



Example 49 **Speaking Bus Stop – Accessible Information for People with Visual Impairment**

City (country) **Münster (Germany)**

good practice for people with ...	kind of vehicle	kind of measure/approach
... visual impairment	city bus	engineering/technology approach organisational/operational support

Project description

People with visual impairments now get timetable information by a spoken announcement at five bus stops in Münster, Germany. The first bus stop with such a service was the bus stop Picasso-Museum and was implemented in July 2007. This service is the first of this kind in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Overall five test installations were put into operation in the whole area of Münster in 2007. Special stickers label all stops with such a speaking unit.

To date public transport users get real-time information on the departure of buses via LED-displays at central bus stops. The plan is to equip all these stops additionally with speaking units especially for people with visual impairment. The contents of the dynamic display are converted into acoustic information. A key press can activate the speaking unit and the contents of the electronic LED-display with information about the bus departure are spoken. The following information is read aloud: the bus line number, the destination and the departure time. The display contents are converted by speech module into spoken language, and the synthetic voice is hardly distinguishable from a personal announcement. So far additional information, like line changes due to accidents, is not spoken, but this information will be added in due course.

The implementation of the speaking units and the test phase is realised in close cooperation with visually impaired representatives. They take care of integrating the speaking units into a comprehensive system of barrier-free bus stops. The visually impaired people are guided to the speaking unit by a line of special natural stones of about 90 centimetres in width so that they are easily able to find the information pillar and the button to start the speaking unit. The button must be held down for several seconds in order to avoid activating the speaking unit by accident.

After the test-phase, all of the 48 real-time information units in Münster will be equipped with speaking units.

Source:

Newstix: Münsters sprechende Bushaltestelle - barrierefreie Informationen für Blinde und Sehbehinderte: Stadtwerke Vorreiter in NRW (de), <http://www.newstix.de/index.php?site=&entmsg=true&ref=RNL&mid=5441> (22/10/2007)