

# Why do I need a standard feed?

## Why real-time data?

Study after study shows that transit riders have come to expect to be able to access real-time vehicle arrival information. Knowing when a bus or train will actually arrive reduces uncertainty, increases the attractiveness of transit, and improves rider satisfaction.

## I already publish real-time data. Why do I need it in the GTFS-Realtime format?

Real-time transit data comes in many forms. But only one format—General Transit Feed Specification Realtime (GTFS-RT)—lets any new or existing app easily consume and publish your data for riders. The GTFS standard structures real-time and schedule data in a universal template so that, no matter who produced it, transit data is easily recognizable to any application developer.

## How is a standard format helpful to riders?

When it comes to data and technology, it's important to meet riders where they are. Smartphone users are savvy digital journey planners, and they tend to instinctively reach for common navigation apps like Google Maps and Apple Maps - the maps that come with their phones. When they have to download a new or unfamiliar app to access real-time data, would-be riders are less likely to get on the bus or train, especially when they only ride occasionally or if they use multiple transit systems.

But Google, Apple, and other major players in online trip planning publish data when it's produced in a GTFS standard feed. So to make sure your riders can easily and intuitively find out when the next bus is coming, your transit data should conform to the standard feed format.

### By the numbers



**In Seattle:** Riders perceived wait times to be 30% shorter when they had access to GTFS Realtime data.



**In NYC & Chicago:** Bus ridership increased by 2% after transit agencies published real-time arrival information.



Cal-ITP staffs a Transit Data Helpdesk for California transit providers to receive free support. Send your questions to [hello@calitp.org](mailto:hello@calitp.org) to get started!