# Chats About Apps: Apps for getting out and about Transcript

Voice-over: This podcast is brought to you by the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team and the RNIB Technology for Life team. It is part of our Chats About Apps series. The information in this podcast will be helpful for people living with sight loss, sight loss and complex needs and for people who are supporting someone living with sight loss.

Linzi: Hello and welcome to our podcast in the Chats About Apps series. I’m Linzi from the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team and I will be speaking to Hannah today about apps to assist with travel and transport. Hi, Hannah.

Hannah: Hi, there!

Linzi: So you mentioned in the very first podcast that travel was one of your top five features of apps. So, I wondered if you could tell us a bit more about what apps there are and what they can do to help someone living with sight loss with transport and their journeys?

Hannah: There are lots of different sorts of aps to help with different sorts of transport. There is a bus app called Next Bus, which tells you where your nearest bus stop is and what the next bus is to arrive at that stop. Lots of local authorities also have their own bus apps which tell you a similar thing and when you’re stood at the bus stop, you can tell how far away the next one is to you.

You can also get similar apps for train travel, where you can see what the next train going to arrive is, going to a particular destination. These apps are brilliant because quite often, they’ll also tell you the platform number of the train you’re wishing to catch. So, I find this particularly helpful with my sight loss – I can’t see any of the boards at the train station, so whilst I can get there OK and find the platform, I can’t necessarily see where my train is coming into, which platform or at what time. An example of this would be recently, when I was catching a train and I was waiting on the platform for my train to arrive and I noticed on the app that the platform number had changed and I wasn’t quite sure what I was going to do. I was like: ‘Oh, do I trust the app or..?’ but nobody else seemed to be moving to the other platform so they obviously hadn’t changed on the overhead board so I decided ‘Yep, I’m going to go to the other platform. So, over I went and I was the only person on that platform and I thought: ‘Oh, maybe I’ve made the wrong decision’ and then a couple of minutes later, everybody else started moving over and there was a big, kind of, rush to get over to the steps and come over to the platform that I was on and then they announced over the tannoy that the train indeed was going to be changing platforms and I’d made the right decision in moving over, so the app had given me that information before it appeared on the overhead boards and before anybody else had had it so I wasn’t missing out on any information, I had it there, all at my fingertips to be able to get the train that I needed to get.

There are lots of different apps that will do this, so for example, the Trainline app, or National Rail Enquiries. It’s also worth looking at your local travel provider, so I’m here in Wales, so we have Travel Line Cymru, that shows you all the different information on arrivals and departures and locations throughout Wales with the different sorts of transport.

Linzi: That’s so helpful to know, Hannah and it’s even better if we first want to know if a train platform number has changed.

Hannah: It was great, I felt quite smug!

Linzi: Yes!

Hannah: I’ve got insider information!

Linzi: Exactly! So, do most travel companies have apps now that you can buy tickets online?

Hannah: Yes, they do. So, through the apps on your phone, you can buy things like bus tickets or train tickets. And what happens is, when you’ve hade the transaction, the ticket appears as a code on your phone that can be scanned at the barriers or when you go on the bus. This is great because you know, whenever I buy a ticket, I can’t tell what it says on it, if it’s an outgoing ticket, if it’s a return ticket and then I put it in my pocket and I don’t know what I’ve done with it, so it’s all really handy to then have it on the phone, I know which ticket is to go where and I’m not going to lose it if it’s on my phone.

Linzi: Yeah, that’s good to know because I know if I’m travelling anywhere on public transport, I end up having tickets in my purse or if it’s boarding passes for flights, in my handbag, and sometimes if you’re on a route with many methods of transport, you end up having lots of tickets or booking confirmations and it can be confusing, can’t it?

Hannah: Yeah, absolutely, and especially if you do have sight loss and you can’t necessarily see all these pieces of paper that you’ve got to carry around with you and show and I think definitely one of those if you’re flying anywhere and you’ve got your boarding pass and everything that you’ve got to have at particular intervals, yeah, it’s really handy to have that all in your phone as an app.

Linzi: Definitely.

Hannah: Make the booking on your phone, pay for it on your phone and then you have your tickets on your phone. And that just makes everything a lot easier and straightforward.

Linzi: And I know, recently, I now do use my phone for any boarding passes and it saves me hunting for my boarding pass in my handbag! Another feature I would like to ask you about, Hannah – getting around, you know, are there apps to help locate whereabouts we are if it’s somewhere we’re maybe not familiar with? Are there any apps regarding that that you want to mention?

Hannah: Yeah, so there are lots of GPS apps that you can use to locate where you are when you’re out and about. These apps are really great and can be really useful but they’re never 100% accurate just because the satellites have sort of a three-metre degree of inaccuracy, if you like. So they can’t pinpoint where you are – sometimes, they don’t necessarily tell you if there’s a safe pavement to walk on, where the crossings are, so whenever you use these apps, you have to bear in mind to keep safe, however, they’re really handy to use alongside any mobility skills you already have. Just to support that and to reassure you that you are where you think you are and give you that confidence when you’re out and about. So, for example, there are great apps like Lazarillo or Soundscape or just Google Maps – you can put in a start destination and an end destination to help guide you towards a particular place, or app that, just when you’re walking around, will give you that feedback. So, for example, Soundscape, if you’re walking along a street, will announce places that are around you, so, for example: ‘Boots at 9 o’clock’ so you know that, ‘OK, over that side of the street, that’s where Boots is’ and it’s just that nice reminder of ‘OK, I know whereabouts I am, I am in the right place, I know I’m heading in the right direction’ and just to reduce that kind of, anxiety of getting around and getting about.

Linzi: Yes, anything that gives us a bigger picture of our location and where we are and, as you say, that reassurance as well, of we are in the right place or we’re heading in the right direction.

Hannah: Yes, absolutely and that’s kind of, what they’re really good at in showing us the places that we’re heading.

Linzi: Super, thank you so much for those great examples, Hannah and hopefully this podcast has helped our listeners get some ideas about how apps can assist in our travel plans and getting about. So, that’s our podcast finished on transport and travel. Thank you for listening.

Voice-over: If you found this helpful, listen to our other podcasts in our Chats About Apps series. We also have further information and support online relating to technology and apps from our Technology for Life team. Type ‘technology resource hub’ into the search bar at the top right-hand side of the RNIB webpage. For more information about working with people with sight loss and complex needs, go onto the RNIB website at rnib.org.uk, type ‘complex needs’ into the search box at the right-hand side. You can also call the RNIB Helpline on 03031239999. We are the Older People and Complex Needs team and the Technology for Life team. For more information about what we do, search for us on the RNIB website. Thank you for listening.

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