ELERTS

BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING and MBTA See Say mobile app

MBTA Riders "Saw Something and Said Something" by using MBTA See Say

On April 15, 2013 two bombs exploded at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Many spectators used the MBTA to get to the marathon. Alert transit riders had the **MBTA See Say** smartphone app, for reporting safety and security problems to transit police.

PRE-EXPLOSION

Before the bombs went off, many spectators were casually taking photos of the crowd and runners, using their smartphones.

POST-EXPLOSION

After the bombs exploded, MBTA police received about 100 messages from riders using the **MBTA See Say app**. Some messages came in immediately, some over the next few days.

CROWD-SOURCING AT ITS FINEST

Transit riders used the **MBTA See Say app** to upload photos of the crowd by the finish line, taken minutes before the explosions. They wanted police to have their photos, in case the perpetrator(s) were in the crowd.

Photos submitted by mobile phones can help to locate criminals in real-time.

MBTA THANKED RIDERS

Three days after the bombing, MBTA police broadcast a message to app users, thanking them for submitting information and photos about the marathon.

MBTA police also broadcast to all MBTA See Say app users, a message from Transit police officer Richard Donahue, who was shot in pursuit of the marathon bombers.

Outbound messages sent to MBTA See Say app users built rapport with the transit rider community, at a time when the entire city was on edge.

Phone calls failed, but MBTA See Say App Worked

Transit riders using the MBTA See Say app demonstrated the power of ELERTS crowd-sourced incident reporting solution. In the chaos, when cell towers were over-run by too much traffic, the mobile app still worked. Voice calls and SMS text messages failed, but the mobile app delivered messages promptly to transit police dispatchers.

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