thetrainline.com

your first stop for train tickets

Calling at…your iPhone

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Your first stop for train tickets….
on your mobile

Why iPhone?

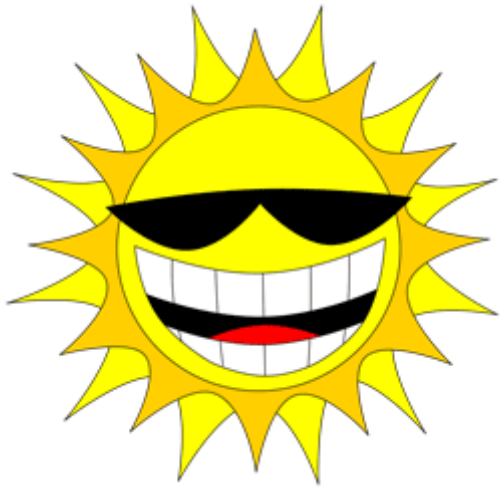
Guardian iPhone app could net £2 million a year, says *paidContent*

Posted by Emma Heald on January 15, 2010 at 4:22 PM

Income from iPhone apps is nothing to scoff at. The Guardian's app costs £2.39, and the UK newspaper announced it has sold almost 69,000 app downloads since the app's launch in December. At that rate, income from the app alone could reach £1.97 million a year. paidContent reported today.

What about Android, Ovi, or redeveloping our mobile site?

- Android and Ovi had not matured whilst the iPhone gave us an established platform to test the mobile app water
- Mobile manufacturers are moving more and more towards native applications



In the summer of 2009…

We set off to build an iphone application that provides our customers with the easiest access to train times on the go. Our goal was to reach 100,000 downloads…

Starting out: the Key Decisions

1. What features / information

2. How will information be presented

3. What do we charge for the app

4. How will we market the app

What Information / Features do our customers need?

- Although there are some exceptions, users prefer apps that do less, but do it very well.
  - skype, spotify, the weather app, Chill Music App, they all do 1 thing very well.

- Lesson: include the least amount of information / functionality required to still be sufficiently useful
  - In our case, focus on Train Times

*Bonus Point if you can make any of the information available to the user off-line

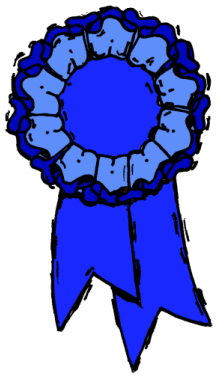
“Good design is telling the user what to do but making them think they figured it out for themselves”

Quick Tips

- Get the user to the information they need in 3 screens or less
- Speak the users language, not industry jargon
- Don’t worry too much about being flashy, unless you’re building a game, it’s the information that’s important.
- If it doesn’t look right, its probably not

To Free or not to Free?

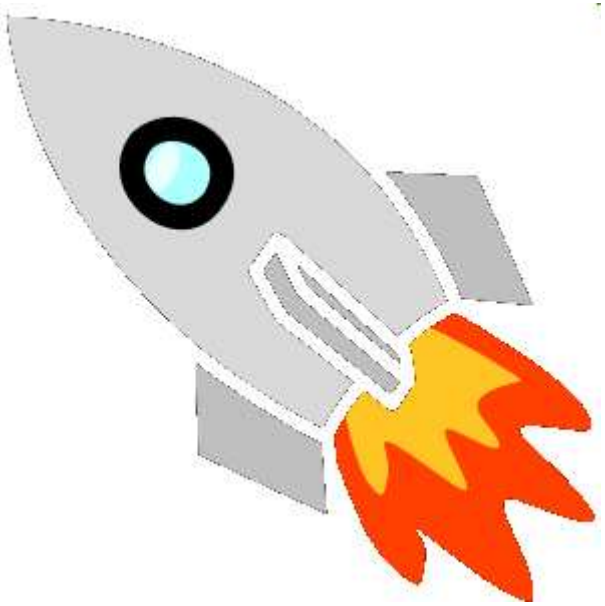
….that is the question



- Free apps
  - Higher downloads: 7.5 to 1 download ratio of free apps to paid apps
  - Lower user expectation and quick decline in usage
  - No app sales revenue

- Paid apps
  - Fewer downloads but higher usage
  - High user expectations
  - App sales revenue

The Launch Effort



A crash course in iPhone Marketing

Dear Mission Control, the app store is Viral

Love, Tom

- Appearing in the app store top 100 increases your daily download figure by 2.3x*
- Our downloads increased 4x in top 10
- Lesson Learned:
  - Concentrated initial effort.

    We emailed, placed Onsite, tweeted, Social'ized, all upfront.

*Info provided by pinch media (who we use to monitor app usage).

Did it work?

You could say so……

- Released to the public October 16th 2009
- Joined the top 10 Free apps within its first 3 days
- Reached 2nd in free apps and 1st in Travel apps – UK Store
- In and out of the Top 10 travel apps and top 100 free apps
- Approaching 750,000 Downloads

What’s the payback on the app?

Well, the app is free and it doesn't currently sell tickets….or does it?

Journey Requests and Searches as a whole have increased significantly

- On any given day the iPhone train time requests makes up to 30% of all channel time table requests
- In August the iPhone provided train times for over 3 million journeys
- Last month over 40% of individuals who have downloaded the app have made at least 1 journey request
- Conversion…

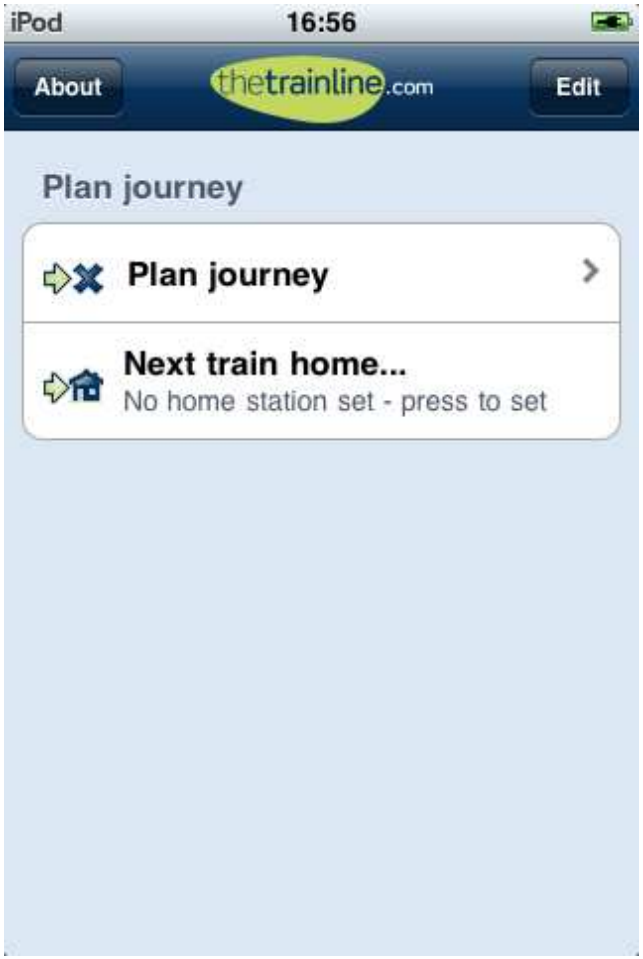
So what's Next?

- Introduce ticket purchasing functionality to the iPhone and continue to update the app with new stations (End of October?)

-Tackle other mobile platforms applying the lessons we learned from the iPhone: Android, Nokia, Blackberry and the rest

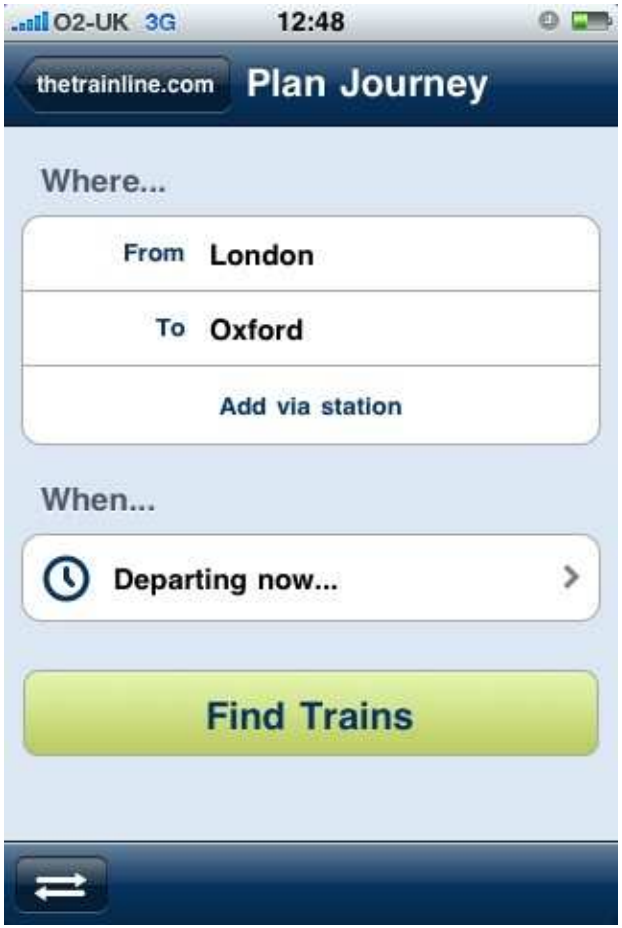
A Progressive Application

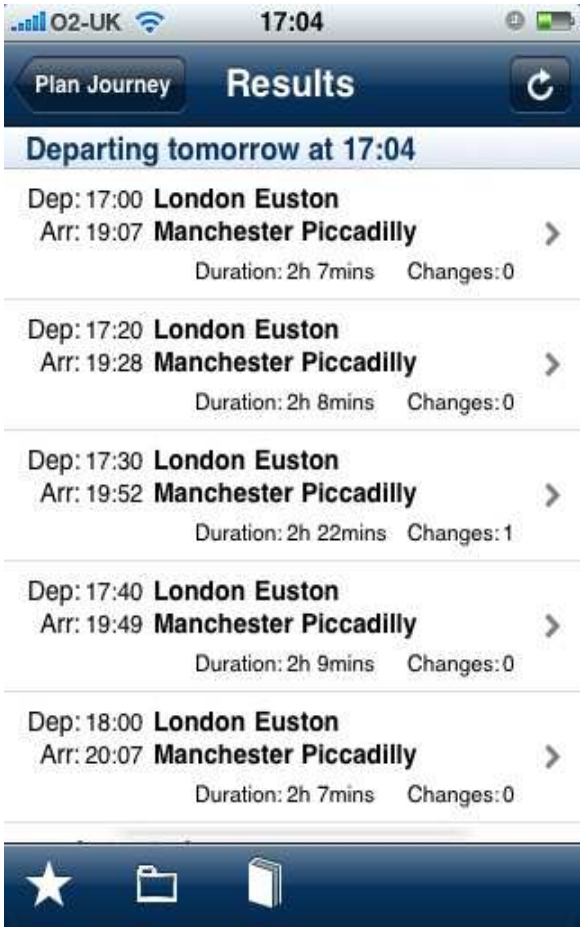
First Load



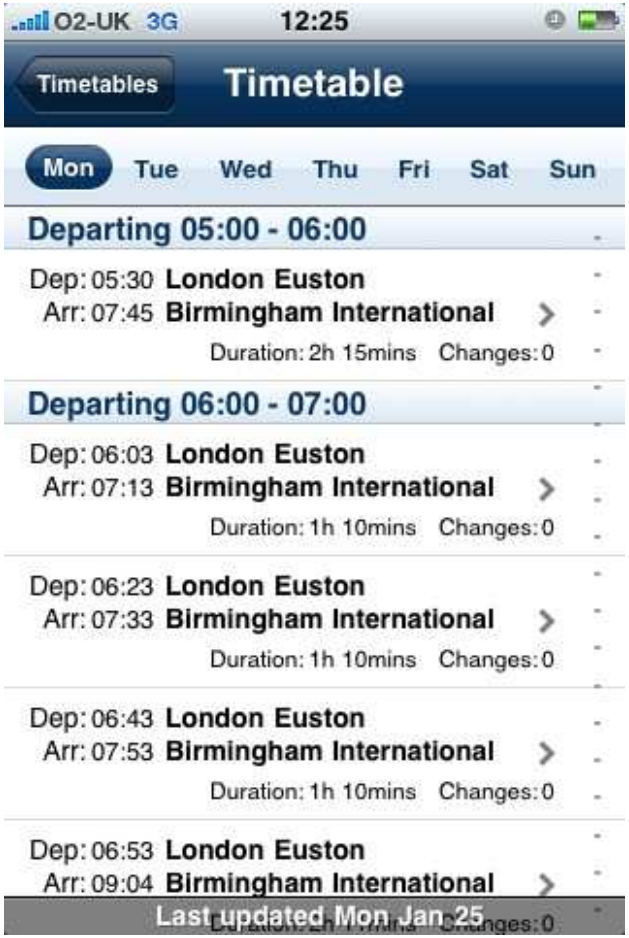
Experienced User

3 steps to your info





Offline Content



(7 Day timetable, available any time)