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The MBTA excuse generator you've been waiting for is here

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DAVID KAMERMAN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

By **Matt Rocheleau**

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Perhaps the worst part of enduring delays on the MBTA is the feeling of helplessness. Your train isn't moving fast enough — or at all — and there's nothing you can do about it.

The good news is there's now a new place you can turn to for relief in such situations. The bad news is it won't get you to where you want to be any faster.

It'll just make you smile.

Two local friends and loyal T riders have launched an online “excuse generator” that spits out made-up, funny excuses for MBTA delays, mimicking the [service alerts](#) that are played on overhead speakers at stations and posted by the T on its website and social media.

When there's a delay, “You'll hear some excuse like, ‘Signal problems at Downtown Crossing,’ but no one ever knows what that means,” said Todd Ching, a co-creator of the website www.mbtaexcuses.com. “So we thought it would be funny to be able to pull up a site where you can get some random, sarcastic excuses instead. We were trying to make people laugh.”

Ching, a Medford resident and IT manager for a non-profit in Cambridge, made the generator with his buddy Andrew Logan, who lives in Waltham and works as a computer engineer at a local tech firm.

Both have been T riders since 2001, when they were freshmen at Boston College.

Ching said it took them about a day to make the generator.

The site has a simple interface. There's a button on the page that says “Again!” Each time it is clicked, it spits out a new excuse in a box above.

Ching said that the generator randomly inserts information to fill out four different variables that make up each “excuse:” the location, the severity of the delays, the problem causing the delays, and some phrase to cap off the message that replaces the standard apology for the inconvenience.



Some examples:

- “#MBTA: #GreenLine: Severe residual delays due to an earlier Tom Brady suspension hearing at Reservoir. We are pretty sure this makes us a World Class City.”
- “#MBTA: #OrangeLine: Minor residual delays due to an earlier runaway train, but, like, that Soul Asylum song, not an actual runaway train at North Station. We hope you don’t have any personal space issues, ‘cause the next train gonna be packed.”
- “#MBTA: #RedLine: Major residual delays due to an earlier Debt Service Power Hour at Central. We will keep this up until morale improves.”
- “#MBTA: #OrangeLine: Moderate residual delays due to an earlier lack of passengers at Oak Grove. If you wish to dispute that, please send in a self-addressed stamped envelope with your rambling nonsense and allow us 6-8 weeks to forget all about any of this.”

They showed it to friends, who encouraged them to post the feature online.

They bought the domain a couple days ago and the site quickly caught people’s attention, generating buzz on [Twitter](#), [Reddit](#), and [local blogs](#). Within the first 24 hours, more than 10,000 unique visitors went to the Web page.

“We were completely blown away,” Ching said.

Overall the response has been positive, he said.

“I think for anyone who rides the T on a daily basis this is the sort of thing that hits close to home and they can relate to,” said Ching.

Asked about for comment about the new feature, T spokesman Joe Pesaturo said in an e-mail: “All of the MBTA’s efforts are focused on reducing its budget deficit, fixing its aging infrastructure, and providing customers with safe and reliable service.”

“To help meet these objectives, the MBTA welcomes constructive comments and suggestions through its Twitter account (almost 200,000 followers) and the customer feedback form on [mbta.com](#),” he added.

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