

Summary:

Mobile applications on the way

What do the travellers' want?

TØI Report 1374/2014

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Oslo 2014, 31 pages Norwegian language

To succeed with the development of new technologies and applications among travellers on public transportation in urban areas, a clear understanding of who the users are, and what they want, is necessary. A classification of travellers in four groups is suggested and it is used as the basis for development of three new concept ideas for travel-applications. A subsequent evaluation, based on focus groups, indicated that they may have the potential to succeed, although there are several areas for improvement. The concepts were largely complementary as they pointed to various areas in which mobile applications are likely to be important for travellers' in the future. The evaluation suggested that consumption of mobile communication technology has changed how most travellers' use their travel time.

New mobile communication technology represents important opportunities for providers of public transport in order to develop better travel experiences for the travellers. In particular, mobile applications for use on smartphones have given the everyday traveller a wide range of tools to assist, support and entertain him/her while traveling.

It is, however, difficult to know what travellers' themselves want, and most of the applications developed are never used. In order to develop useful travel-applications it is necessary to have a good understanding of travellers' needs and habits. In this report a classification of travellers in four groups is suggested, based on a survey of travellers in Oslo and Trondheim. Based on this segmentation model, four personas are elaborated, i.e. detailed person description for use in the development of customized applications and services.

With support of the persona-descriptions as well as an open innovation competition (Travelhack Oslo 2014), three new ideas for mobile application concept are outlined. This is: "Sidespor", "Travel Partner" and "GeoRuterWiki". An evaluation of the concepts, based on focus groups, indicates that they have a potential to make public transport more attractive either in terms of being entertaining, informative and very helpful.

The concepts were complementary in that they pointed to various areas in which mobile applications are likely to be important: 1) Use of real-time location data to coordinate travel and informal physical encounters with friends and acquaintances; 2) the use of open data to provide travellers' with information about events and local history along the way, and; 3) the use of real-time data to coordinate pooling and sharing of transport resources for travellers'.

Mobile applications on the way. What do the travellers want?

An important point that emerged from the focus groups was that everyone believed that their travel habits had changed due to increased use of mobile communication technologies. The majority believed that mobile technology had enriched the journey and made it less boring, supporting the key hypothesis in the project; that mobile ICT has changed on most people's travel experiences.

The consumption of digital content varied not only according to individual travel types, but also by the context. Several of our informants said they alternated between different "travel types" during a single trip. Variations in consumption and how different contexts affect the travel experience, is an area that should be the focus of more research in the future.

As regards ICT usage along, most travellers seemed to prefer to use their travel time for reflection and resting. Many describe public transport as a place to "charging the batteries" and new mobile applications may have a certain potential to meet this requirement even more.

The changed travel habits creates challenges and opportunities for transport providers in cities and towns. Many travellers' have expectations of getting updated information on travel times and both before and during the journey. There are also expectations of that the journey itself is equipped for consumption of different types of services, for example with access to a stable network connection with good capacity. Unless these basic needs are met, it may create disappointment and frustrations. However, the new situation also opens possibilities for new areas where the travellers' can get improved travel experiences, or more efficient transport services. The applications we have shown in this report represents demonstrations of these opportunities.