

News story: Train firms and tech experts unite to revolutionise rail travel

- more real-time data to support rail and tech industry collaboration and to better inform passengers
- intelligent travel apps to cater for passenger needs door-to-door
- action plan to be overseen by industry-led taskforce

Train companies are to publish more real-time information to enable tech firms to develop intelligent travel apps for the future, under new plans announced today (8 August 2018) by the Rail Minister Jo Johnson and Rail Delivery Group Chief Executive, Paul Plummer.

The aim is for closer working between rail and tech firms to bring about more seamless, hassle-free journeys, and better information for passengers on services and delays, as well as seats and on-board facilities, like toilets and refreshments. Better use of data could also allow rail companies to plan more effectively and to predict and fix issues before they arise, creating a more reliable railway.

Transport Minister Jo Johnson said:

This will speed the development of travel apps that provide passengers with helpful information about their journeys.

The government and the Rail Delivery Group, which represents the rail industry, have today published the '[Joint rail data action plan](#)' which sets out the obligations and deadlines for delivering on these ambitions, overseen by an industry-led taskforce.

Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, Paul Plummer, said:

Technology gave rise to the railway, connecting Britain, and the rail industry wants to channel this spirit to help produce cutting-edge products and services that can be exported around the world.

Digital technology in rail already means more timely information and less time spent waiting, helping to put customers in charge, and as part of the rail industry's plan to change and improve we want to use technology to give customers more and more control.

Building on data that the industry has already made available, data will be released over the coming months to provide more consistent and timely information about train services, delays and disruption. Information will

also be made available on the carriages that make up each train, enabling operators to more accurately communicate on board facilities, and to help passengers plan ahead and board in the most convenient place.

The plan will see the rail industry go further than this, by identifying and removing barriers to better information sharing by, for example, improving standardisation of how data is collected, stored and published, and improving clarity over which data is commercially sensitive and what data can be used for what purposes. The government and rail industry will also explore what incentives could be introduced to drive further innovation and data sharing, on top of that already planned.

Improving how rail companies and tech firms work together presents an opportunity for the UK to match its world class expertise in emerging technologies and address the transport challenges set out in the government's ['Future of mobility grand challenge'](#).

The next 10 years will see significant changes in the way we travel and how we develop our transport infrastructure. This includes using digital technology to make journeys on our railways easier and simpler for everyone who wants to use them.