Wide variations in quality of apps

For the first time, we have researched which apps are currently available to public transport users and how highly they are rated

Robert Jack
Managing Editor

▶ Why can't using public transport be as easy as ordering pizza? Speaking at an event in Glasgow earlier this year (PT208), Louise Coward, the acting head of insight at passenger watchdog Transport Focus, revealed research which showed that young people want an experience that is as easy to navigate as the one provided by other retailers.

She explained: "Young people challenged us with things like, 'if I want to order a pizza or I want to go and see a film, all I need to do is get my phone out go into an app' … [In comparison to] all of these other industries and sectors that they are used to dealing with and interacting with, the bus industry and public transport more generally feels really outdated and antiquated to them."

Is that a fair assessment? For the first time, *Passenger Transport* has researched what apps are currently available to public transport users, young and old, and how they are rated.

We identified 85 passenger transport apps, fulfilling a range of functions across different transport modes. We looked at their five-star user ratings for the iOS (Apple) and Android formats on August 27 and then we combined them to create an overall user rating. This revealed wide variations in ratings. A third of the 85 apps (28) achieved a rating of four stars while 13% (11) achieved only one star.

It's interesting to note that bus and coach operators are better at apps than their rail based brethren. Only 16% of train operator apps achieved a combined iOS/Android rating of four stars or more compared to almost half (49%) of the bus and coach operator apps.

The four-star train operator apps were for three of FirstGroup's train operators (Hull Trains, GWR and SWR) and open access operator Grand Central. At the other end of the table, Chiltern Railways and c2c,

which have been consistent table-toppers in Transport Focus's National Rail Passenger Survey, have not transferred their passion for customer service to their respective apps.

First UK Bus was also among the 18 four-star rated bus operator apps, ahead of rivals Arriva (which has different apps for information and m-tickets) and Stagecoach. The 11 highest rated bus operator apps were all developed by Bournemouth-based Passenger, with Blackpool Transport, Warrington's Own Buses, Borders Buses and Nottingham City Transport all possessing apps with a 4.8-star rating - a result that exceeds the 4.7-star rating achieved by the popular Domino's Pizza app.

Britain's biggest bus operator, Stagecoach, is clearly struggling with a combined rating of just 2.5 stars for its bus app. Go-Ahead Group is also lagging behind - eight of the 10 lowest rated bus apps were for its UK bus subsidiary companies, with Brighton & Hove receiving the lowest rating (1.6 stars).

Globe-trotting journey planner apps Citymapper and Moovit each received ratings of 4.5 stars from their users. Trainline, which is currently valued at an incredible £2.2bn, also achieves a 4.5-star rating. In contrast, the four industry-funded Traveline apps achieve ratings of between 2.5 and 3.4 stars, and the National Rail Enquiries app achieves just 2.4 stars. When the open data powers of the Bus Services Act come in, will those people who make apps for a living sweep everyone else away?

It is clear that some of these 85 apps rival the best available, and make using public transport as easy as ordering a pizza. But others are not getting the most out of this technology and could risk losing their slice of the action. ∎

> ## "It is clear that some of these 85 apps rival the best available"

JOURNEY PLANNERS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆

MOOVIT
Combined rating: **4.5 (785k ratings)**
Operator: **Moovit**
Developer: **Moovit App Global LTD**

CITYMAPPER
Combined rating: **4.5 (78.6k ratings)**
Operator: **Citymapper**
Developer: **Citymapper Limited**

TRAINLINE
Combined rating: **4.5 (69.4k ratings)**
Operator: **Trainline**
Developer: **Trainline**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

TRAVELINE SW
Combined rating: **3.4 (218 ratings)**
Operator: **Traveline South West**
Developer: **SWPTI**

TRAVELINE SCOTLAND
Combined rating: **3.1 (1.6k ratings)**
Operator: **Traveline Scotland**
Developer: **Traveline Scotland Ltd**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆

TRAVELINE CYMRU
Combined rating: **2.8 (360 ratings)**
Operator: **Traveline Cymru**
Developer: **PTI Cymru Ltd**

TRAVELINE SOUTH & EAST
Combined rating: **2.5 (151 ratings)**
Operator: **Traveline South & East**
Developer: **PTI (South East) Ltd**

NATIONAL RAIL ENQUIRES
Combined rating: **2.4 (20.7k ratings)**
Operator: **National Rail Enquiries**
Developer: **National Rail**

SAMPLE REVIEW: trainline
▶ "Great app. Does exactly what it's supposed to. Quick and easy to buy tickets and they are cheaper than buying them from the station."

TRAIN OPERATORS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆

HULL TRAINS
Combined rating: **4.4 (602 ratings)**
Operator: **Hull Trains (FirstGroup)**
Developer: **First Hull Trains**

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY
Combined rating: **4.3 (30.4k ratings)**
Operator: **GWR (FirstGroup)**
Developer: **First Great Western**

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Combined rating: **4.3 (13.0k ratings)**
Operator: **SWR (FirstGroup/MTR)**
Developer: **First/MTR**

GRAND CENTRAL RAILWAY
Combined rating: **4.2 (33 ratings)**
Operator: **GWR (FirstGroup)**
Developer: **First Great Western**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS
Combined rating: **3.9 (2.3k ratings)**
Operator: **TPE (FirstGroup)**
Developer: **First TPE**

VIRGIN TRAINS: TICKETS & TIMES
Combined rating: **3.3 (2.3k ratings)**
Operator: **Virgin Trains**
Developer: **Virgin Trains**

TFW RAIL
Combined rating: **3.0 (163 ratings)**
Operator: **TfW Rail**
Developer: **TfW Rail**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆

EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY
Combined rating: **2.8 (211 ratings)**
Operator: **East Midlands (Abellio)**
Developer: **East Midlands Railway**

TRAIN TICKETS
Combined rating: **2.6 (1.8k ratings)**
Operator: **CrossCountry (Arriva)**
Developer: **CrossCountry Trains**

SOUTHEASTERN ON TRACK
Combined rating: **2.6 (743 ratings)**
Operator: **Southeastern (Govia)**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group**

MERSEYRAIL
Combined rating: **2.5 (200 ratings)**
Operator: **Merseyrail**
Developer: **Merseyrail**

GREATER ANGLIA
Combined rating: **2.4 (903 ratings)**
Operator: **Abellio East Anglia**
Developer: **Abellio East Anglia**

SOUTHERN ON TRACK
Combined rating: **2.4 (803 ratings)**
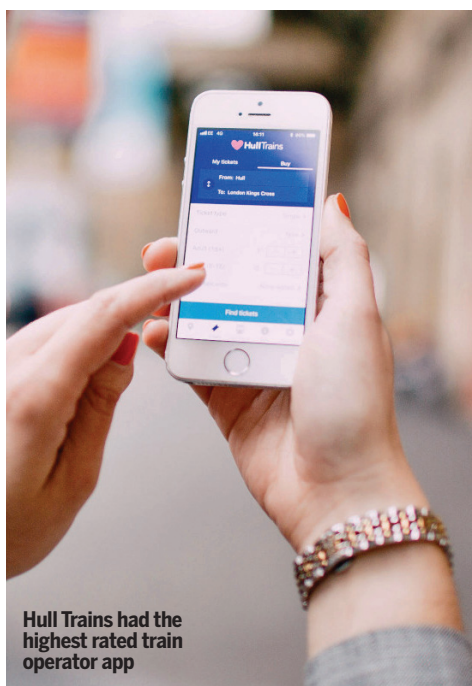Operator: **Govia Thameslink Railway**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group**

NORTHERN
Combined rating: **2.4 (1.3k ratings)**
Operator: **Northern (Arriva)**
Developer: **Northern**

SCOTRAIL
Combined rating: **2.3 (1.8k ratings)**
Operator: **ScotRail (Abellio)**
Developer: **ScotRail**

Hull Trains had the highest rated train operator app

WEST MIDLANDS RAILWAY
Combined rating: **2.1 (155 ratings)**
Operator: **WMT (Abellio)**
Developer: **West Midlands Trains**

THAMESLINK ON TRACK
Combined rating: **2.0 (485 ratings)**
Operator: **Govia Thameslink Railway**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group**

HEATHROW EXPRESS
Combined rating: **2.0 (884 ratings)**
Operator: **Heathrow Express**
Developer: **Heathrow Express**

ONE STAR ★☆☆☆☆

GATWICK EXPRESS
Combined rating: **1.9 (159 ratings)**
Operator: **Govia Thameslink Railway**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group**

CALEDONIAN SLEEPER
Combined rating: **1.8 (21 ratings)**
Operator: **Caledonian Sleeper**
Developer: **Soluis Group Limited**

STANSTED EXPRESS TICKETS
Combined rating: **1.7 (412 ratings)**
Operator: **Abellio East Anglia**
Developer: **Abellio East Anglia**

LONDON N'WESTERN RAILWAY
Combined rating: **1.7 (171 ratings)**
Operator: **WMT (Abellio)**
Developer: **West Midlands Trains**

LNER TRAVEL BUDDY
Combined rating: **1.6 (731 ratings)**
Operator: **LNER**
Developer: **LNER**

C2C LIVE
Combined rating: **1.5 (355 ratings)**
Operator: **c2c**
Developer: **Trenitalia c2c Limited**

CHILTERN RAILWAYS - TICKETS
Combined rating: **1.5 (745 ratings)**
Operator: **Chiltern Railways**
Developer: **Chiltern Railways**

BUS AND COACH OPERATORS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆

BPL TRANSPORT
Combined rating: **4.8 (2.4k ratings)**
Operator: **Blackpool Transport**
Developer: **Passenger**

TOUCH & GO
Combined rating: **4.8 (130 ratings)**
Operator: **Warrington's Own Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

BORDERS BUSES
Combined rating: **4.8 (944 ratings)**
Operator: **West Coast Motors**
Developer: **Passenger**

NCTX BUSES
Combined rating: **4.8 (6.2k ratings)**
Operator: **Nottingham City Transport**
Developer: **Passenger**

EY BUSES
Combined rating: **4.7 (1.7k ratings)**
Operator: **East Yorkshire**
Developer: **Passenger**

READING BUSES
Combined rating: **4.7 (3.3k ratings)**
Operator: **Reading Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

TRANSDEV GO
Combined rating: **4.7 (2.3k ratings)**
Operator: **Transdev Blazefield**
Developer: **Passenger**

KENNECTIONS
Combined rating: **4.7 (75 ratings)**
Operator: **Reading Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

CARDIFF BUS
Combined rating: **4.6 (4.0k ratings)**
Operator: **Cardiff Bus**
Developer: **Passenger**

YB MOVE
Combined rating: **4.6 (1.4k ratings)**
Operator: **Yellow Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

MCGILL'S BUSES
Combined rating: **4.5 (781 ratings)**
Operator: **McGill's Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

OXFORD TUBE MOBILE TICKET
Combined rating: **4.4 (524 ratings)**
Operator: **Oxford Tube**
Developer: **Corethree**

GREEN LINE 702
Combined rating: **4.4 (114 ratings)**
Operator: **Reading Buses**
Developer: **Passenger**

NATIONAL EXPRESS COACH
Combined rating: **4.2 (7.3k ratings)**
Operator: **National Express Coach**
Developer: **National Express Coach**

WHIPPET BUS M-TICKET
Combined rating: **4.2 (142 ratings)**
Operator: **Whippet Bus**
Developer: **Corethree**

TRANSPORT FOR EDINBURGH
Combined rating: **4.2 (11.4k ratings)**
Operator: **Transport for Edinburgh**
Developer: **Lothian Buses**

FIRST BUS
Combined rating: **4.1 (30.5k ratings)**
Operator: **First Bus**
Developer: **FirstGroup plc**

ARRIVA M-TICKET
Combined rating: **4.0 (12.4k ratings)**
Operator: **Arriva**
Developer: **Corethree**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

UNO BUS
Combined rating: **3.7 (413 ratings)**
Operator: **Uno Bus**
Developer: **Corethree**

ARRIVA UK BUS APP
Combined rating: **3.7 (11.4k ratings)**
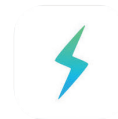Operator: **Arriva**
Developer: **HaCon Ingenieurges**

NX BUS mTICKET
Combined rating: **3.6 (632 ratings)**
Operator: **National Express WM**
Developer: **National Express**

TfE M-TICKETS
Combined rating: **3.4 (6.3k ratings)**
Operator: **Transport for Edinburgh**
Developer: **Corethree**

HUGO
Combined rating: **3.2 (223 ratings)**
Operator: **trentbarton**
Developer: **trentbarton**

XPLORE DUNDEE mTICKET
Combined rating: **3.2 (30 ratings)**
Operator: **National Express Dundee**
Developer: **Masabi**

GO NORTH WEST
Combined rating: **3.1 (36 ratings)**
Operator: **Go North West**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

PRESTON BUS M-TICKETS
Combined rating: **3.0 (33 ratings)**
Operator: **Preston Bus**
Developer: **Masabi**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆

STAGECOACH BUS
Combined rating: **2.5 (8.0k ratings)**
Operator: **Stagecoach Bus**
Developer: **Stagecoach Group plc**

CLICKIT2RIDE
Combined rating: **2.5 (269 ratings)**
Operator: **Go South Coast**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

NATIONAL EXPRESS BUS
Combined rating: **2.4 (749 ratings)**
Operator: **National Express WM**
Developer: **National Express**

METROBUS
Combined rating: **2.2 (638 ratings)**
Operator: **Metrobus**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

CAROUSEL BUSES
Combined rating: **2.1 (29 ratings)**
Operator: **Carousel Buses**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

GO NORTH EAST
Combined rating: **2.1 (537 ratings)**
Operator: **Go North East**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

PLYMOUTH CITYBUS
Combined rating: **2.0 (228 ratings)**
Operator: **Plymouth CityBus**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

ONE STAR ★☆☆☆☆

OXFORD BUS
Combined rating: **1.9 (357 ratings)**
Operator: **Oxford Bus**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

EAST ANGLIA BUSES
Combined rating: **1.8 (108 ratings)**
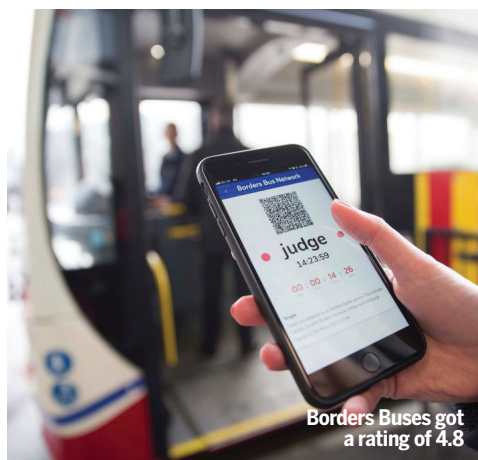Operator: **East Anglia Buses**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

DIAMOND BUS
Combined rating: **1.7 (95 ratings)**
Operator: **Diamond Bus**
Developer: **Rise Digital Media**

BRIGHTON & HOVE: BUSES
Combined rating: **1.6 (551 ratings)**
Operator: **Brighton & Hove Buses**
Developer: **Go-Ahead Group plc**

Borders Buses got a rating of 4.8

LRT/METRO

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆

ROBIN HOOD NETWORK
Combined rating: **4.4 (343 ratings)**
Operator: **Nottingham City Council**
Developer: **Passenger**

WEST MIDLANDS METRO
Combined rating: **4.1 (275 ratings)**
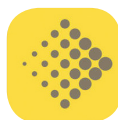Operator: **West Midlands Metro**
Developer: **West Midlands Metro**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

GET ME THERE
Combined rating: **3.6 (5.7k ratings)**
Operator: **TfGM Metrolink**
Developer: **Corethree**

MANCHESTER METROLINK
Combined rating: **3.2 (731 ratings)**
Operator: **Manchester Metrolink**
Developer: **TfGM**

TYNE AND WEAR METRO APP
Combined rating: **3.0 (80 ratings)**
Operator: **Tyne & Wear Metro**
Developer: **HaCon Ingenieurges**

NEW MOBILITY

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆

WHIM - ALL YOUR JOURNEYS
Combined rating: **4.1 (422 ratings)**
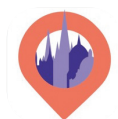Operator: **MaaS Global**
Developer: **MaaS Global**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

ARRIVACLICK
Combined rating: **3.8 (143 ratings)**
Operator: **Arriva**
Developer: **Via Transportation Inc.**

PICKMEUP OBC
Combined rating: **3.2 (85 ratings)**
Operator: **Oxford Bus (Go-Ahead)**
Developer: **Via Transportation Inc.**

PTES/TRANSLINK

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

TRANSLINK MLINK
Combined rating: **3.7 (2.2k ratings)**
Operator: **Translink**
Developer: **Translink**

MY TFGM
Combined rating: **3.2 (101 ratings)**
Operator: **TfGM**
Developer: **TfGM**

NETWORK WEST MIDLANDS
Combined rating: **3.2 (1.0k ratings)**
Operator: **West Midlands Metro**
Developer: **West Midlands CA**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆

MERSEYTRAVEL
Combined rating: **2.5 (193 ratings)**
Operator: **Merseytravel**
Developer: **Mentz GmbH**

TRANSLINK NI
Combined rating: **2.4 (823 ratings)**
Operator: **Translink**
Developer: **Translink**

OTHER

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆

ZIPTRIP
Combined rating: **3.7 (401 ratings)**
Operator: **Ticketer**
Developer: **Ticketer**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆

INTALINK HERTS BUS M-TICKETS
Combined rating: **2.2 (280 ratings)**
Operator: **Intalink**
Developer: **Via Transportation Inc.**

SAMPLE REVIEW: ArrivaClick
▶ "Sometimes there are no pick-ups available but on the whole this app is great"