Major improvement in public transport apps

In 2019 we researched which apps were available for public transport users and how highly they were rated - three years later things have got better

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▶ How many apps do you have on your phone? I have 124 on mine, which probably makes me an app aficionado. They help me to manage my life, including my use of public transport. I find the Transport for Edinburgh app invaluable for journey planning and real-time information.

A good app cements the role of a service provider in your life and builds loyalty. A bad one does the opposite - can that really be forgiven in this digital age?

Back in September 2019 we researched the apps available for public transport and how they were rated by their users (PT216). Many of the 85 apps we found rivalled the best known, but many others were poor. Almost a third of the apps (28) achieved a rating of four out of five stars but a larger proportion (35) received a rating of just one or two stars. There was clearly work to be done.

Three years on and we have repeated this exercise. This time we identified 113 apps (including four from outside the UK for comparison), fulfilling a range of functions across different transport modes. We looked at their user rating for the iOS (Apple) and Android formats on September 14 and then we combined them to create an overall aggregate rating.

The good news is that there has been a significant improvement.

More than two-thirds (78) of the 113 apps looked at this year received a four-star rating while only around one in six (19) received ratings of only one or two stars.

The graph below illustrates this improvement. It shows an enormous increase in the number of four-star apps and a decline in three, two and one-star ratings.

Much of this improvement can be attributed to the UK bus and coach sector (see page 13) where an impressive 92% of apps have a four-star rating compared to 60% in 2019. Go-Ahead Group's relationship with website and

"How are you supposed to use an app for a public service that just doesn't work?"

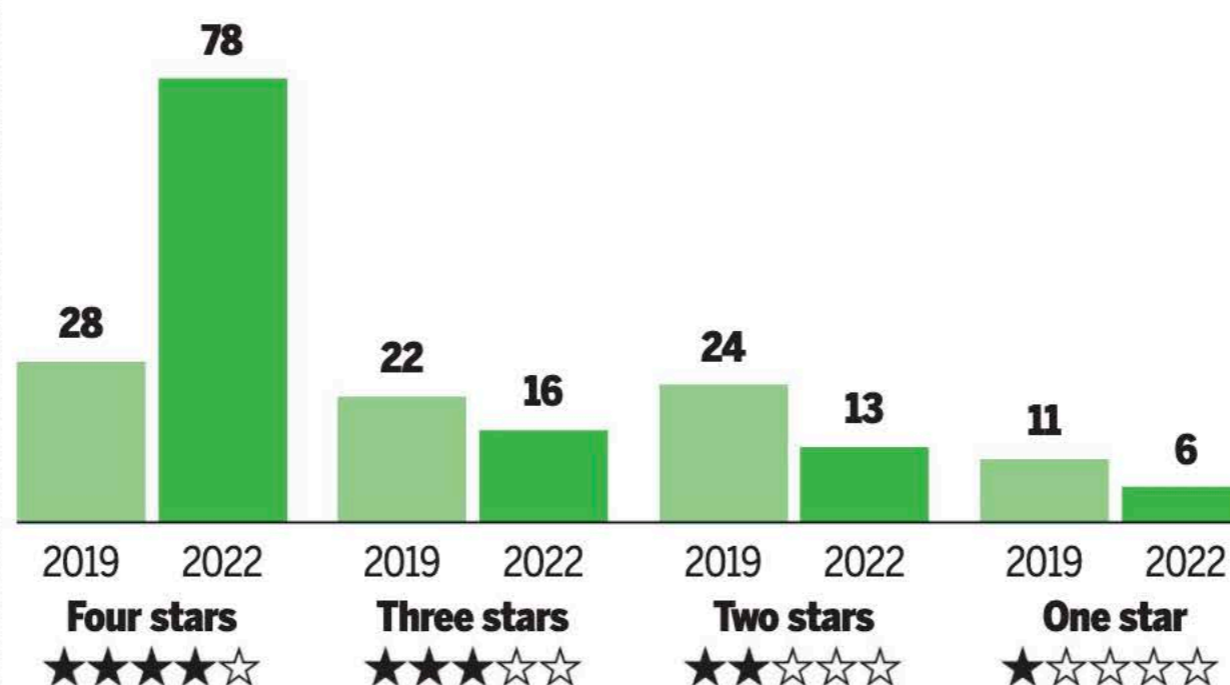app developer Passenger is largely responsible for this increase. With its devolved structure, Go-Ahead's operating companies each have their own app, but in 2019 they were poorly rated - highly rated operations like Oxford Bus Company and Brighton & Hove had apps with a one-star rating. Last year Bournemouth-based Passenger helped Go-Ahead launch 17 apps in the space of just five weeks (PT245) and they all now have four-star ratings. The lesson is simple - if your app isn't performing, find someone who can help you turn it around!

Arriva UK Bus should heed this lesson - it's bottom of the bus and coach class with a 1.4-star rating for its app. One of the many scathing reviews for this app states: "I rarely give negative reviews but this app is just unacceptable. How are you supposed to use an app for a public service that just doesn't work?"

In response, Arriva says: "We are looking at the known issues and will rectify them as soon as possible."

The other major bus groups have apps that perform much better. Stagecoach, Britain's biggest bus and coach operator, was struggling in 2019 with a 2.5-star rating but this has now leapt to 4.3 stars. First Bus has also improved, from 4.1 stars to 4.6.

There has also been a significant improvement among train operating companies, although the average rating of 3.8 stars lags behind bus and coach (4.4).

Open access operators Grand Central Railway and Lumo have the highest ratings (see page 12), followed by intercity operators LNER and Avanti West Coast.

At the other end of the table, Go-Ahead needs to perform the kind of transformation it did with its bus apps. The bottom three are all components of the group's giant Govia Thameslink Railway operation.

It's worth noting that the average 3.8-star rating for UK train operating companies compares well to some of Europe's major railway companies. Deutsche Bahn's DB Navigator receives 3.6 stars and Trenitalia gets 2.8, although SNCF Connect achieves an impressive 4.5.

Will Great British Railways want to launch its own network-wide app? And could it rival Trainline, the highly rated and highly valued online rail retail platform? Transport for London's 4.6-star app provides an example of a large publicly-owned body getting it right.

Customers will only increase as this technology develops. The best public transport apps must keep striving to get better, and those that are lagging behind must catch up fast. ◼

THE RATINGS: PAGES 12-13

RATINGS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT APPS IN 2019 AND 2022

Analysis by *Passenger Transport*

	Four stars ★★★★☆		Three stars ★★★☆☆		Two stars ★★☆☆☆		One star ★☆☆☆☆	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
	28	78	22	16	24	13	11	6

TRAIN OPERATORS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
Grand Central Railway
Rating: 4.8 stars (2.4k ratings)
Developer: **Grand Central**

LumoGo
Rating: 4.7 (1.1k ratings)
Developer: **Lumo**

LNER | Train Times & Tickets
Rating: 4.7 (8.0k ratings)
Developer: **LNER**

Avanti West Coast
Rating: 4.7 (17.3k ratings)
Developer: **First Trenitalia West Coast**

Hull Trains
Rating: 4.6 (1.2k ratings)
Developer: **First Hull Trains**

Eurostar
Rating: 4.6 (36.7k ratings)
Developer: **Eurostar International Ltd**

Chiltern Railways - Tickets
Rating: 4.6 (7.1k ratings)
Developer: **Chiltern Railways**

c2c Live
Rating: 4.5 (4.0k ratings)
Developer: **Trenitalia c2c Limited**

TransPennine Express
Rating: 4.5 (7.1k ratings)
Developer: **TransPennine Express**

EMR - East Midlands Railway
Rating: 4.5 (462 ratings)
Developer: **East Midlands Railway**

South Western Railway
Rating: 4.5 (37.5k ratings)
Developer: **First MTR South Western**

Great Western Railway
Rating: 4.5 (61.9k ratings)
Developer: **First Great Western**

TrC | TfW
Rating: 4.4 (2.6k ratings)
Developer: **Transport for Wales**

Northern train tickets & times
Rating: 4.3 (4.7k ratings)
Developer: **Northern Railway**

ScotRail Trains Times & Tickets
Rating: 4.4 (3.9k ratings)
Developer: **ScotRail**

West Midlands Railway
Rating: 4.1 (449 ratings)
Developer: **West Midlands Trains Ltd**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
Heathrow Express
Rating: 3.9 stars (366 ratings)
Developer: **Heathrow Express**

Greater Anglia Tickets and Times
Rating: 3.5 (1.3k ratings)
Developer: **Greater Anglia**

Southeastern On Track
Rating: 3.1 (1.4k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
Merseyrail
Rating: 2.4 stars (260 ratings)
Developer: **Merseyrail**

ONE STAR ★☆☆☆☆
Caledonian Sleeper
Rating: 1.8 stars (22 ratings)
Developer: **Soluis Group Limited**

Gatwick Express
Rating: 1.7 (238 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Thameslink On Track
Rating: 1.5 (902 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Southern On Track
Rating: 1.4 (1.3k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

INTERNATIONAL

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
SNCF Connect: Trains & trips
Rating: 4.5 stars (372.5k ratings)
Developer: **SNCF Connect**

Bonjour RATP
Rating: 4.3 (93.7k ratings)
Developer: **Bonjour RATP**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
DB Navigator
Rating: 3.6 stars (180.2k ratings)
Developer: **Deutsche Bahn**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
Trenitalia
Rating: 2.8 stars (38.5k ratings)
Developer: **Trenitalia S. p. A.**

JOURNEY PLANNERS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
Citymapper
Rating: 4.7 stars (296.1k ratings)
Developer: **Citymapper Limited**

Trainline: Book train tickets
Rating: 4.7 (281.6 ratings)
Developer: **thetrainline**

TrainPal
Rating: 4.6 (21.0k ratings)
Developer: **Ctrip.com international**

Omio: Book train & bus tickets
Rating: 4.6 (165.8k ratings)
Developer: **GoEuro Corp**

Redspottedhanky
Rating: 4.6 (483 ratings)
Developer: **Worldline IT Services UK**

TrainSplit
Rating: 4.4 (1.7k ratings)
Developer: **TrainSplit.com Ltd**

ZetTrans
Rating: 4.3 (50 ratings)
Developer: **NC Communication**

TRANSPORT AUTHORITIES

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
TfL Go: Live Tube, Bus & Rail
Rating: 4.6 stars (19.7k ratings)
Developer: **Transport for London**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
Translink mLink
Rating: 3.4 stars (6.4k ratings)
Developer: **Corethree**

Merseytravel
Rating: 3.0 stars (344 ratings)
Developer: **Mentz GmbH**

LIGHT RAIL OPERATORS

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
get me there - TfGM Metrolink
Rating: 3.7 stars (12.1k ratings)
Developer: **TfGM**

West Midlands Metro
Rating: 3.6 (498 ratings)
Developer: **West Midlands Metro**

Manchester Metrolink
Rating: 3.0 stars (1.0k ratings)
Developer: **TfGM**

Virgin Trains Ticketing
Rating: 4.2 (28 ratings)
Developer: **Virgin Red Ltd**

Moovit
Rating: 4.1 (1.2m ratings)
Developer: **Moovit App Global LTD**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
Traveline SW Journey Planner
Rating: 3.1 stars (243 ratings)
Developer: **SWPTI**

Traveline Scotland
Rating: 3.1 (1.8k ratings)
Developer: **Traveline Scotland Ltd**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
Traveline Cymru
Rating: 2.7 stars (402 ratings)
Developer: **PTI Cymru Ltd**

National Rail Enquires
Rating: 2.6 (23.0k ratings)
Developer: **National Rail**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
Translink NI
Rating: Rating: 2.3 (1.2 ratings)
Developer: **Translink**

Pop
Rating: 2.1 stars (55k ratings)
Developer: **Nexus (Tyne and Wear PTE)**

ONE STAR ★☆☆☆☆
TfWM - Powered by Swift
Rating: 1.7 stars (277 ratings)
Developer: **West Midlands Combined Authority**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
NETGO!
Rating: 2.9 (200 ratings)
Developer: **Tramlink Nottingham Ltd**

Tyne and Wear Metro App
Rating: 2.7 stars (175 ratings)
Developer: **HaCon Ingernieurges**

BUS AND COACH OPERATORS

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
Unilink Bus
Rating: 4.8 stars (298 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Unibuses
Rating: 4.8 (610 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

BPL Transport
Rating: 4.8 (5.0k ratings)
Developer: **Blackpool Transport Services Limited**

NCTX Buses
Rating: 4.8 (10.7k ratings)
Developer: **Nottingham City Transport**

Southern Vectis
Rating: 4.8 (696 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

FlixBus & FlixTrain
Rating: 4.8 (7.6k ratings)
Developer: **FlixMobility GmbH**

Swindon Bus
Rating: 4.8 (268 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Borders Buses
Rating: 4.8 (1.8k ratings)
Developer: **West Coast Motors**

morebus
Rating: 4.8 (1.1k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

TV Buses
Rating: 4.8 (212 ratings)
Developer: **Thames Valley Buses**

Touch & Go Warrington
Rating: 4.8 (541 ratings)
Developer: **Warrington Borough Transport Limited**

Konectbus
Rating: 4.7 (200 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

bluestarbuses
Rating: 4.7 (155 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

East Yorkshire Buses
Rating: 4.7 (1.0k ratings)
Developer: **East Yorkshire Motor Services Limited**

Metrobus
Rating: 4.7 (3.3k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Oxford Bus and Thames Travel
Rating: 4.7 (846 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Transdev Go
Rating: 4.7 (6.0k ratings)
Developer: **Transdev Blazefield Ltd**

Xplore Dundee
Rating: 4.7 (773 ratings)
Developer: **Tayside Public Transport Company Ltd**

Go Cornwall Bus
Rating: 4.7 (390 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Reading Buses
Rating: 4.7 (6.7k ratings)
Developer: **Reading Buses**

McGill's Buses
Rating: 4.7 (1.9k ratings)
Developer: **McGill's Buses**

Newbury & District
Rating: 4.7 (191 ratings)
Developer: **Reading Buses**

Edinburgh Bus Tours
Rating: 4.6 (166 ratings)
Developer: **Lothian Buses plc**

Big Bus Tours
Rating: 4.6 (5.1k ratings)
Developer: **Big Bus Tours Ltd**

Salisbury Reds
Rating: 4.6 (295 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Cardiff Bus
Rating: 4.6 (6.7k ratings)
Developer: **Cardiff City Transport**

First Bus
Rating: 4.6 (101.8k ratings)
Developer: **FirstGroup plc**

Carousel: High Wycombe Buses
Rating: 4.6 (180 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

PlymouthBus
Rating: 4.6 (847 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Green Line 702
Rating: 4.6 (294 ratings)
Developer: **Reading Buses**

Go North East
Rating: 4.6 (3.3k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Hedingham and Chambers
Rating: 4.5 (176 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Go North West
Rating: 4.5 (610 ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Brighton & Hove Buses
Rating: 4.5 (3.7k ratings)
Developer: **The Go-Ahead Group plc**

Uno Buses
Rating: 4.5 (1.4k ratings)
Developer: **Rise Digital Media Ltd**

Oxford Tube: Plan>Track>Buy
Rating: 4.4 (1.1k ratings)
Developer: **Stagecoach Group plc**

Falcon Bus
Rating: 4.3 (334 ratings)
Developer: **Rise Digital Media Ltd**

Stagecoach Bus: Plan>Track>Buy
Rating: 4.3 (79.9k ratings)
Developer: **Stagecoach Group plc**

Diamond Bus
Rating: 4.3 (3.7k ratings)
Developer: **Rise Digital Media Ltd**

Newport Bus
Rating: 4.3 (154 ratings)
Developer: **Newport Transport Ltd**

Preston Bus m-tickets
Rating: 4.2 (111 ratings)
Developer: **Rise Digital Media Ltd**

Transport for Edinburgh
Rating: 4.2 (17.6k ratings)
Developer: **Lothian Buses plc**

Ipswich Buses
Rating: 4.2 (203 ratings)
Developer: **Ipswich Buses Limited**

National Express Coach
Rating: 4.1 (11.8k ratings)
Developer: **National Express Ltd**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
**TfE M-Tickets
(Transport for Edinburgh)**
Rating: 3.4 stars (9.8k ratings)
Developer: **Corethree Ltd**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
NX Bus mTicket
Rating: 2.6 stars (2.2k ratings)
Developer: **National Express**

Hugo (trentbarton)
Rating: 2.3 (672 ratings)
Developer: **trentbarton**

ONE STAR ★☆☆☆☆
Arriva UK Bus
Rating: 1.4 stars (9.3k ratings)
Developer: **Arriva**

DRT

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
Worcestershire On Demand
Rating: 4.7 stars (32 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

HertsLynx
Rating: 4.3 (17 ratings)
Developer: **Padam Mobility**

WM On Demand
Rating: 4.3 (142 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
Go2 Sevenoaks
Rating: 3.7 stars (33 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

ArrivaClick
Rating: 3.3 (246 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

Tees Flex
Rating: 3.0 stars (71 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
JustGo North Lincs
Rating: 2.9 stars (32 ratings)
Developer: **Liftango**

fflecsi
Rating: 2.7 (84 ratings)
Developer: **Via Transportation, Inc.**

OTHER

FOUR STARS ★★★★☆
Seatfrog
Rating: 4.7 stars (14.9k ratings)
Developer: **Seatfrog Pty Ltd**

Railcard
Rating: 4.7 (196.9k ratings)
Developer: **National Rail**

myTrip by Passenger
Rating: 4.4 (478 ratings)
Developer: **Passenger**

THREE STARS ★★★☆☆
Go-Hi
Rating: 3.4 stars (17 ratings)
Developer: **FOD Mobility Group**

TWO STARS ★★☆☆☆
Intalink Herts Bus M-Tickets
Rating: 2.8 stars (449 ratings)
Developer: **Corethree**