, and might be expected to give generally more positive answers to the survey.

The sample of respondents to the survey was relatively balanced in terms of the UK population, as there was a good spread of ages (Q16), a near 50:50 gender split (Q17), and only a slight bias towards early adoption of technology (Q15).

There was a wide range of problems that prompted complaints. Buses seemed to cause particular problems, and spurs for complaint ranged from major one-off issues, repeated issues coupled with a 'tipping point', being asked to complain by transport staff, and feelings of disbelief with illogical policies or actions.

The emotional responses to encountering the transport issues were overwhelmingly strong feelings (Q2) of anger, frustration and annoyance (Q1).

The vast majority of respondents found out about FixMyTransport via a web search (Q11), and prior to using it on this occasion, had not heard of it. In most cases, it was the first and only method used in relation to that complaint.

'When I found FixMyTransport I was quite surprised, I didn't know it had existed'

The majority of respondents reported the problem on a desktop PC or laptop (Q4), and either did that when they had arrived at their destination, later that same day, or at a later date (Q5). This suggests an opportunity to better support the individual who may want to tag an issue at the time, but complete the details of a complaint later when it is more convenient.

Within the last 12 months, the vast majority of respondents had only used FixMyTransport once (Q7). It is unsure why one respondent answered '0', since the only way of completing the questionnaire was via the link from the FixMyTransport website, with a prompted follow up to a problem report. Very few respondents had supported other peoples' campaigns (Q9).

The majority of respondents had not made any *formal* complaint in ways other than FixMyTransport (Q14a) over the last 12 months.. There was one missing answer, indicated by 0. Similarly, the vast majority had made none, or only one *informal* complaint over the last 12 months. There was a slightly higher rate of posting of transport comments on the web, but at least half of the respondents had never done this. This pattern suggests that FixMyTransport was being used by individuals who do not tend to otherwise make complaints about transport.

FixMyTransport was seen as generally easy to use (Q8a), and personally useful (Q10a):

'It was very useful to feel heard'

'it was very useful to feel heard', 'and the feeling that ... people were on to it'

'Somebody out there was interested, somebody out there cared, somebody out there might be able to do something about it'

'Nice to have a forum to, you know, vent my anger really. It sort of helped calm it in a way'

The most useful aspects were the directing of the complaint to the appropriate operator or individual, and the ability to get problems out in to a public space. The typical comment in relation to usability was that individuals found it easy enough to use, but did not fully understand how it worked. It is clear that mySociety have been able to develop a successful beta version, as was their stated aim at the outset, and develop this further.

It was generally likely that respondents would use FixMyTransport again (Q12a), and recommend it to a friend (Q12b). However this was tempered with comments about lack of resolution of problems, and several respondents stated they could not really recommend it unless they knew that their problem had been resolved. Note with this question, it was asked in relation to a friend who is 'interested in transport', to ensure that there was potential relevance to a third party. There was evidence of some real buy –in:

'Oh yes, I would use FixMyTransport because it's really the only hope I have isn't it?'

However another respondent stated that he felt it didn't work due to being too micro in its outlook

'it basically doesn't work, idea is nice, but it is too micro, too small scale, problems are too small, you have things that have been up there for months and only have 4-6 people supporting it.'

The travellers had had a range of responses to their problem (Q6). There was a high level of support from FixMyTransport staff, and a personalised response in about 30% of instances. There was a statement relating to resolution of the problem in just over 15% of the cases. Responses to this feedback varied greatly. Positive comments included:

'It was comforting to know that somebody cared, that there was something out there'

'I was really happy to have, to find something like FixMyTransport to report what I was unhappy about'

'it was nice to get an e-mail asking if the problem had been resolved'

'It was quite nice to have a little bit of moral support and realise that other people thought my problem was you know a bad one'

Respondents were more satisfied with the response from FixMyTransport than with the transport operator replies. In some cases, the operator responses were very poorly received (.g. 'appalling', 'shocking') or operators refused to respond through FixMyTransport. Other negative responses were a lack of understanding of the process:

'Feedback from FixMyTransport was useful, 'but I wasn't quite sure what was going to happen with what I'd reported, I didn't really understand the process for resolving the problem, or whether the fact that I'd complained would have any effect on you know solving the problem'

4.7 Potential improvements

Comments about how FixMyTransport worked were generally very positive. There were no negative issues raised in relation to the interface, but this is probably partly due to the delay between the individual using FixMyTransport, the completion of the survey, and the follow up interviews. One respondent stated:

'It's probably one of the easiest ones that I've found to use', felt it was very easy, very clear, colours were good'

There were several overall suggestions for improvement, the main ones being:

- A better explanation of what FixMyTransport is, and who is behind it. Many were unsure who was running it; some people thought that it was linked to Transport for London.
- Include an option for transport related road issues such as bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.
- Include domestic airlines.
- Bringing to attention when someone else has already reported exactly the same issue at around the same time – to promote a campaign rather than two separate problem reports.
- A clearer explanation of what happens as a result of lodging a complaint – what the process is, and what the individual can expect by way of response.
- Better advertising and wider awareness, as most individuals had never heard of it, and realise that its success is based on wider uptake.
- A way of informing individuals about local issues, without having to search on the website.
- Linking to FixMyTransport from key travel sites.
- A clearer response in relation to what has actually happened to an issue.
- Better correlation and aggregation of problems, so that campaigns can be built around specific operators, or wider issues (such as Oyster Card refunds, or Oyster Card issues related to all First Capital Connect trains within the TfL area). This is a shift from the micro issue to the more global. Using the data to show what people are complaining about, what responses are being made, what satisfaction is being achieved.
- Having some high level backing (eg Mayor of London), and being able to provide evidence of a lack of engagement of some operators with customers.
- Finally (and an issue raised by many), having transport operators being mandated to reply effectively to customer complaints, preferably within an open environment such as FixMyTransport.

In addition, from the campaigns analysis above, FixMyTransport could advise individuals on how to create campaigns that are likely to garner support by: using short and to-the-point posts, making posts factual rather than overly emotive, and making reference to legislation and other supportive evidence.