



Re-elaborate Design, Display Technology

*Light rail's large technical system,
between social requests and user experience*

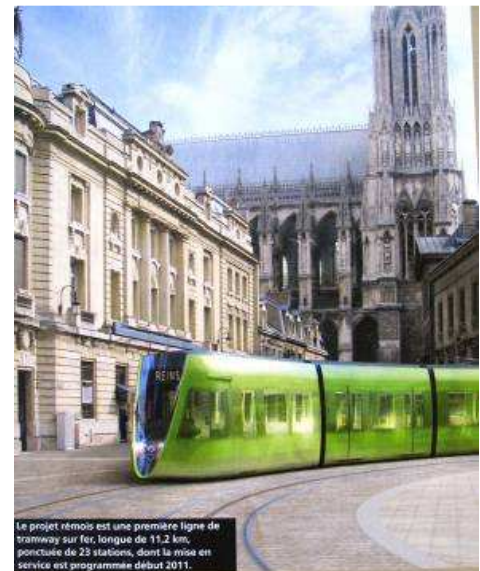
The light rail renaissance emerges as an attractive crossover case study, involving large-scale urban policy, mobility management, expertocracy and wisdom of the many, and social demand for efficient mass transport. The tram has re-entered the urban scene, and its rebirth is a composite and complex phenomenon, which summarises in itself urban needs and inertias, city revitalization and social demands.

The main thesis here advanced is that its success was due both to new social and political attitudes and to a deep redesign of its large technical system.

The “old” tram technology has been re-envisioned, re-branded and re-drawn in order to meet the new urban desires and requests.

The classical tram was baptized “light rail transit”, the streetcars assumed a new and “stylish” design. Tram technology, which until the 1970s was seen in the social imagination as a poor transport mode, often associated with low income commuters (or even with a Soviet Union urban transport style), re-positioned itself as an attractive, well-designed, secure transport means.

Customer satisfaction has become part of a wider strategy by transport companies and industries, with a large focus on design also in order to build up a social pride for trams. In this respect, the light rail running in the city became urban icon, or mobility technology on display, but also - in same respect - a kind of technology fascination or technology fetishism.



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As a researcher I have spent the last ten years investigating mobility history, the impact of political sciences on urban areas and the social outcome of technology. In 1998, after my M.A. (*cum laude* and special mention) in Political Sciences at the Turin University, I was awarded my Ph.D. in Urban Planning History at the Turin Polytechnic.

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