



Traveline User Experience Research
Qualitative Debrief
Prepared for Transport Focus

March 2020
Project number: 38310

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Background and Methodology

Online travel-planning tools are a vital part of the passenger journey

Traveline is looking to enhance its offering and win new customers

Traveline is a collaboration between transport companies, local authorities and passenger groups to provide an integrated, multi-modal route planning tool. It includes information on bus, rail, coach and ferry.

Transport Focus is working with Traveline to better understand users, and potential users, to ensure that current and future needs are met.

Feedback on Traveline can also serve as a case study into how passengers use journey planning tools

This research can help Transport Focus understand how passengers use, obtain and process travel information from all sources, allowing them to advocate for higher standards across the industry.

51% Smartphone users in the USA who use an app for travel purposes, 71% of whom do so at least weekly

Think With Google: How people use their phones for travel (2016)



Sample Summary and Methodology

6 Focus groups

Location	Age	Technology Usage	Distance
Manchester	Older	Lower Tech	Infrequent Journey Planner
	Middle Aged	Lower Tech	Infrequent Journey Planner
	Younger	Higher Tech	Frequent Journey Planner
Preston	Older	Higher Tech	Frequent Journey Planner
	Middle Aged	Higher Tech	Infrequent Journey Planner
	Younger	Lower Tech	Frequent Journey Planner

After the focus groups, the most engaged respondents were invited to give their hands-on feedback about Traveline via an online post-task

12 In depth interviews

Location	Segment	Age	Distance
Brighton	Traveline User	Younger	Longer Distance
	User of other service	Middle Aged	Longer Distance
	Infrequent/Non-planner	Younger	Shorter Distance
	Traveline User	Middle Aged	Shorter Distance
Exeter	Infrequent/Non-planner	Older	Longer Distance
	User of other service	Younger	Shorter Distance
	Traveline User	Younger	Longer Distance
	Traveline User	Middle Aged	Shorter Distance
Preston	User of other service	Younger	Longer Distance
	Infrequent/Non-planner	Older	Shorter Distance
	Traveline User	Middle Aged	Longer Distance
	Traveline User	Older	Shorter Distance

Following the qualitative research, we will undertake an online survey of n=2,000 respondents across a nationally representative sample.



Journey Planning Context

Users thought about journey planning in four different ways

The ideal journey planning tool needs to cater for all of these



Journey Strategy:

- Should I even travel at all?
- What mode should I use?
- What's the best way to do this journey?

Journey strategy emerged as the pre-planning of a journey, sometimes up to weeks in advance but occasionally the night before. Information needs to answer **broad questions** around the feasibility and execution of the journey, and what potential pitfalls to expect.



Journey Optimising:

- Could I do this journey quicker?
- How reliable is my current route?
- Could I save money on this journey?

Transport users may wish to optimise an existing, **routine and familiar journey**. As with journey strategy, this can be done somewhat **hypothetically**, motivated by the urge to save money and time.



Journey Information

- *Hypothetically*, how would I plan this journey?
- What's the extent of the transport network?

This form of journey planning is more **abstract**. Users may wish to understand '**the lie of the land**' in a new area, understand what viable journeys are available to them and obtain a general sense of the reliability of the transport network.



Journey Checking

- Has anything gone wrong?

Immediate, timely, concise information is called for here. Information needs to be in the form of alerts for it to be of any use at all. Alerts about traffic jams, train cancellations and delays are all vital to the successful execution of a journey.

Each different form of planning came with its own hierarchy of information needs

Planning Type:



Journey Strategy:

- What mode should I use?
- Should I even travel at all?
- What's the best way to do this journey?



Journey Optimising:

- Could I do this journey quicker?
- How reliable is my current route?
- Could I save money on this journey?



Journey Information

- *Hypothetically*, how would I plan this journey?
- What's the extent of the transport network?



Journey Checking

- Has anything gone wrong?
- What is the schedule?
- What platform do I need?

Core information Need:

Service frequency / timetabling

Locations of stations / stops

Degree of interchanging between modes

When you say plan, for me I just book the train tickets in advance and that is just a scheduled time thing, from then on there is nothing else to be planned...I always look for the cheapest one, I don't mind having to take a longer train as long as it is cheaper.

Brighton, Younger (Depth Interview)

Journey speed

Fare information

Service options / alternatives

Well all my journeys are for leisure now. I tend to look for the fastest trains because the ones up to London are quite slow.

Exeter, Older

Locations and extent of stations / stops

Information about disruption

Information about road conditions

Information about crowding

The only things I'm looking for are, are the trains on time and what platform, over and over every morning.

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

Attitudes to journey planning varied according to the complexity and familiarity of the journey

Distance adds a third dimension here – a longer journey raises the importance of cost saving and is usually a higher-stakes trip.

For these very simple journeys, the need for information is minimal. Even for more rural respondents, the prevailing attitude was just to 'turn up and go' – prior experience often overrides the need to check for new information.

Here, passengers need to check for potential, prospective routes as well as their overall feasibility with respect to cost, time and service reliability.

Less Complex
Familiar Journey

More Complex
Familiar Journey

For these journeys, in-the-moment information is crucial – the more abstract 'strategising' (considering whether there is a better way to do this journey) is back-of-mind.

Less Complex
Unfamiliar Journey

More Complex
Unfamiliar Journey

At the most complex and unfamiliar level, most took a maximalist approach – the more information they can glean, the better. These journeys tended to be the least common, however.

Attitudes to journey planning varied according to the complexity and familiarity of the journey

I get the Met. Again, it's just, you know how long it's going to take, it's not traffic dependent, not stopping every 100 yards or whatever. The Met just does the job.

Manchester, Younger

If I were planning a leisure journey on the train, I'd absolutely plan on a split ticketing app or something like that

Preston, Middle Aged

Less Complex
Familiar Journey

More Complex
Familiar Journey

Less Complex
Unfamiliar Journey

More Complex
Unfamiliar Journey

I check Trainline for trains that will get me there on time. But again, with Northwest, it's quite hard because they can get cancelled; so I find myself booking one even earlier. Like three hours early.

Preston, Younger

Well I have quarterly meetings in London, but I try not to venture out too far and especially not to London if I can avoid it.

Manchester, Middle Aged

Technology is ubiquitous across all age groups

Touch-based devices have overtaken laptops or desktop computers

This became particularly clear during the depth interviews. Many respondents were un-used to the track-pad as an interface, attempted to touch the screen, and explicitly argued that a tablet or phone would be preferable. For younger respondents, the smartphone is the default device.

Most concerns around technology centred on privacy

Many felt 'saturated' with different apps and tools; that somewhere in the wide range of programmes they use, 'somebody' is collecting a great deal of data about them.

However, journey planning tools did not fall under this worry – most expected journey planners to record their location and saw this as a trade-off very much in their favour.



People use a portfolio of sources – no one source meets every need

Respondents were **habituated** to their journey planners of choice – it was a challenge for many of them to identify significant weaknesses.

CitiMapper was a very popular choice for those planning holidays abroad; again through force of habit, this could be used within the United Kingdom as well.

‘Offline’ sources were virtually unused. Very few respondents used paper maps such as the AA or RAC route planners.

*I've found Google Maps to be the easiest because you can put in your end destination and it gives you all the information you need, it takes all of the guess work out of it, it even tells you how many feet you have to walk, so that is my go to. Except for business commuting which I use the **Southern Rail** app for, I feel like they **would have more information on the trains** that I would want to take.*

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

Provider-specific apps were very common across train and bus. For these respondents, getting the information ‘straight from the source’ felt most appropriate and accurate. It is, however, worth noting that most bus passengers interviewed were **highly familiar with their local bus routes and were highly inclined to ‘turn up and go.’**

Google Maps tended to act as an ‘anchor’ between other transport planning tools. By letting the user know where they are in space, at any given time and GPS tracking, this helps the user get to the right station and **‘stick to’ the itinerary laid out by other, more mode-specific apps.** Google was for navigation, not information.

While other tools like Apple Maps were used, **Google was by far the most common** (however the quantitative research will help to establish this).

Trainline has fundamentally changed users’ expectations for how a journey planning tool should work. Respondents really appreciated being able to plan a journey as well as purchase the relevant tickets in one place.



Google Maps



Passengers travelling with children, luggage or a physical disability have specific information requirements

For those with physical disabilities, information about seating is paramount

- Respondents with disabilities, as well as those who travel with them, said they would value more information about the *likelihood* of getting a seat.
- An easy-to-read metric for the extent of crowding (perhaps akin to Google's system based on user reviews) would be welcome.
- Similarly, disabled passengers had different tolerances for standing. While some would be able to stand for ten minutes, but struggle with an hour, others would need seating for every stage of the journey.

Respondents with children are concerned with whether public transport is viable in the first place

- Information about the availability of luggage storage, the amount of walking and seating, are all major parts of deciding whether to travel by car or attempt public transport.

It's good to know if the trains have a bike space on them. When I phoned to ask the guy said if we do have bike space it will have a symbol on the outside of the carriage, but he didn't know which ones have bikes and which ones don't. So, we literally just showed up to see and we got lucky.

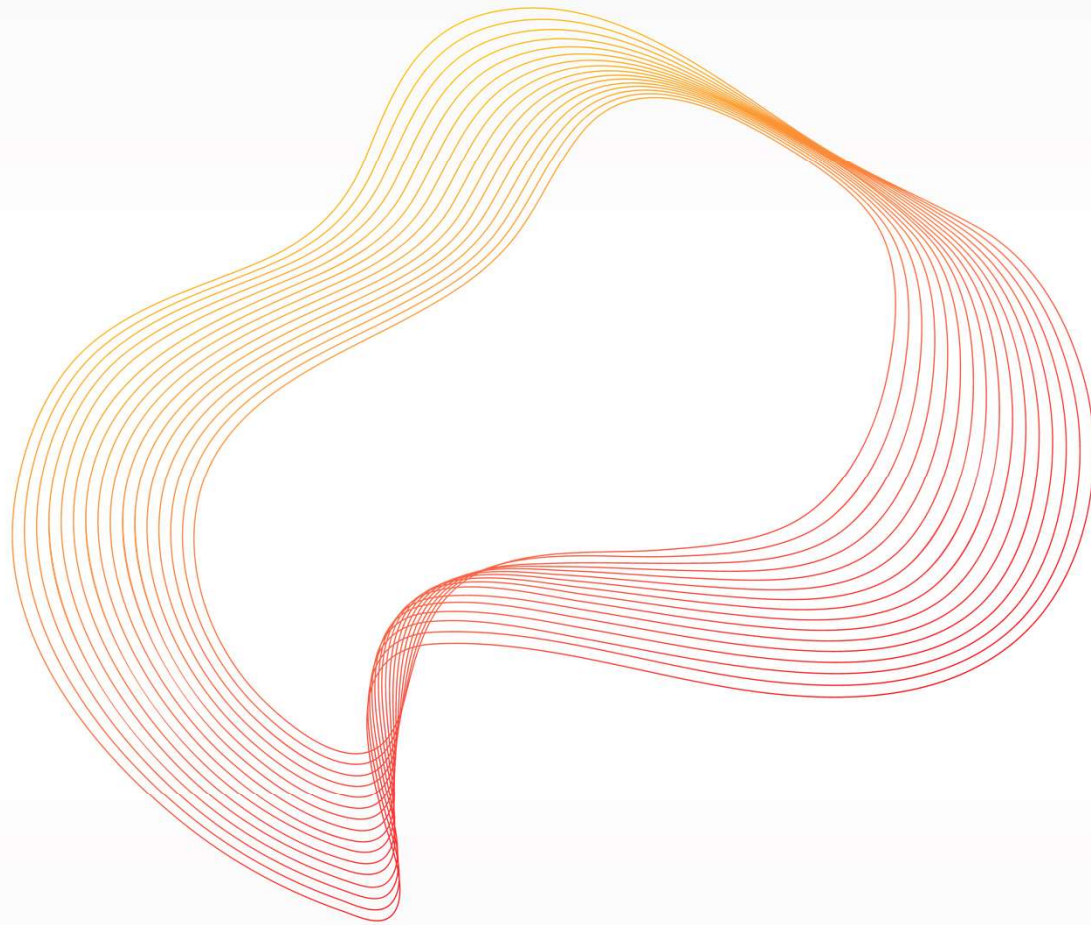
Brighton, Older (Depth Interview)

I suppose you would need to know if there are lifts at the train station. I know the places that I'd go on the train. Preston, Manchester...Not London though.

Preston, Middle Aged



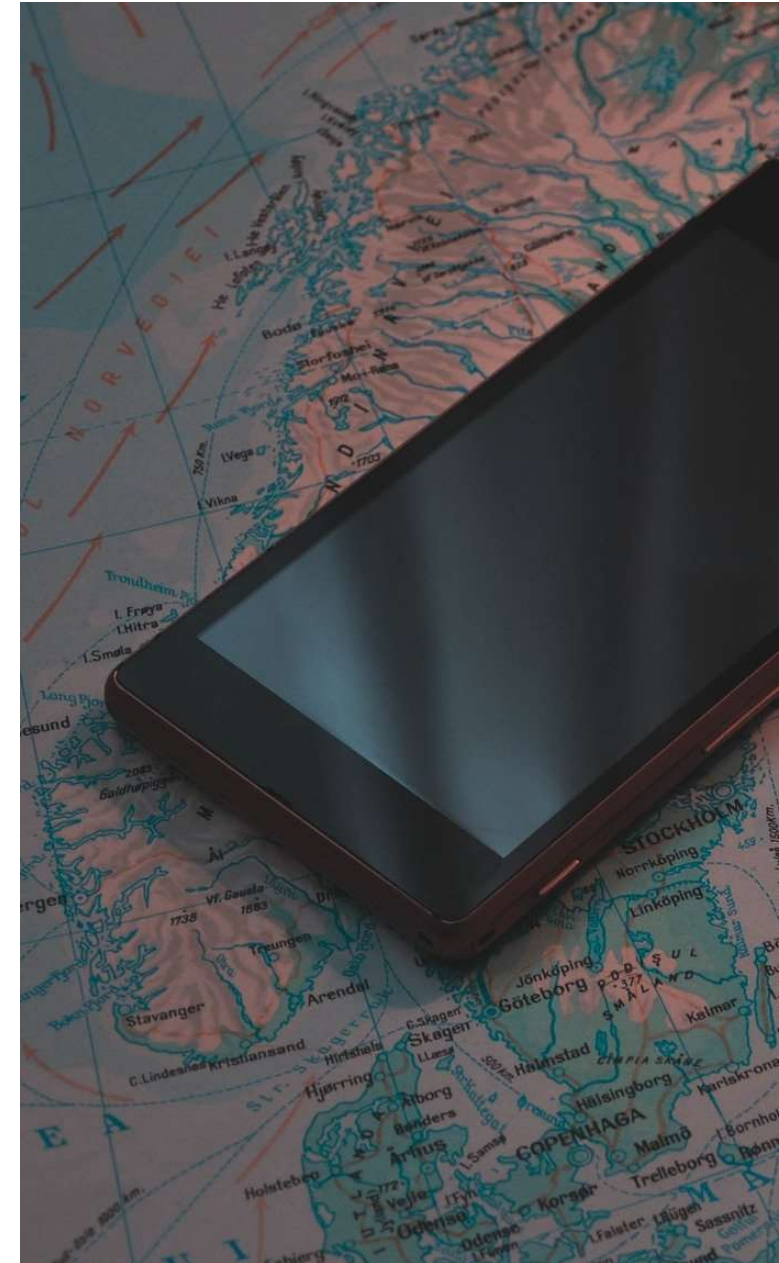
Traveline User Experience



Location Summaries

Reactions to the Traveline website differed by location

- Differing perceptions of the reliability of public transport in a region was a key variable.
- It was argued that journey information is only as reliable as the transport operator and for this reason, areas with a lower level of public transport provision are likely to require up-to-the-minute information about disruption.
- More rural respondents tended to stress the importance of the car. This was commonly used in tandem with public transport and therefore integrating rail and road was essential.
- Having public transport separated from private transport struck rural respondents as counterintuitive, and across the board, ‘should I take the car or public transport’ was the first question on their minds.
- Journey planning tools are expected to help users make this call.
- For longer-distance, inter-city journeys, Trainline was the most used app, preferred because it provided times and the ability to purchase tickets. National Rail would be checked on the day of travel for disruptions.



Manchester

Manchester was characterised by a reliable but multifaceted transport system

- As a result, Traveline was most successful here. There was a real need for the range of transport options to be **summarised and aggregated**, and it was felt that Traveline accomplished this handily.
- More importantly, respondents **fundamentally trusted the transport system**. Bus, tram, rail and car use are all viable options across a wide metropolitan region and are felt to work reasonably well.
- As a result, passengers felt that they could 'stick to' the Traveline route, and the need for in-the-moment updates was therefore less pressing (though by no means absent): a route that works in principle is likely to work in practice.

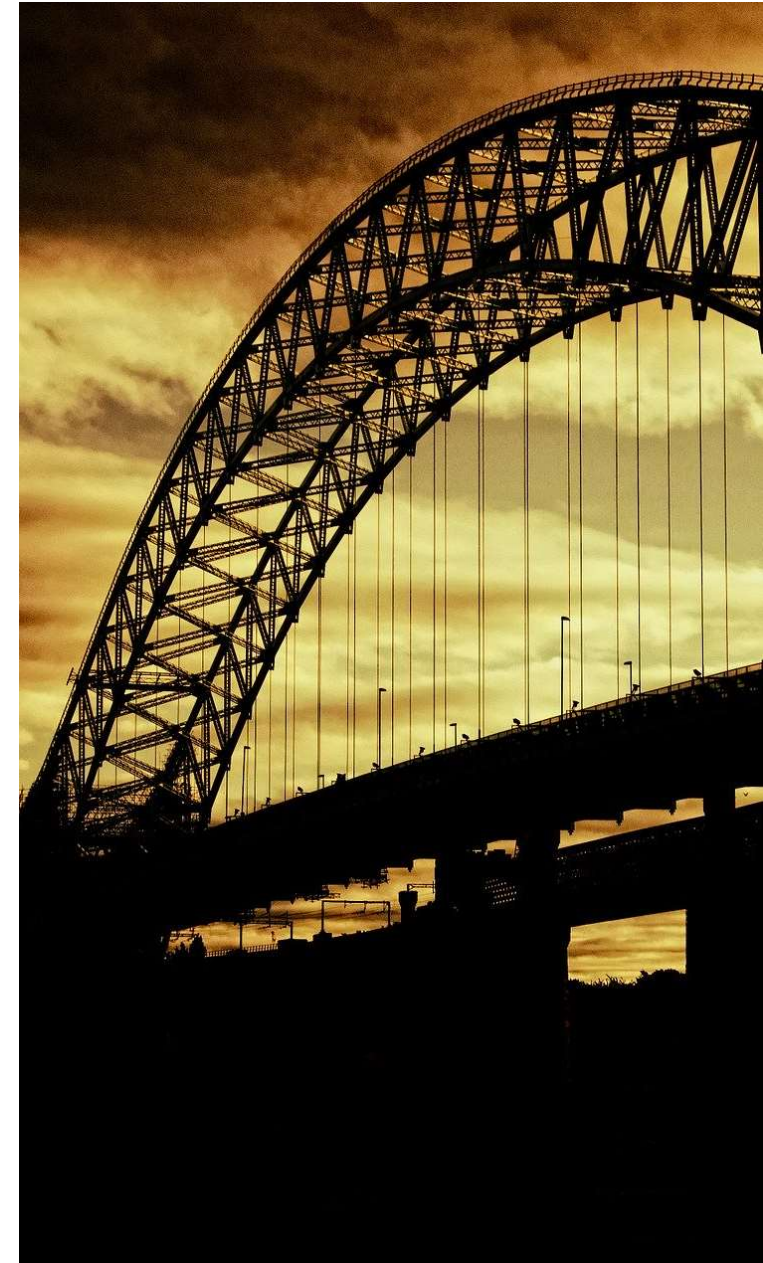
It's the Metro for me, because it's so close to my house it would be silly for me not to get it, and you do stop, but not as regularly as the buses.

Manchester, Younger

So for me, it's here if I need to find out a little bit more. I think it's good that it's just very simple but then you can look up more if you need to.

Manchester, Younger

Key Question: 'What is the best mode to use?'



Preston

Traveline was least well received in Preston

- Respondents lacked confidence in public transport, meaning that any travel information is usually met with scepticism; it is seen as the best-case scenario, not something they can reasonably plan around.
- This lack of confidence made an app even more vital. Respondents expected that they would need to check, and re-check transport details en route, more than any other location covered.
- Most were biased towards car use. The lack of road planning facilities in Traveline, or a way to compare the merits of public transport versus personal transport, restricted the usefulness of the website.

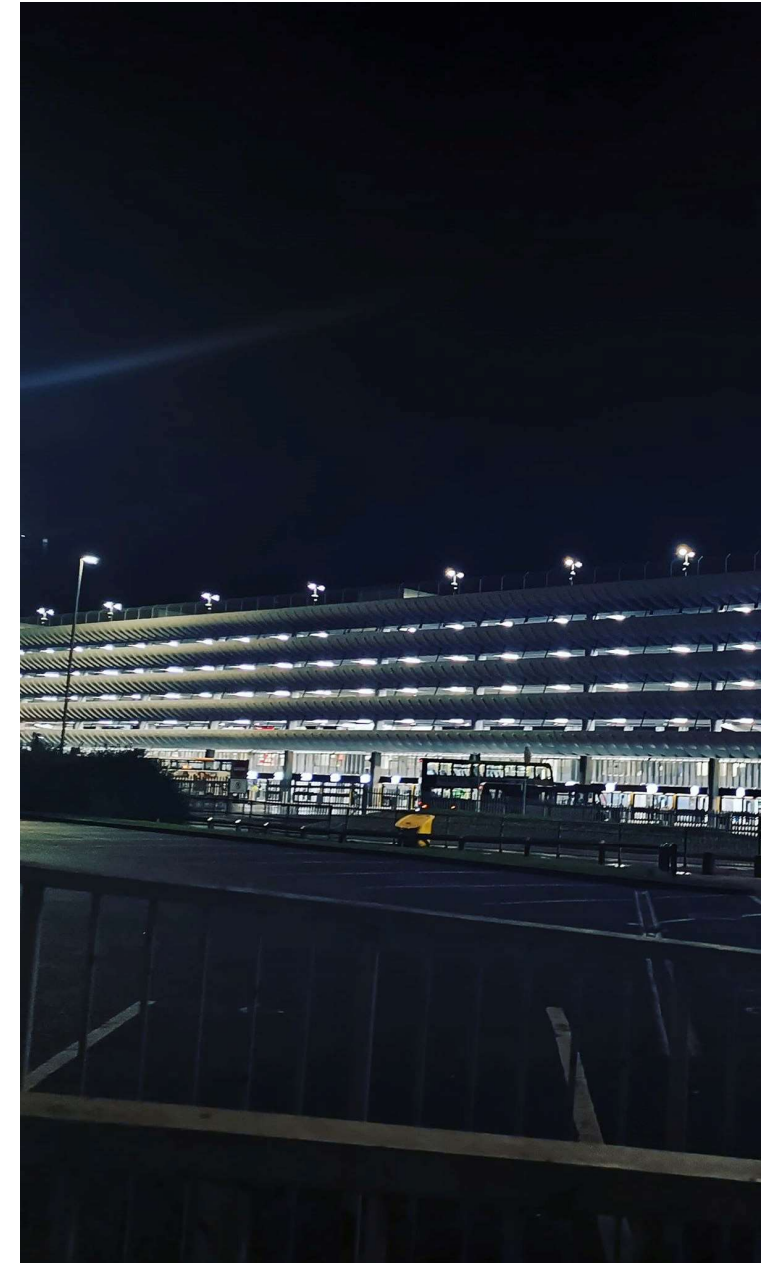
Especially with North West it's quite hard because they can get cancelled; I always find myself booking one three hours earlier

Preston, Younger

I don't tend to use the bus as much because I don't understand them; they scare me!

Preston, Older

Key Question: 'Has anything gone wrong'?



Brighton

Respondents' travel heavily consisted of familiar journeys, limiting the need for Traveline

- Brighton to London was the most common rail journey for commuters and leisure rail users. Regardless of how frequently respondents made this journey, it was perceived to be straightforward, requiring minimal planning.
- Trainline was the most used app, preferred because it provided times and the ability to purchase tickets, something Traveline was lacking in. The only other piece of information respondents required was disruption information, where the rail companies themselves were the most accurate or up-to-date source.
- Local travel was mostly completed by car and many were comfortable getting themselves around without help. Some relied on bus however these respondents made regular, familiar journeys.

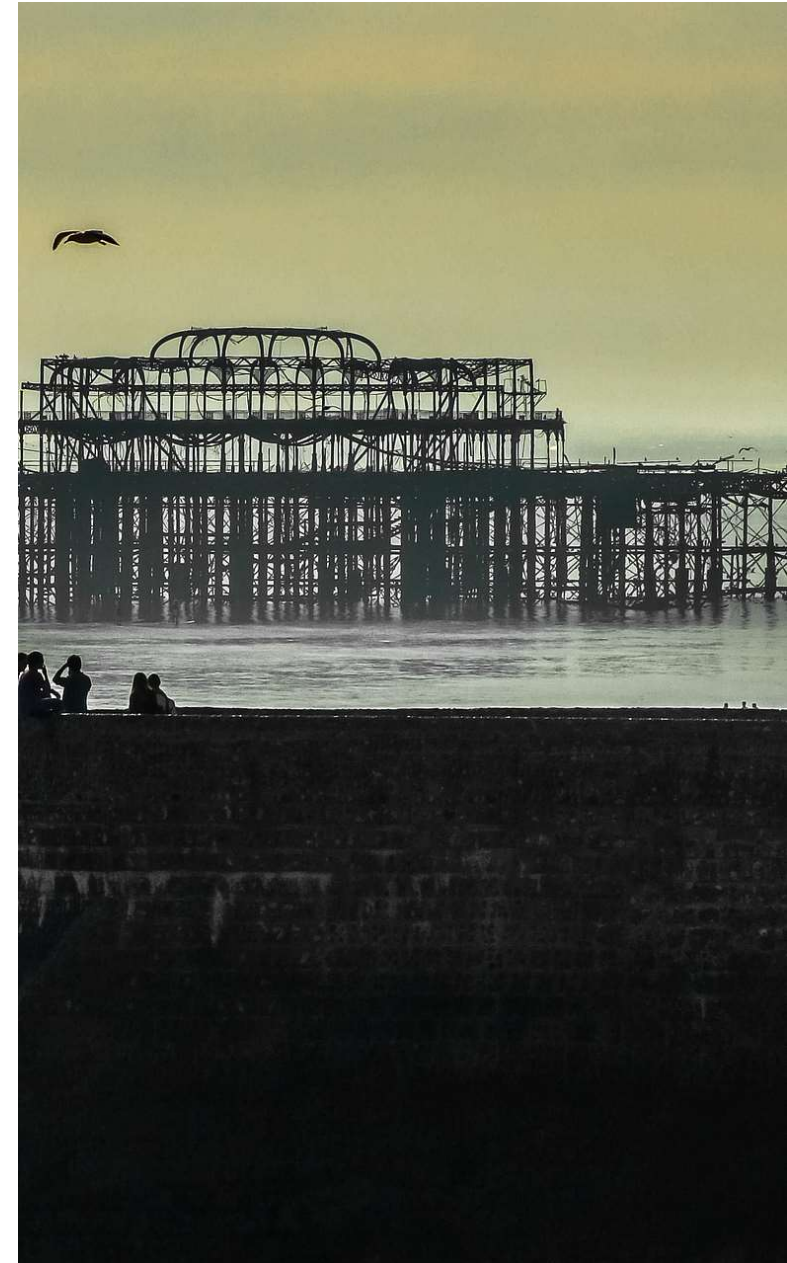
I just need to know what time my train is and if the trains are running, so I check that every morning using Trainline.

Brighton, Middle Aged

I take the number 7, which is practically outside my house, to Royal Sussex twice a week. I know it by heart and the buses come every 10 minutes so even if I miss one there will be another one.

Brighton, Older

Key Question: 'What is the schedule'?



Exeter

Respondents' travel heavily consisted of local journeys, but the choice of bus or train is a potential gap that Traveline would fill.

- **Local journeys** within Exeter and the surrounding towns/ villages was the most common journey planned. **This was often by bus**, and the **local train network into Exeter** was used. For known routes, it was usually just a case of checking when the next bus / train is due.
- The **Stagecoach app** was also well liked – it provides information on (live) bus times, and has a map that shows where buses are in real time.
- This caused confusion with the Traveline live times, as Stagecoach uses a bus icon to indicate where buses are – but on Traveline this same icon represented a bus *stop*.

I Google 'how to get to X' in advance, and then use travel websites like TfL to confirm the times and get the most up-to-date information.

Exeter, Middle Aged

I like the Stagecoach app because I can get my pass and tickets on it. It will say there's a disruption, but not whether it affects my journey.

Exeter, Younger

Key Question: 'What is the best mode to use?'



Existing users of Traveline used the site for more 'local' journeys, as hypothesised

Manchester, Younger

Worked at many different locations across the city of Manchester and travelled socially – while he had a car, typically he preferred public transport because of his access to stations and stops.

He felt he could virtually always use public transport to get where he needed. He valued Traveline as a way of optimising his journeys and filtering through the different options. He valued the walking legs and the opportunities to increase the amount of walking he could do in a journey.

Brighton, Older

A traditionalist when it comes to technology, this respondent does not use travel apps or real-time journey information; thus Traveline suits her planning requirements well. That said, she uses Traveline infrequently and only for unfamiliar bus journeys. National Rail is her preferred platform for planning train journeys as it includes the cost of the train, an essential piece of information for her.

Although somewhat familiar with Traveline, the site still felt unintuitive with some unclear information e.g. icons, meaning of 'legs,' the purpose of additional information like Twitter links.

Preston, Middle Aged

This user works as a driver, transporting cars between different showrooms. Traveline was recommended to him by his colleagues as a helpful way of finding his way home after dropping off the car.

Given the varied nature of his work, he was a maximalist when it came to professional travel – the more information, the better. He valued Traveline for its comprehensiveness but has since started using Google Maps as it serves his information needs on a mobile phone.



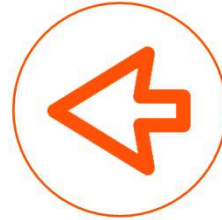
Detailed User Experience

The overarching look, feel and level of detail are received warmly



The imagery, layout and ‘feel’ of the website was clear, appropriate and gave a sense of variety

- Some respondents complained that the website imagery ought to include some form of public transport.
- However, the consensus was that the imagery is pleasant, and strongly conveys a sense of travel – there is no ambiguity about what the site is for.
- What the imagery does not convey, is ‘local journeys’ – the images are adventurous, stressing the unfamiliar and potentially giving a skewed impression of the types of journeys that can be planned.



Except for the lack of predictive text, the overall user interface was clean and seamless.

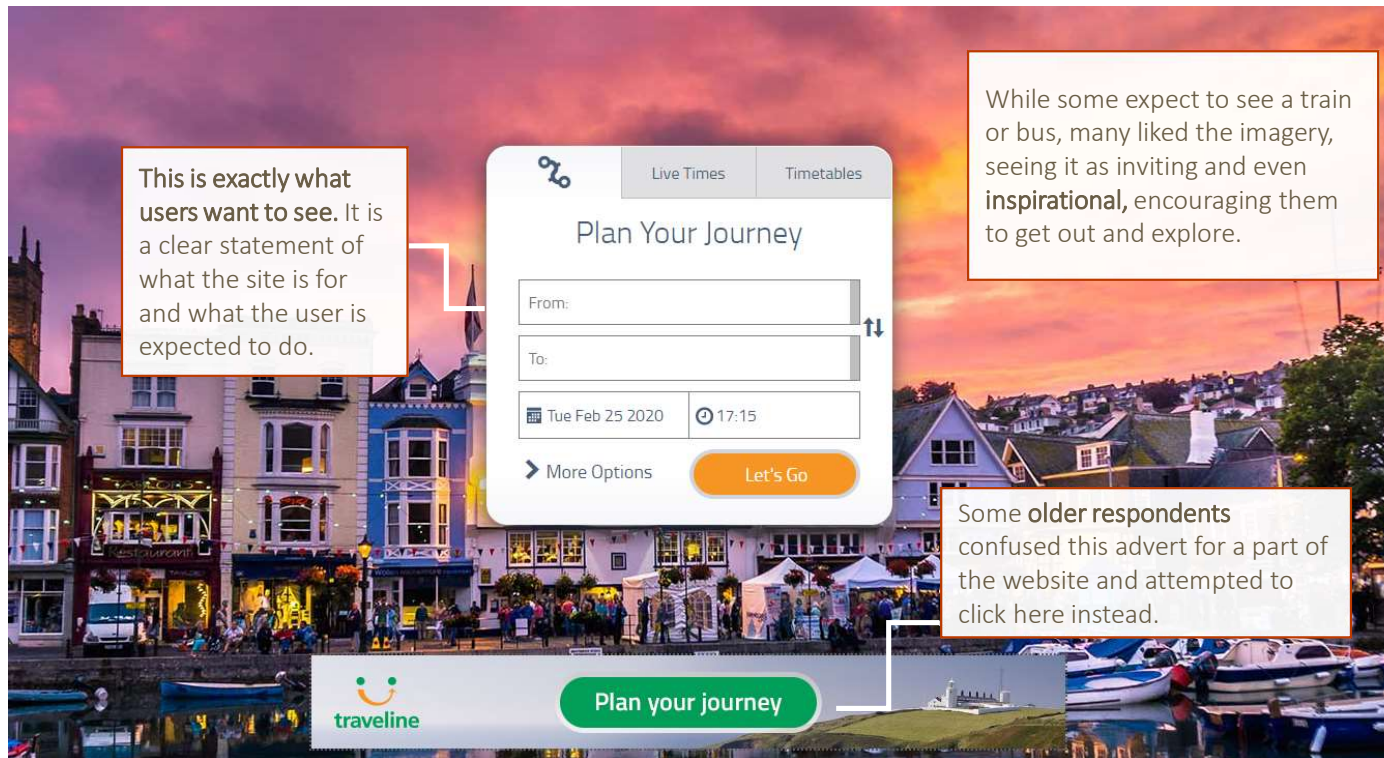
- Apart from very elderly respondents, all were able to execute the tasks given to them in the depth interviews.
- The main issue lies with articulating exactly where respondents want to go, particularly given the hypothetical nature of some journeys.
- Prompts would be appreciated here, and heuristics like ‘city centre’ or ‘the station’ were used as approximations for city-to-city travel.



Behind the clarity and cleanness of the interface, however, some of the most differentiating features can be missed.

- Virtually no respondents spontaneously clicked on the ‘Live Times’ or ‘Timetables’ tabs, or even enquired about what they were for.
- Greater signalling of the additional features of Traveline, while maintaining the overall sleekness of the site, would be a significant benefit.
- Respondents value the detail, even if the use cases are not immediately apparent for some.

The title page was warm, inviting and exceptionally clear



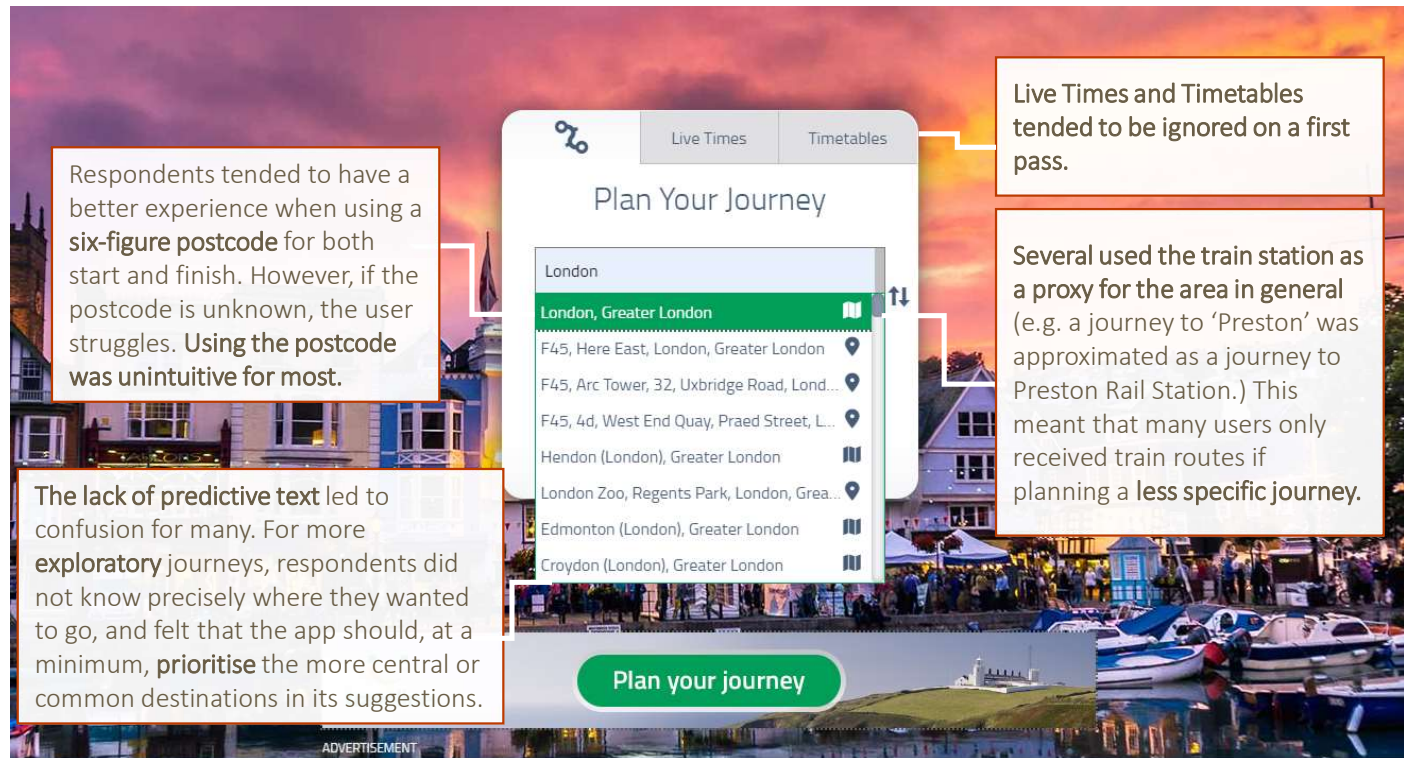
I really like it, I like the background picture; it's obviously supposed to be about traveling, it's got a nice backdrop, a nice sky.

Brighton, Younger (Depth Interview)

But it's not telling me whether it's on time...

Exeter, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

Drop down menus led to significant confusion, particularly for less familiar journeys



You might be going to Aberystwyth and not know how to spell it!

Preston, Younger

Lots of options for Victoria goodness, I just want Victoria railway station but I don't see it... That was really annoying. With Trainline it knows I'm getting on a train so maybe that's why it gives me Victoria railway station right away, it may give me two or three options but it doesn't give me every single place related to Victoria like this just did.

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

I haven't planned my journey yet so I'm just being shown everything rather than narrowing it down to what I'd want.

Exeter, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

The additional options are beneficial, but often overlooked and underutilised

The 'More Options' button was **unnoticeable** and therefore **unutilised** by majority of respondents. However, once prompted to explore this option, respondents understood the value.

Selecting departure or arrival time is perceived as an **essential** feature for journey planning. However, it was felt that 'Journey Type' was an inaccurate title leaving respondents confused when they uncovered its purpose.

Being able to choose mode of travel was seen as a useful way of making the results **more relevant to the individual**.

The title 'Journey Legs' was **unclear**, implying something different to what respondents expected to see. This feature was of interest to some but was **not seen as essential**.

'Walking Speed' was seen as **unnecessary** and **would not be utilised by most**. Majority of respondents felt an estimate of walking time was adequate and knew themselves well enough to add or subtract a few minutes for improved accuracy.

Plan Your Journey

From: [input]
To: [input]
Wed Mar 04 2020 14:45
Fewer Options Let's Go

Live Times Timetables

▼ Journey Type
▼ Choose Travel Mode
▼ Journey Legs
▼ Walking Speed

traveline

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They are averages so I just assume if I were going to be on my own it might take me ten minutes and if I'm with children probably a bit longer.


Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

Is that the arrival time or the departure time? That is interesting. What is the more options?

Preston, Middle Aged

Although useful features of the platform, these tabs go unnoticed


Respondents **greatly valued having up-to-date timings** for their journeys, making it easy to plan around. However, it was felt that this feature could be **incorporated into the 'Plan Journey'** process to make it more accessible. Additionally, the lack of live rail times was a disappointment for some rail users.

Plan Journey  Timetables

Live Times

Postcode, stop code or street & town:


Let's Go

Plan Journey **Live Times** 

Find Your Timetable

Service Number or Description:

Locality:

 Wed Mar 04 2020

Let's Go

The information required from respondents was **unintuitive**. Many respondents were confused by 'Service Number' and 'Locality'. Slight alternatives such as **bus number, postcode or town** were seen as more straightforward.

If I can't get to the bus stop on time for the 77, then I would be able to see I could just get the 31 that comes in 6 minutes instead.

Preston, Middle Aged

Service number...what do they mean by that? Description...does that mean the location you are trying to go to? Locality...the verbiage is all wrong.

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

The journey summary was viewed as concise and effective

However, respondents often had to ‘fill in the gaps’ with their prior experience (or educated assumptions)

The screenshot shows the Traveline journey planner interface. On the left is a sidebar with the Traveline logo, a 'Plan your journey' button, and a 'Start' button. The main area is titled 'Your Journey' and shows a route from 'London Greater London' to 'Piccadilly (Stop R) Manchester City Centre [mantjtjw]'. Below this are buttons for 'Earlier', 'Edit / Go Back', and 'Later'. A 'Summary Results' table is displayed, showing three journey options with their respective departure/arrival times, number of changes, legs, and duration. At the bottom is a banner with the Traveline logo and a 'Plan your journey' button.

Depart/Arrive	Changes	Legs	Duration
✓ 17:15 → 19:53	1	Walking, Bus, Train, Walking	2:38
✓ 17:35 → 20:13	1	Walking, Bus, Train, Walking	2:38
✓ 17:55 → 20:35	1	Walking, Bus, Train, Walking	2:40

The **bus stop code** was confusing for many – it felt like an **error** rather than a feature.

Duration was well liked as an **at-a-glance** measure of the merits of a route. However, many felt that fare information was important as an additional comparator, even if most could infer that ‘fewer trains, more buses,’ meant a cheaper route.

Respondents tended to **infer the cost of a journey** based on whether it involved a train or a bus, as well as the **complexity** of a journey based on how many interchanges it would involve. However, most would prefer an equally succinct measure of these variables as the ‘Duration’ tab on the right.

Planning a new journey was very clear to do. I took advantage of the filter options which let me filter out methods of transport or increase the walking distance which reduced the number of changes – interesting.

Manchester, Post-task activity

The journey detail was often seen as better-presented than Google or Apple Maps

Summary Results

Depart/Arrive

Changes

Legs

Duration

17:15

→

19:53

1

2:38

Walk to Charing Cross Underground Station, Charing Cross

2 minutes. Depart 17:15, Arrive 17:17

Take Northern line to Euston Underground Station, Euston

7 minutes. Depart 17:18, Arrive 17:25

London Underground (TfL)

Walk to London Euston Station

Less than a minute. Depart 17:25, Arrive 17:25

Train to Manchester Piccadilly

2 hours 5 minutes. Depart 17:40, Arrive 19:45

Avanti West Coast

@VirginTrains

Walk to Piccadilly (Stop R), Manchester City Centre [mantjtjw]

8 minutes. Depart 19:45, Arrive 19:53

View on Map

What's the difference between the circular one and the train one?

Preston, Middle-Aged

The **descending, step-by-step nature** of these directions came across as very simple, concise and effective.

Google's directions, on the other hand, could come across as slightly cramped or 'busy'. **Traveline's cleaner, more spacious layout is well-liked.**

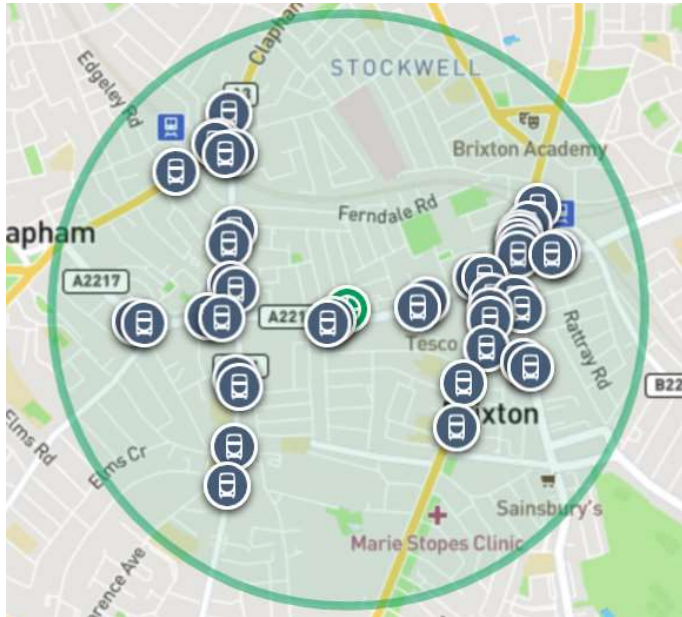
For a handful of respondents, the **mode icons** were confusing:

- The distinction between the Underground and Train icons was not obvious for some
- For particularly elderly respondents (75+), the concept of icons (and indeed **skeuomorphs** in general) was unintuitive; they would prefer a more **prosaic** approach.
 - However, they are in the minority and for these respondents, interacting with Traveline via telephone would likely be more appropriate.

*You writing all this down on the board is clear to me, but that [Traveline] is not – because those are statements there whereas there are no statements on the website. **It doesn't talk to you at all.***

Preston, Older (Depth Interview)

Maps showing the range of bus stops available were less useful



*It's useful if I know what's on that route but being blind to Clapham I wouldn't really know where it'd go or if that bus route is something I need. **Which bus do I need?***

Preston, Younger (Depth Interview)

The location of bus stops is second tier information for most passengers. While it is logically presented, clear and interesting, it is not directly related to a journey planning task. It falls under 'journey information' for more hypothetical travel or simply understanding the range of options available in a very unknown location.

While respondents were interested in seeing the range of services available in their local area, this was a more **exploratory**, general interest rather than a concerted form of journey planning.

The indicative stops were not seen as sufficiently detailed to give a real indication of what the route can do.

Most respondents would prefer to search their desired **destination** and view the range of services available to them that way, rather than **starting with the assumption that they will take a bus**.

The most useful thing I didn't know existed was the map [of bus stops] within the radius. If you wanted to get a specific point you've obviously got all those stops to take your pick from.

Manchester, Younger

Very few were willing to consult a long-form bus timetable

Many younger respondents did not know how to read a bus timetable easily

Older respondents had also fallen out of this habit; seasoned bus travellers tended simply to ‘know,’ or saw the bus services as sufficiently frequent for timetables to be less important.

Most felt that seeing a ‘snapshot’ of the bus timetable was easier, akin to the TfL approach

Even for a hypothetical journey, respondents would select a ‘typical’ departure time and either scroll backwards or forwards in time to evaluate the best time to leave.

As a result, seeing the entire day’s bus timetable was deemed unnecessary. For planned, routine journeys, the **departure time is static** and again, only a narrow slice of the schedule is called for.

There was some interest in seeing the intermediate stops, however this was mostly a proxy, to get a sense of **how often the bus would be stopping**.

I’ve never been able to figure out the buses, the buses always confuse me, in any city I’ve ever lived in. It’s the schedules, whenever I read them it’s just so confusing to me, so, either I’ll splurge on an uber or just get off wherever!

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

02	06:12	06:24	06:36	06:
06	06:16	06:28	06:40	06:
09	06:18	06:30	06:42	06:
13	06:24	06:36	06:48	07:
16	06:28	06:40	06:52	07:
17	06:30	06:42	06:54	07:
21	06:35	06:47	06:59	07:
26	06:41	06:53	07:05	07:
30	06:47	06:59	07:13	07:
32	06:49	07:01	07:15	07:
36	06:54	07:06	07:21	07:

31	08:37	08:43	08:49	08:
33	08:39	08:45	08:51	08:
39	08:45	08:51	08:57	09:
42	08:48	08:54	09:00	09:
51	08:57	09:03	09:09	09:
57	09:03	09:09	09:15	09:
59	09:05	09:11	09:17	09:
06	09:12	09:18	09:24	09:
14	09:20	09:26	09:32	09:
23	09:29	09:35	09:41	09:
26	09:32	09:38	09:44	09:

OpenStreetMap was well-received as part of Traveline

Respondents liked the cleaner, more detailed look of OSM

The additional detail was particularly appealing to leisure travellers who could see themselves scrolling around the map to find additional attractions or things to do.

The extra information was noted as being suitable for 'road to door' navigation; getting from the street to the specific area of interest. This is an area of interest for journey makers.

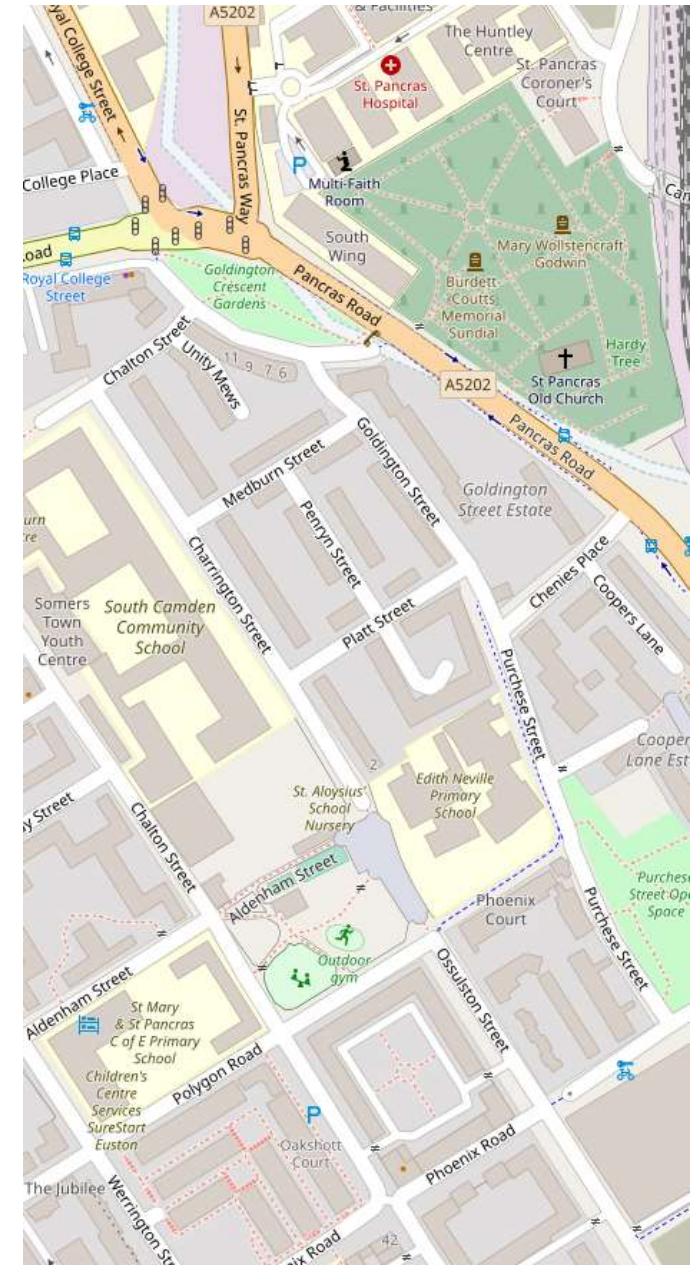
However, some still had to supplement it with their own knowledge to make the most of the map

Several respondents used the map to visually 'trace' the road route as a comparison with Traveline's suggested public transport route.

A more obvious way to compare public transport with car usage would therefore likely be welcome.

Others would have liked to see the map earlier in the user journey, as with Google Maps

There was some interest among these respondents for **learning** more about the local area – this detailed map **serves an exploratory purpose** as well as a journey planning one; a use case that can be embraced.



Some argued that the accessibility information was not detailed enough

The green wheelchair logo signified that every aspect of that part of the journey would be **fully accessible**. It was not until respondents were prompted to mouse over the symbol that various caveats emerged.

No respondents moused over the green logo spontaneously, suggesting that they would embark on the journey with an incomplete picture of how accessible a route really is.

In a journey planning context, ‘fully accessible’ is taken to mean:

- Complete wheelchair accessibility across the whole station or bus stop
- Complete wheelchair accessibility on the train or bus itself
- Easily accessible assistance from staff, perhaps not even having to book



‘Trains are accessible, but stations may not be. Wheelchairs need to be booked.’

My sister has a condition where she needs to know where the toilets are, and I think she was handed a map with locations in London, but you can turn up and they're out of use.

Preston, Younger

If it says disabled access, that means I can go with the pram. Although it's not definitely...Oh well that is rubbish! It's like a lightbulb with no power.

Preston, Younger

I didn't even notice it. It's not really relevant to me but I think everyone would miss that, the logo is so small.

Brighton, Younger

Twitter was not seen as an effective way to communicate information to passengers

The Twitter feed was expected to act as a source of up-to-the-minute service updates

Depending on the train operator shown, the Twitter feed could either show service updates for less relevant routes, or simply advertising and customer engagement Tweets.

This was generally not felt to be useful. However, Twitter was recognised as a *potential* source of timely information, if only train operators could make it so.

Some also felt that they had to be 'on Twitter' to be able to use this information effectively.

Some older passengers would be willing to contact a train or bus operator directly

However, the majority felt that these contact numbers are only useful for making a complaint – this is something they are open to.

The idea of contacting an operator for advice 'in the moment' was not intuitive and again, Google Maps and Trainline were the go-to for this information.

(Several respondents noticed the mis-match between Avanti West Coast and Virgin Trains)



The contact information is not really useful. I guess the Twitter link could be because sometimes they will announce that there is trouble on the railway but it might not get through to this site, but I don't really use Twitter, I'd go to the Southern website instead.

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

The Twitter point on here, I expected it to be something to do with my journey, rather than just peoples' comments.

Preston, Middle Aged

The Traveline logo was well-recognised and clear

Many respondents could recall seeing the logo on bus shelters

However, based on this logo, few were able to infer that there was a website attached to the service. Seeing the Traveline brand out of home did not necessarily impart all the necessary information.

The arrow motif clearly indicates that Traveline is to do with travel, although comparisons were drawn with the TUI logo. No respondents confused Traveline with its regional counterparts, however.

The logo was not noticed on the website

As a result, few made the connection between Traveline as a service and their existing, perhaps better-established knowledge of the telephone service which, although seldom-used, was helpful for some.





Priorities for Improvement

By a wide margin, a Traveline app was the most pressing area for improvement

There was a general dislike of accessing specific tools like Traveline through the browser on a phone.

- While no respondents during the post-task highlighted issues with the mobile site, the preference for an app was almost universal.
- Almost all respondents continue to check their journeys en route, and an app is seen as the most convenient format for this.

Even more long-term or hypothetical forms of journey planning are likely to be undertaken on a mobile device

- Given that many passengers use several journey planning tools in tandem, it is likely that an app is more user-friendly than switching between multiple tabs on a single browser.

Hard to use on the internet; it'd be better in an app form and it also needs some easier navigation buttons. In general this needs to be simplified as older people would struggle with it if I'm struggling with it.

Preston, Younger [Post-Task]

They can't do without an app. You just go to your phone, turn it on, the app is there; it's a lot easier and again we always seem to take the easy route.

Manchester, Older

I may use this site to plan an unfamiliar journey, like if I needed to get to the airport, but I would only look at it the night before and not on the day of as I wouldn't carry my laptop around. If they had an app that would be great, and if it had similar functionality like knowing where you are so you don't have to sift through loads of stations and it saved your favourites, that would be really handy.

Brighton, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

Additional features for improvement

Health tracking and carbon tracking were not seen as useful

- While some respondents were interested in these features and recognised that they were highly **differentiating**, few could see a role for them in their day-to-day travel.
- Most recognise by **intuition** that walking more is better than walking less, or that public transport is superior to car use from an environmental perspective. These are not things that they wanted to measure quantitatively.

Certain features were must-haves for Traveline to compete effectively with other journey planning tools

- The ability to buy tickets within the app was essential, primarily for train services rather than bus.
- Respondents were usually looking to minimise the number of apps used for a given journey and the success of Trainline has created a **strong expectation for a 'one-stop shop'**
- **Predictive text** was spontaneously mentioned as a quality-of-life improvement that would enhance the user experience and enhance trust in the site.

'Where's my bus?' was the winner in terms of being both novel and useful

- Information about disruption was of universal importance regardless of what kind of journey is being planned. Seeing the bus on a map would provide an **indicator of disruption**, as well as an indication of how long the passenger needs to **wait**.

If people are becoming more aware about the environment that's a good thing but not right now for me because my only other option would be to use the bike but that's 15 miles each way...

Preston, Younger (Depth Interview)

Oh, you can't buy tickets here? I thought this whole time that was the point.

Brighton, Younger (Depth Interview)

I guess that would be helpful – if it's ten minutes late you could see where it is, if you should just leave...

Preston, Younger (Depth Interview)



Summary

There are real opportunities for Traveline to fill a range of unmet needs in travel planning

While travel planning is almost automatic for many, on reflection, they found several gaps in information

Information about the feasibility, reliability and overall punctuality of a given mode of transport were all seen as valuable. While their existing portfolio of tools can give **directions** for a journey, they are left to their own devices in terms of whether this is the best approach for them.

Some work could be done to build the use case for 'journey information'

Over the course of this fieldwork, many respondents felt that Traveline would be ideal for simply gaining a better understanding of the transport networks they are surrounded by.

This is not something that journey makers were currently doing, but they could see the value in terms of having a fuller understanding of their options and helping to optimise their journeys for the long term. Respondents were excited by the level of detail but could struggle to see what they would do with it.

There are opportunities for quality-of-life improvements across the site

*It feels like a website that's still **under development**, that there's more they're going to do to it.*

Exeter, Middle Aged (Depth Interview)

*I think this will help a lot of tourists; maybe they'll find this more **interesting and useful**.*

Manchester, Older

*The walking speed and journey options are **things I didn't know I wanted until I saw them**.*

Manchester, Younger

Priorities for improvement depend on the importance of the information concerned

Information tier

More important

First-tier information: Must-have, core functionalities for making a journey

Second-tier information: Nice-to-have information that reassures, informs and optimises a journey

Third-tier information: Less important details which, while well-liked, can struggle to find a use case

Less important

Examples

Departure times, navigation, 'snapshots' of timetables, fare information, journey duration

Live times, summary bus timetables, locations of bus stops

Long-form bus timetables, contact information for transport operators

Priority for improvement

Higher priority

- Predictive text
- Development of an app

- Stronger signposting
- Clearer user interface

- Explanation of the potential use cases and the value of this information

Lower priority

Summary and next steps

As hypothesised, Traveline excels on the more local journeys, both familiar and unfamiliar.

When distance is brought in, **cost and fulfilment** become more important: passengers want to minimise costs and purchase tickets in the same stroke.

More complex journeys also tended to be higher-stakes. In these circumstances, passengers revert to what they are used to: they need the **reassurance** of a GPS (i.e. Google Maps) and of live, up-to-date information through a mobile app.

This qualitative research uncovered the ways in which passengers think about planning. **Traveline excels in strategising, optimising and gathering information** about travel, but not in the 'checking' of a journey either en-route or immediately prior.

The quantitative research will need to establish the **prevalence** of these different attitudes and understand the **relative importance** of different kinds of journey planning: are they areas in which Traveline is established? If not, how could it become so?

Less Complex Familiar Journey	More Complex Familiar Journey
Less Complex Unfamiliar Journey	More Complex Unfamiliar Journey