

Transportation Center Seminar.....

## "The Digitally Connected Commuter: Is Growing Reliance on Personal Electronic Devices Increasing the Demand for Public Transit?"

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**Thursday –Oct. 1, 2015**

**4:00 - 5:00 pm**

*(Refreshments at 3:30 pm)*

Location: Transportation Center  
Northwestern University  
Chambers Hall  
600 Foster, Evanston, **Lower level**

### **Abstract**

This presentation reviews newly-collected data about the growing dependence on personal electronic devices (PEDs) among commuter rail travelers in the Chicago region. Drawing upon DePaul's Technology in Travel project, it explores whether the growing importance of these devices to travelers is stimulating the demand for rail transit. The report compares observation of 4,700 passengers at randomly chosen points on 45 Metra trains in early 2015 with more than 14,000 observations between 2010 and 2014. The results show that more than three times as many riders are engaged in electronic tasks that are illegal while driving—such as reading emails on phones—than five years ago. Schwieterman postulates that the value of travel time made possible by PEDs helps explain some of the recent ridership increases in the wake of significant fare increases

**Bio:** **Joseph P. Schwieterman**, PhD, a professor in the School of Public Service at DePaul University and director of the school's Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development, is a noted authority on transportation, and a long-standing contributor to the Transportation Research Board. He holds an M.S. in Transportation from Northwestern University and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Schwieterman spent eight years working in yield management for United Airlines and is president of the Chicago chapter of the Transportation Research Forum.