

San Diego Wireless Traffic Report: “Powered by Cal-(IT) 2”

Project: SD Wireless Traffic Report
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Anyone navigating the roads of southern California knows that congestion and delays are commonplace. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) offers detailed information on bottlenecks and delays on major highways – but only online. For anyone who does not have immediate access to the Web, the only available traffic information is on the radio. Now, Cal-(IT)² has developed the San Diego Wireless Traffic Report as part of its advanced technology research program to find solutions to infrastructure issues facing Californians – in this case, to give motorists “anytime, anywhere” access to traffic alerts and highway speeds.

“What I particularly love to do is take core technologies and develop innovative voice, wireless, and telematics applications for consumers... The Traffic Report system is one example. Users can customize the traffic report to their morning and evening commuting patterns, through a Web portal (<http://traffic.calit2.net>), and access them using their cell phones.”
– Ganz Chockalingam, Cal-(IT)² Researcher

The Traffic Report is a voice-assisted information service for commuters in the greater San Diego region, provided free of charge by the institute. The service allows motorists to dial in from their cell, home, or office phones to retrieve real-time alerts and traffic speeds for most major highways countywide. It draws on the same up-to-date traffic data that is available only through the Caltrans website.

The freeway speed data is collected 24/7 by Caltrans from sources including electronic sensors in the pavement, freeway call boxes, video cameras, and motorist cell calls. The data is channeled through the San Diego Transportation Management Center, the nerve center for the region's urban road infrastructure, covering roughly 1,000 miles of highway in San Diego and Imperial counties.

The web portal to customize a motorist's traffic report is <http://traffic.calit2.net>. You can create an account by registering your cell phone and then enter your morning and evening commute routes. You then call (866) 500-0977 from your cell phone, and the system will identify you based on the cell phone number you are calling from. It will give the traffic conditions for your morning/evening commute route, depending on the time of day you call. If you don't have your cell phone handy, or if you have not signed up for an account, you can still use the system by calling from any phone. The system will no longer be able identify you, but you can say the highway name such as "5 North" and the system will inform you of the congested regions of the highway. The technology could be incorporated into a future "511" traffic information service now in the planning stages for San Diego County.

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