

## **Survey Methodology**

A survey was conducted onboard AATA buses from October 1 through 10, 2009. Survey data collection occurred onboard the buses. Survey personnel accompanied drivers at the beginning of the shifts, and rode the buses for an entire run. They approached all riders rather than a sample of riders. The effective cooperation rate was 73%, and 3,028 questionnaires were completed.

### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

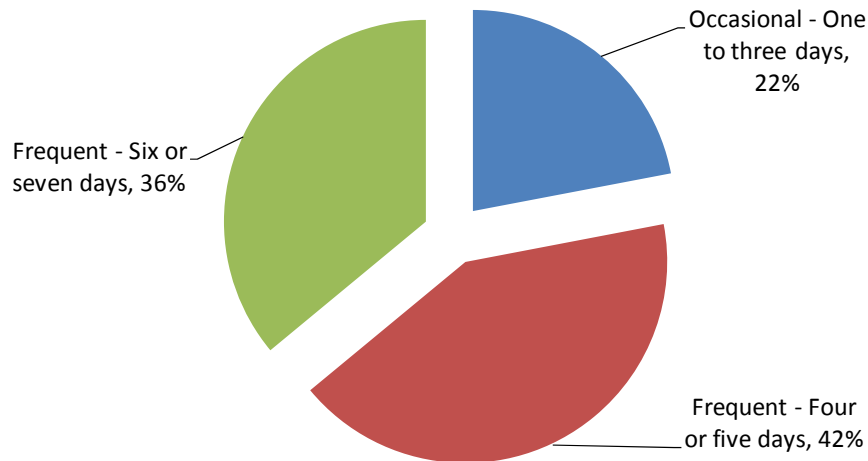
#### ***The Ride is heavily used.***

Most riders (a total of 66%) use AATA five or more days a week. One-fourth (25%) use it every day, while another 11% use it six days a week. For convenient analysis, the riders are grouped in three sets:

1. "Occasional riders," who use The Ride one to three days a week.
2. "Frequent riders," who use The Ride four or five days a week.
3. "Intensive riders," who use The Ride six or seven days a week.

#### **Q10 In the past 7 days, how many days have you ridden on an AATA bus?**

(Source: AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)



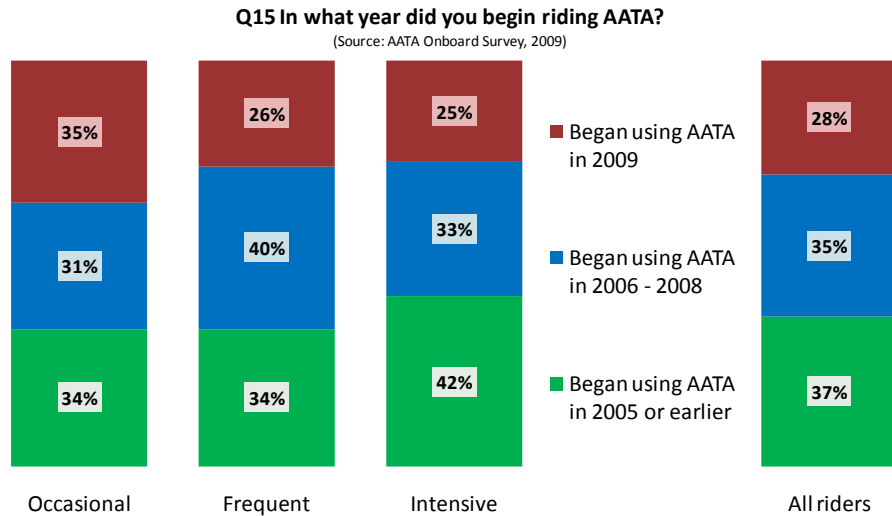
**How often do AATA customers use The Ride?**

**When did riders begin to use AATA?**

**Like all U.S. bus systems, AATA experiences rapid turnover of riders.**

There is a great deal of rapid turnover in the clientele of bus systems in the United States. This is true regardless of whether or not the system serves a university community like Ann Arbor -- i.e. it is not only college students who account for the high turnover. Of AATA riders, 28% began riding only in 2009. This was the same percent of recent riders found in the 2006 study. Such turnover places a premium on building information

mechanisms for new riders. It also may offer opportunities for ridership growth if rider retention can be even slightly improved by making service improvements such as additional weekend service that is more frequent and operated for longer hours.



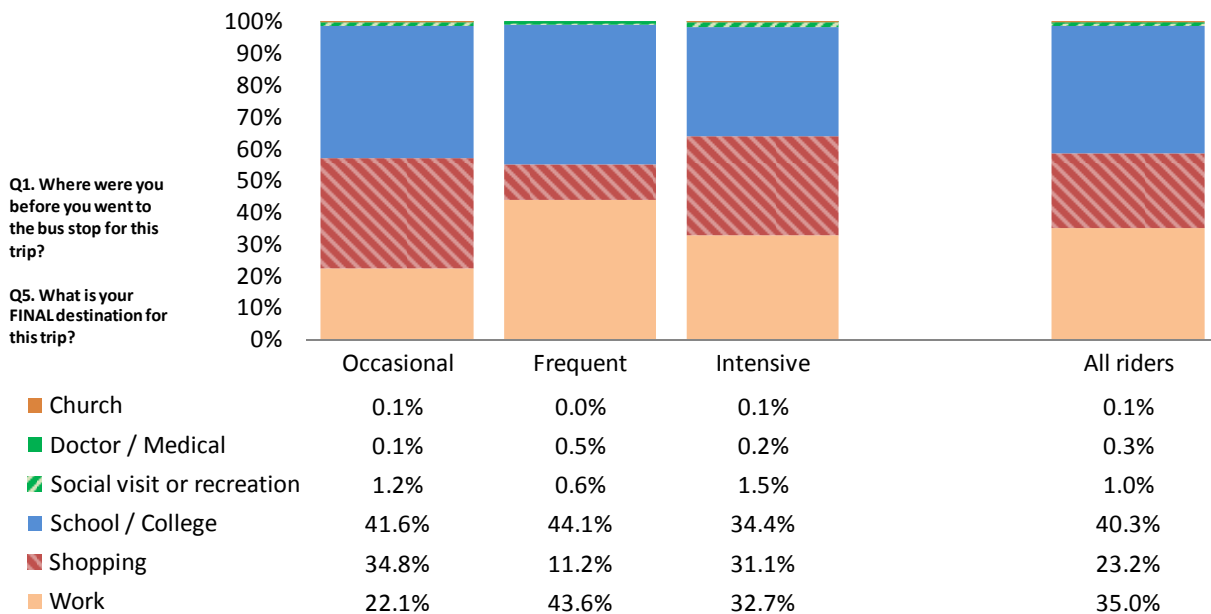
**Most AATA riders use The Ride for trips to work or school.**

Of all AATA riders, 35% use *The Ride* for work-trips. This is especially true of the "frequent riders" among whom 43.6% use it for work trips. However, large numbers of all three rider groups also use it for trips to school or college. Of all riders, 40.3% use it for school trips.

**Trip purposes (based on Q1 and Q5)**

(Source: AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)

**Trip purpose**

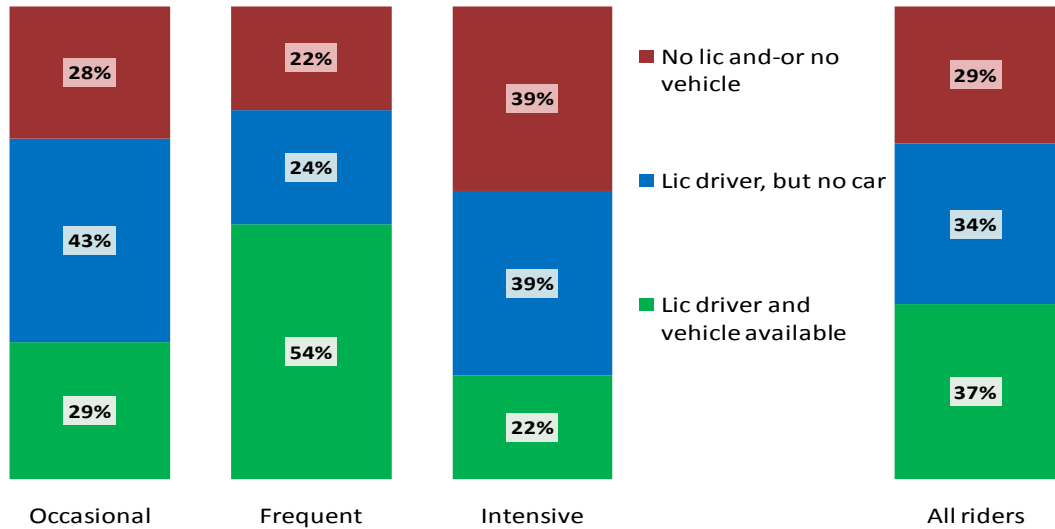


**More than one third of AATA riders have a driver's license and a vehicle available, but choose to use The Ride.**

Frequent riders are more likely than other to be riders-by-choice. Among that group, 54% have both a license and a vehicle available but choose to use *The Ride*. On the other hand, of intensive riders, only 22% have both license and vehicle, while 39% have neither.

**Modal choice**

**Modal choice and frequency of using The Ride**  
(Based on Q20 and Q21 - See appendix)(Source: AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)

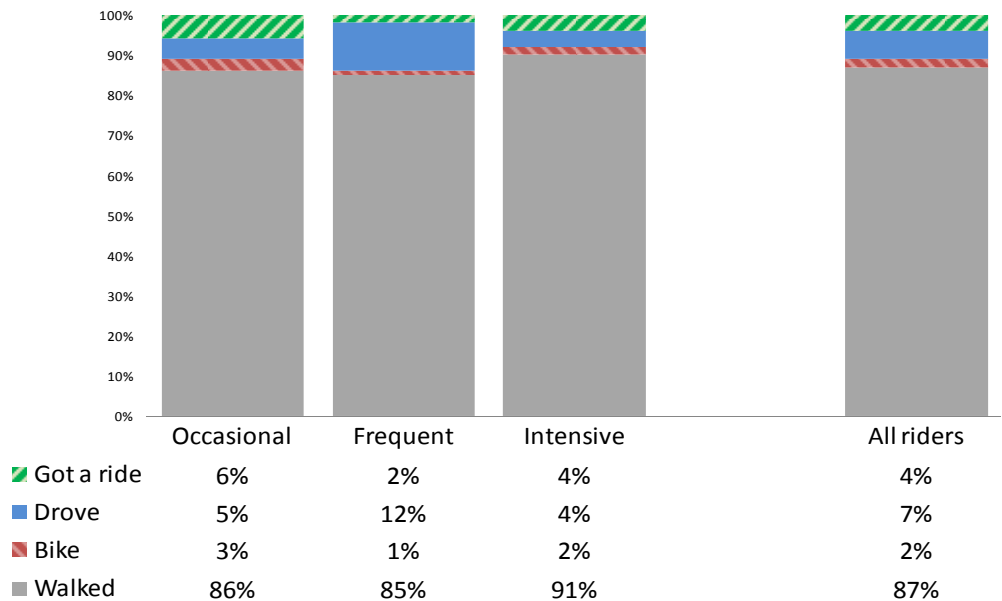


**Most AATA riders (87%) walk to their bus stop. However, a substantial number get rides, drive, or bicycle.**

As is typical in almost all transit systems, most people (87% in the case of AATA) walk to the bus stop. This tendency varies somewhat among the rider segments, with 12% of frequent riders indicating that they had driven to the bus stop, apparently utilizing a park and ride opportunity.

**Background of ridership growth**

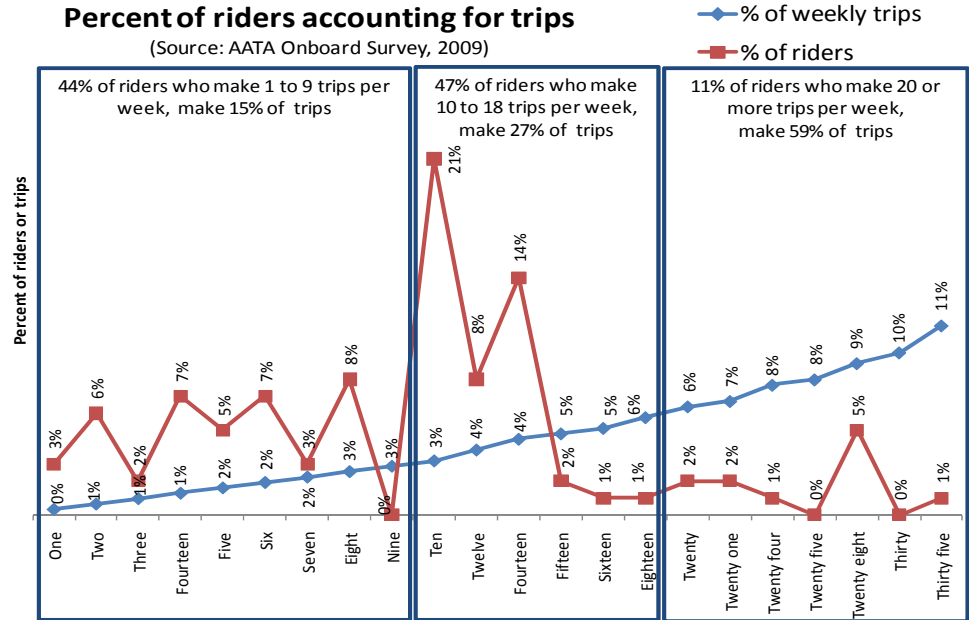
**Q3 Mode to the bus stop**  
(Source: AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)



**A small percentage of AATA riders account for most trips.**

- Only 11% of all riders account for 59% of all trips because they make twenty or more trips per week.
- Almost half of all riders (47%) account for only slightly more than one fourth (27%) of all trips, most of which are round trips on five to seven days a week.
- And 44% of all riders making only nine or fewer trips per week account for only 15% of all trips.

**Number of trips**

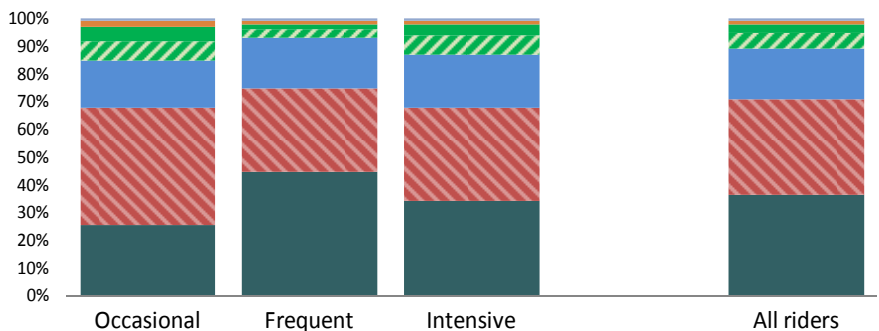


**AATA riders tend to be employed, students-only, or students who are also employed.**

Most riders are students. A total of 52% are students-only or employed students. Of all AATA riders, including both students who are also employed and persons who are employed but not students, 54% are employed. More of the occasional riders than of the other rider segments are students only. Thus, while 42% of occasional riders are students only, 30% of frequent riders, and 33% of the intensive riders are students only.

**Employment**

**Employment**  
(Source: AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)

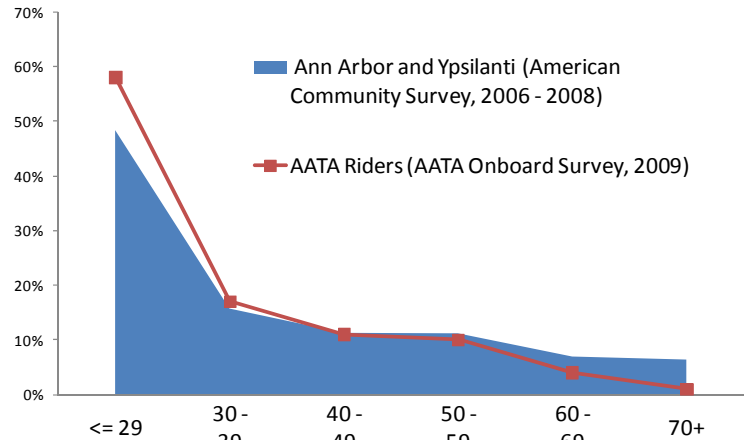


**Age of AATA riders compared to the general population of the service area.**

Nationally, most transit users are young. This is also true of AATA riders. It is not surprising, therefore, that AATA riders are somewhat younger than the general population of the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti areas. However, the contrast of the age of the riders compared to age the community as a whole is much less pronounced than in most transit systems because the population of the service area as a whole tends to be quite young. The chart shows the contrast between data from Census Bureau surveys and the 2009 AATA Onboard Survey. For example, while a total of 13% of the adult population is 60 or older, only 5% of riders are of that age.

Age

**Comparing age of the general public with age of riders** (Sources: American Community Survey and AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)



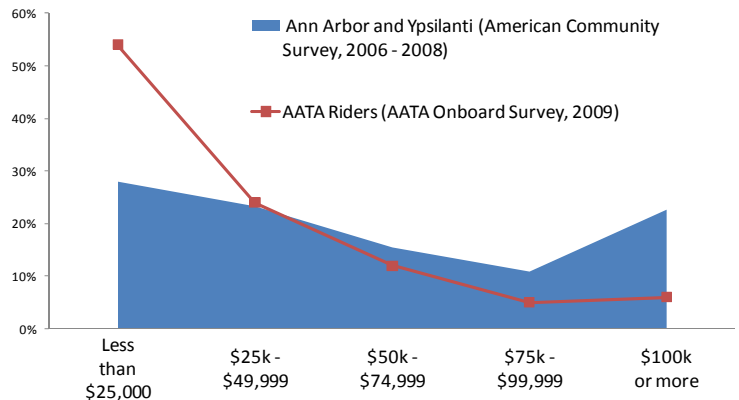
	<= 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70+
Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti (American Community Survey, 2006 - 2008)	48%	16%	11%	11%	7%	6%
AATA Riders (AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)	58%	17%	11%	10%	4%	1%

**Income of AATA riders compared to the general population of the service area.**

Household income of AATA riders is considerably lower than that of the population of the service area. This is very typical of transit ridership, and is among the reasons that ridership is so responsive to changes in fuel costs. It is also an indicator of how important public transit is in the social mobility of young people who begin adulthood with low incomes and need to economize while becoming established.

Income

**Comparing income of the general public with income of rider households** (Sources: American Community Survey and AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)



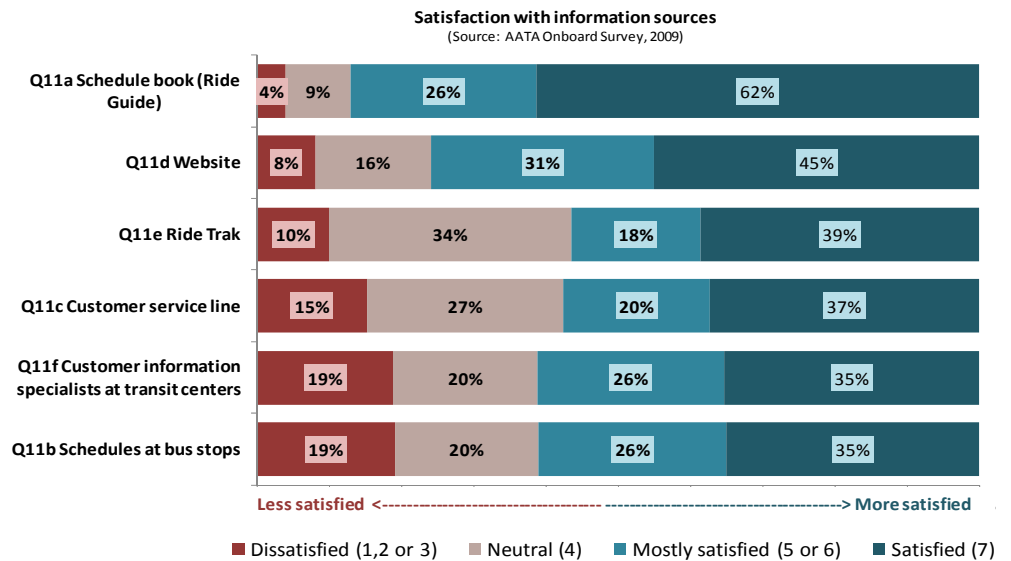
	Less than \$25,000	\$25k - \$49,999	\$50k - \$74,999	\$75k - \$99,999	\$100k or more
Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti (American Community Survey, 2006 - 2008)	28%	23%	15%	11%	23%
AATA Riders (AATA Onboard Survey, 2009)	54%	24%	12%	5%	6%

**AATA riders tend to be satisfied with, or neutral toward, the several sources of information.**

Even in this electronic era and on a system whose riders are so youthful, the printed schedule book is a satisfactory source for the vast majority of riders (88%) who rate it 5 – 7 on the 7 point satisfaction scale on which 7 is most satisfied. The website too is very satisfactory to most riders who have used it (only 27% have not used it in the past 7 days), with 76% of those users scoring it in the 5 – 7 range.

RideTrak, is satisfactory to 57% of the 21% who have ever used it, and most others are neutral toward it.

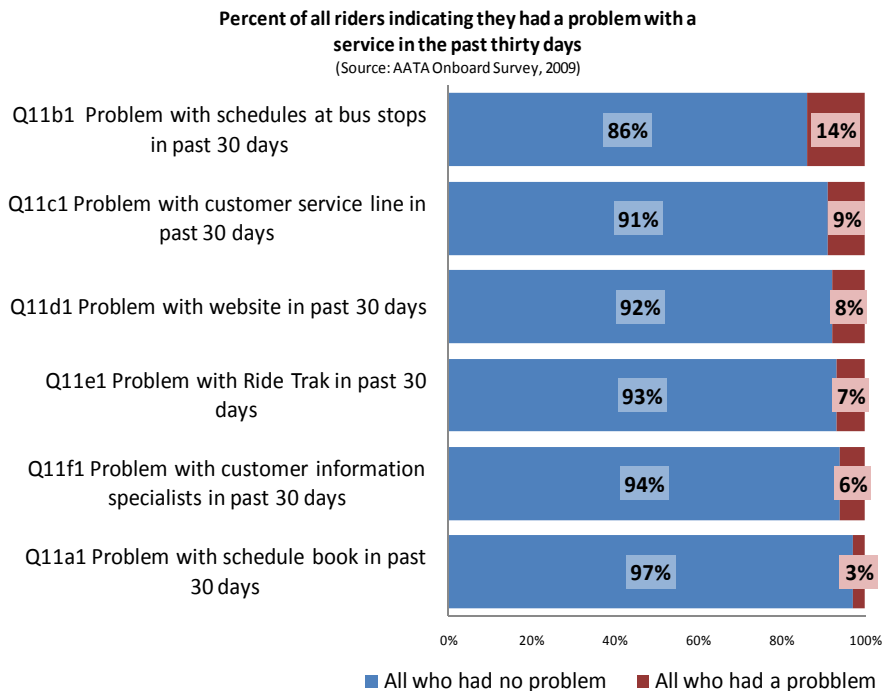
The two information sources that involve human interaction are two of the three areas on which dissatisfaction stands at 15% or more. The reasons for this are not revealed by the survey, but since such sources involve human interaction, the problem may lie with customer perceptions and expectations (which may not always be realistic) or staff conduct, or some combination of the two. The other element with a high dissatisfaction rating (19%) is schedule information at the bus stops. The latter is a perennial problem with bus transit everywhere because it is so difficult to provide complete information in a compact manner at every stop.



**The overwhelming majority of riders – more than 90% -- reported no problems at all with most aspects of AATA information. Problem reports exceeded 10% in only one case – schedule information at the bus stops.**

The problem most frequently reported was with information (or perhaps lack of information) at bus stops. Information at the stops is a major challenge for every bus system, because many stops lack anything but a sign on which to place very limited information and because a single stop may serve many routes.

Notice also that, although 19% had given low satisfaction scores to customer information personnel at the transit centers, only 6% recalled having had a problem in the past thirty days. This suggests that problems are infrequent, but when they are perceived to have happened, the memory lingers.

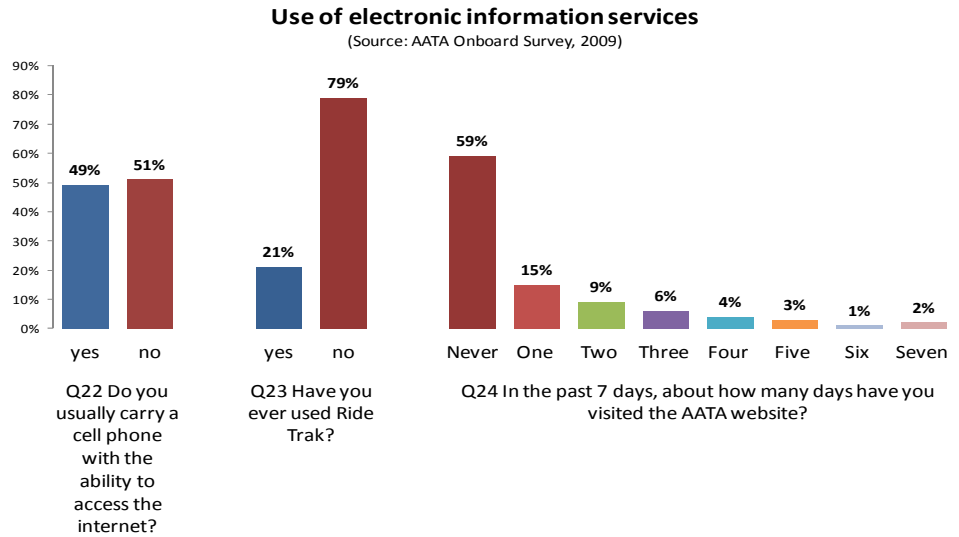


**Use of electronic information services**

**Almost half of riders (49%) carry an Internet-enabled cell phone.**

Within a few years, dissemination of local transit information will probably be dominated by electronic systems. For now, printed materials still dominate. Although 49% of riders carry an Internet-capable cell device, and probably many more use a text-enabled cell-phone, only 21% have used RideTrak. Given that many of their trips are routine and brief, it may be that they simply have not seen the need to use this service.

On the other hand, 41% have visited the website in 7 days prior to the survey, a fairly high rate for a transit website. The history of diffusion of innovation in communication certainly suggests that AATA riders will move increasingly to electronic sources.

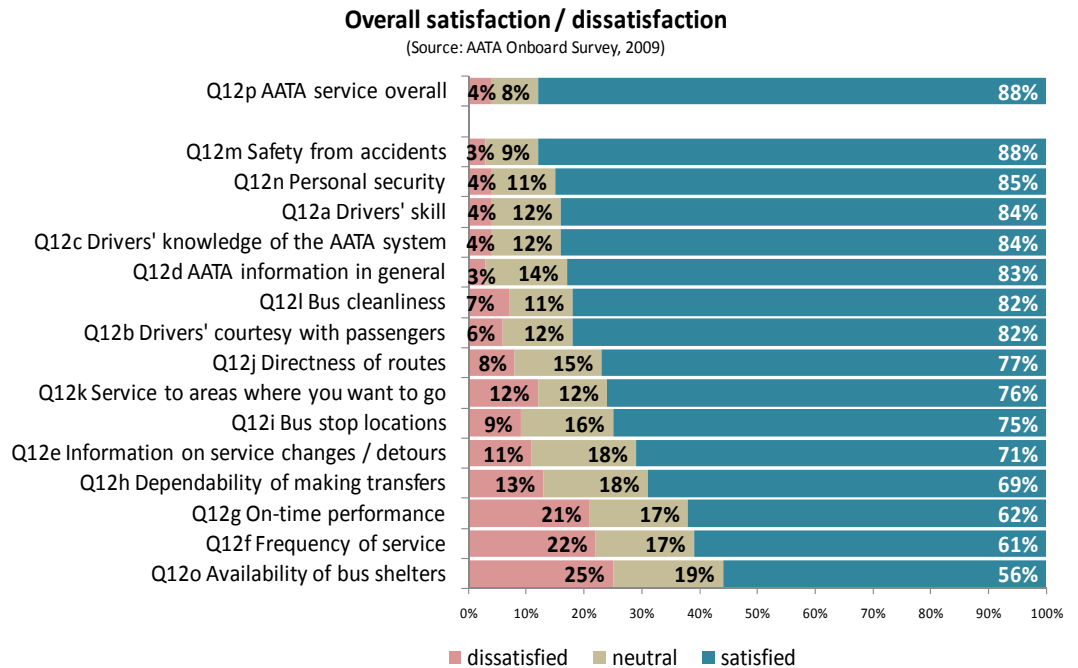


**Riders were asked to use the seven point rating scale to rate sixteen aspects of service. No less than 56% expressed satisfaction with every aspect of service.**

In the chart below, those who indicated they had no experience with the service were excluded. For example, 27% of riders were unable to answer the transfer question, presumably because they do not transfer regularly. When only those able to answer each question are included in the percentages, all satisfaction ratings stand at 56% positive or higher, even for the items at the bottom of the list because of their *relatively* poorer scores.

**Satisfaction with AATA service**

At the top of the satisfaction list are personal safety matters including safety from accidents (88%) and personal security (85%). Driver performance items are also very high on the satisfaction list, with their skill, knowledge of the system, and courtesy with passengers all enjoying ratings of "satisfied" by 82% or more of riders.



**There have been only minor changes in mean satisfaction ratings since 2006.**

Most of the satisfaction items asked in 2006 were asked again in 2009. The table shows the scores in each year, the change that occurred, and the rank order of the item ranked by the mean. Notice that the changes are minimal, with nine moving in a positive direction and five in a negative direction -- but all to only a minor degree. The rank order of the items changed very little also. The score for on-time performance changed most, going from 5.19 to 4.97 (change=-.22

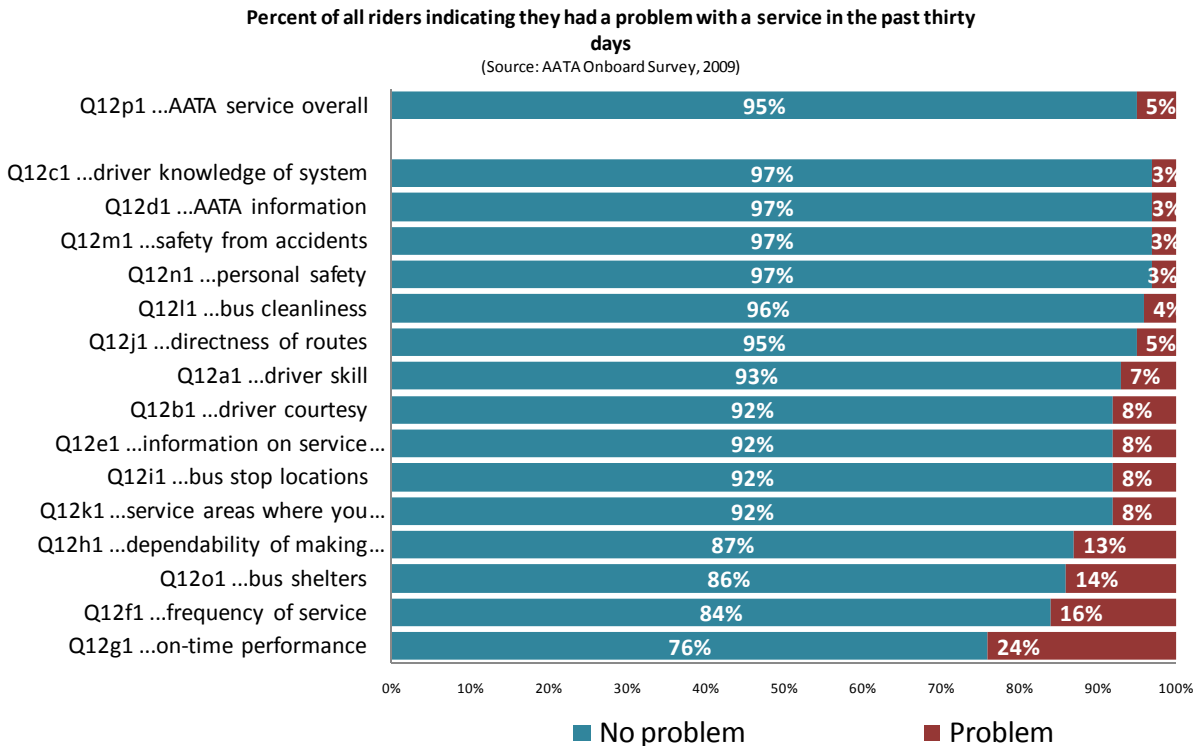
which, in percentage terms, was a change of -5% in the "satisfied" range). Internal AATA records can verify whether this reflects a real system performance change or is only customer perception.

On the positive side, scores improved for several aspects of operator performance, including safety from accidents, drivers' knowledge of the system, drivers' skill, and their courtesy with passengers.

<b>Customer satisfaction, 2006 and 2009</b>					
	Mean on scale of 1 - 7			Rank order	
	2009	2006	Change	2009	2006
All riders (excluding "don't know")	6.17	6.02	0.15		
Q12m Safety from accidents	6.17	6.02	0.15	1	1
Q12c Drivers' knowledge of the AATA system	6.07	6.00	0.07	2	2
Q12n Personal security	6.02	5.92	0.10	3	3
Q12a Drivers' skill	5.96	5.83	0.13	4	5
Q12d AATA information in general	5.91	5.82	0.09	5	6
Q12p AATA service overall	5.85	5.84	0.01	6	4
Q12b Drivers' courtesy with passengers	5.84	5.73	0.11	7	8
Q12l Bus cleanliness	5.77	5.74	0.03	8	7
Q12i Bus stop locations	5.56	5.57	-0.01	9	9
Q12e Information on service changes / detours	5.48	5.54	-0.06	10	10
Q12h Dependability on making transfers	5.35	5.51	-0.16	11	11
Q12f Frequency of service	4.98	5.05	-0.07	13	13
Q12g On-time performance	4.97	5.19	-0.22	12	12
Q12o Availability of bus shelters	4.77	4.74	0.03	14	14
Q12j Directness of routes	5.64				
Q12k Service to areas where you want to go	5.53				
10-11. Design of routes		5.49			

**Riders were asked if they had encountered service problems in the past thirty days. The problem reports parallel the satisfaction scores.**

On all but four of the 16 areas of service measured, the "no problem" rate exceeds 90%. Safety, driver performance, bus cleanliness, and information score well, for example. But on-time performance, service frequency, shelters, and transfer dependability all find more than 10% of riders reporting problems. Of these, on-time performance, with 24% reporting a problem, is the highest level.



**Riders were asked to rate the importance to them of various service improvements.**

Riders consider it important for AATA to provide later evening service weekdays and weekends, and more frequent service on the weekend. The desire for these services is related to the need for riders to work evenings and weekends. The need to work at these times is also related to the intent to purchase a vehicle and use AATA less often. Thus, these expanded services appear to be related to customer retention.

Increased weekday frequency is another element considered important to improve by many riders. Other aspects of service improvement are important to some, but to far fewer than the basic items already mentioned that affect all riders.

**Importance of service improvements**

