

YOUMOBIL - Pilot final report Saxony-Anhalt

This paper describes how the new digital communication of public transport was received by youths and how it was used to promote additional service connections addressed primarily to youth.

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1. Introduction

The deliverable “Pilot final report - Saxony Anhalt” describes all the relevant aspects of the pilot in Saxony Anhalt and the main results achieved.

In particular, the following topic will be discussed:

- General description of the pilot and focus on the adopted solution
- Achievements

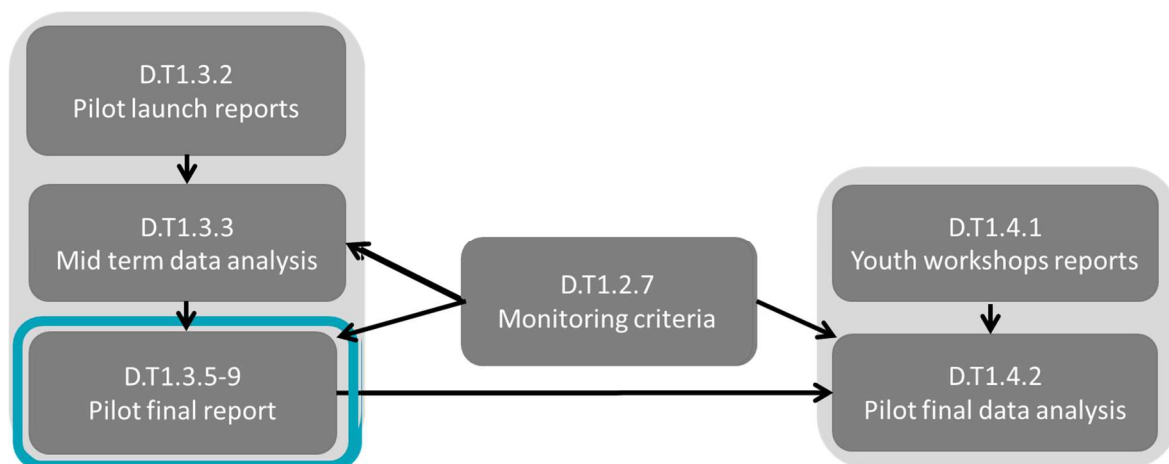
In the first part the main goal of the pilot, the target users to which the solution is addressed and all the main characteristics of the Saxony Anhalt’s pilot will be described. Moreover, the novel ICT and smart solutions and their interfaces will be analysed in detail.

The second part collects all the results achieved during the pilot experimentation, focusing on critical issues encountered, strengths and on the analysis of the most relevant quantitative indicators (cfr. D.T1.2.7 “Monitoring criteria”). It is also reported how the new digital communication of public transport was received by youths and how it was used to promote additional service connections addressed primarily to youth.

This document is one of the five final deliverables of Activity 1.3 “Piloting smart solutions to enhance rural areas' youth's access to passenger transport networks”, in fact it is strictly related to deliverables 1.3.6 - 1.3.7 - 1.3.8 - 1.3.9, in which are collected the achievements for the pilots in Croatia, Mazovia, South Moravia and Modena. All these documents follow a common template.

This document is also related to DT 1.2.7 “Monitoring criteria”, as it contains an update on the status of the assumed KPIs compared to DT1.3.3 “Mid-term data analysis”.

The results presented in this deliverable will be integrated into DT1.4.2 together with the results obtained from the workshops organised in the framework of DT1.4.1.





2. Pilot description

In Saxony-Anhalt, the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport (MLV), together with its in-house partner Nahverkehrsservice Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH (NASA GmbH), has developed a new information app on public transport services, called INSA YOUNG, as the central part of the pilot project. The new application is primarily addressed to youth and young adults in the rural areas of the federal state. The aim of the app is to present local transport services in a more visible and user-friendly way, while including functionalities that are desired by the target group. INSA YOUNG is built on the existing information app “INSA”, enhanced with new functionalities specifically tailored to the target group of young people.

The “parent” app INSA offers information services and accompanies PT users on their journey from door to door. INSA is a service provided by NASA GmbH in cooperation with Mitteldeutscher Verkehrsverbund and the participating transport operators.

The new PT information app INSA YOUNG has been developed as a client of INSA. It expands the range of information and therefore increases the attractiveness of public transport services. For example, the app enables digital call-a-bus ordering or the visualization of public transport vehicles with real-time data on a map.

The main milestones for the development of the new ICT solution were the following:

1. Market survey → 23/04 - 08/05/2020
2. Signing of the contract → 09/09/2020
3. Delivery of first Android test app → 21/09/2020
4. Delivery of first iOS test app → 13/10/2020
5. Release of iOS app → 04/03/2021
6. Release of Android app → 09/03/2021

INSA YOUNG allows users to easily find their next connection, whether this is from one transport stop to the next or door-to-door. Via the app, users are able to save their connections, making them available offline, which can be extremely useful in rural areas, where areas without signal still exist. If the journey is under 10 km long, in addition to the public transport connections, a bicycle route is shown. Furthermore the “take-me-there” function has been expanded. This function allows users to save addresses with icons, photos or initials, to allow quick routing. Through the pressing of a single icon a route from the current location to the saved address is planned immediately.

For the student summer holiday ticket, known as “Schülerferienticket”, a checking function was included. The ticket is valid in all of Saxony-Anhalt and even in some areas outside of the federal state during the summer holidays. In certain places such as Wolfsburg the ticket is only valid in some forms of public transport. To enable the user to easily and quickly check where the ticket is valid, the “Schülerferienticket-Check” was included in INSA YOUNG.

The map functionalities have been expanded by including points of interests as well as a reachability layer, which shows the user which areas are reachable by public transport within the

next 20 minutes. Moreover, the map includes a “live-map” function, which shows the movement and position of buses, trams and trains in the area.

Additionally, the digital booking of call-a-bus services required the development of a booking platform. The background system for this already existed. This background system allows the call-centre to receive bookings and pass them onto the operating transport company. Therefore, only a user interface, that is connected to the background system, needed to be developed. This user interface allows the passenger to enter a booking directly into the background system. The development of the user interface was done by NASA GmbH.

For a small group of testers, a digital display of the student summer holiday ticket was implemented. Through the development of a separate app version this extra function could be tested by a selected group of students. Social Media posts were used to inform potential testers of the planned test. In total seven local students were selected to participate in the test. After receiving a free student summer holiday ticket, the test and INSA YOUNG were introduced via two video conferences and the feedback was collected via a questionnaire.

3. Main results

In this chapter the main results achieved during the pilot experimentation will be described in detail.

In the “qualitative analysis” sub-chapter, strengths/weaknesses and opportunities/risks are reported. Moreover, the effects of COVID-19 on the pilot are included.

In the “quantitative analysis” sub-chapter, the progress of the indicators proposed in the deliverable D.T1.2.7 “Monitoring criteria” are reported.

3.1 Qualitative analysis

Through the SWOT analysis, strengths and weaknesses (internal factors) can be identified together with opportunities and threats (external factors):

- Strengths are those factors within the pilot that have a positive impact
- Weaknesses, on the other hand, result from all the obstacles within the pilot
- Opportunities are represented by those factors which, if correctly interpreted and exploited, offer the pilot development opportunities
- On the contrary, threats are the risks to be assessed and faced because they can negatively affect the pilot from the outside.

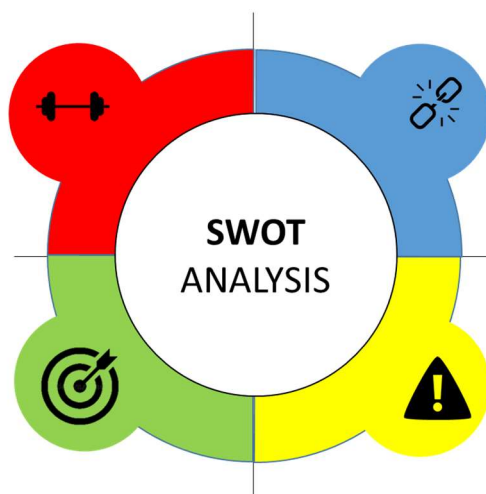
In the following figure is reported the SWOT analysis for the Saxony Anhalt’s pilot.

STRENGTHS

- Summer holiday ticket check (“Schülerferienticket-Check”)
- Live-Map
- Digital on-demand bus reservation
- Free app
- Real-time PT information

OPPORTUNITIES

- Integration of new function into INSA to improve PT information for all passengers
- Gathering usage data as a source to adapt services to user preferences.
- Increase the use of PT services
- Allow young people to have a PT platform that addresses their needs



WEAKNESSES

- Complexity of background systems
- App and some PT services in general (e.g. on-demand bus) are not widely known.
- Some functions took longer to create and proved more difficult than expected
- Collection of feedback proved difficult during the pandemic

THREATS

- Maintaining another PT information platform can be economically challenging
- Low number of users
- Pandemics like the COVID-19 pandemic can impact the use of PT services and hence the need for information apps



Among the factors that influenced the performance of the pilot, the COVID-19 pandemic should be mentioned: from March 2020, the pandemic has changed the lifestyle and mobility habits of citizens across Europe and the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the target group of INSA YOUNG in particular. The large majority of students at university continued their studies during the pandemic online, decreasing the need for travel via public transport. Schools experienced a similar situation, where online teaching was incorporated into the schedule. As the number of COVID-19 cases decreased schools began to alternate between in-person and online teaching. During the summer holidays COVID-19 preventative measures were eased, however this came at a time where students and universities were on their summer break, making it difficult to reach the target group.

As many chose to travel during the summer holidays, the number of cases quickly started to rise again once the holidays were over, leading to stronger regulations. Institutions like schools and universities experienced a strong increase in administrative tasks linked to the pandemic, such as documentation of testing (up to three times a week), parental permissions and COVID-19 concepts, which often lead to exhausted capacities. For the pilot this meant that organising further activities with schools proved difficult.

As the pandemic required various institutions to change to digital instruments, a general disinterest in digital tools appeared to grow, making it difficult to motivate the target group to participate in events. For the pilot this meant that the interaction with the target group and therefore the collection of feedback proved difficult.

As the fourth wave began in Autumn 2021 regulations have once again become stricter. These regulations included “3G measures”, which refers to a proof of vaccination against COVID-19, a proof of recovery of COVID-19 or a proof of a negative test result. In order to decrease the spread of the virus these regulations have been implemented at the workplace and in public transport.

3.2 Quantitative analysis

For each pilot, different KPIs have been identified in D.T1.2.7 “Monitoring criteria” to monitor and determine the success of the actions carried out in the pilot tests to enhance the passenger transport system for young people living in rural areas and their access to the European and national transport networks.

This chapter reports the final status of the monitored KPIs, providing an update of what was the monitored status in January 2021 (DT1.3.3 “Mid-term review”).

If any KPIs have not achieved their 'expected impacts', a detailed explanation is given in the last column of the following table.



Saxony-Anhalt				
KPI	EXPECTED IMPACTS (already estimated in D.T1.2.7)	State in January 2021 (already estimated in D.T1.3.3)	State in November 2021	State of planning (if the KPI has not been achieved, it is indicated the current status and further details useful to understand it)
number of app downloads	best value: 154.800 average value (prev. App): 44.100 worst value: 214	In progress	Android Downloads: 1666 total since release of app Monthly maximum: 438 (July 2021) Monthly minimum: 12 (April 2021) iOS Downloads: 1048 total since release of app Monthly maximum: 273 (Mai 2021) Monthly minimum: 10 (April 2021)	
number of new users (compared to those using the previous app)	10.000	In progress	Android users = 550 iOS users = 368 (October 2021)	
number of users using a specific function	-	In progress	Summer holiday ticket check function was used 789 times (max. no. 396 in July 2021) Take-me-there function was used 1468 times Map (incl. live map) was opened 27 747 times	



number of tickets sold through the app	210 students from two Grammar Schools 4 young adults in an Inhouse-Workshop	Not achievable		Tickets cannot be bought via the app and therefore this form of quantitative analysis is not possible.
number of youths involved in the youth workshops (D.T1.4.1) and raised awareness for the pilot service	-	In progress	10	
young users' level of satisfaction (e.g. score scale to be defined) of the YOUMOBIL service collected during the youth workshops	-	In progress	3,4	50 % voted 4 out of 5 40 % voted 3 out of 5 10 % voted 2 out of 5

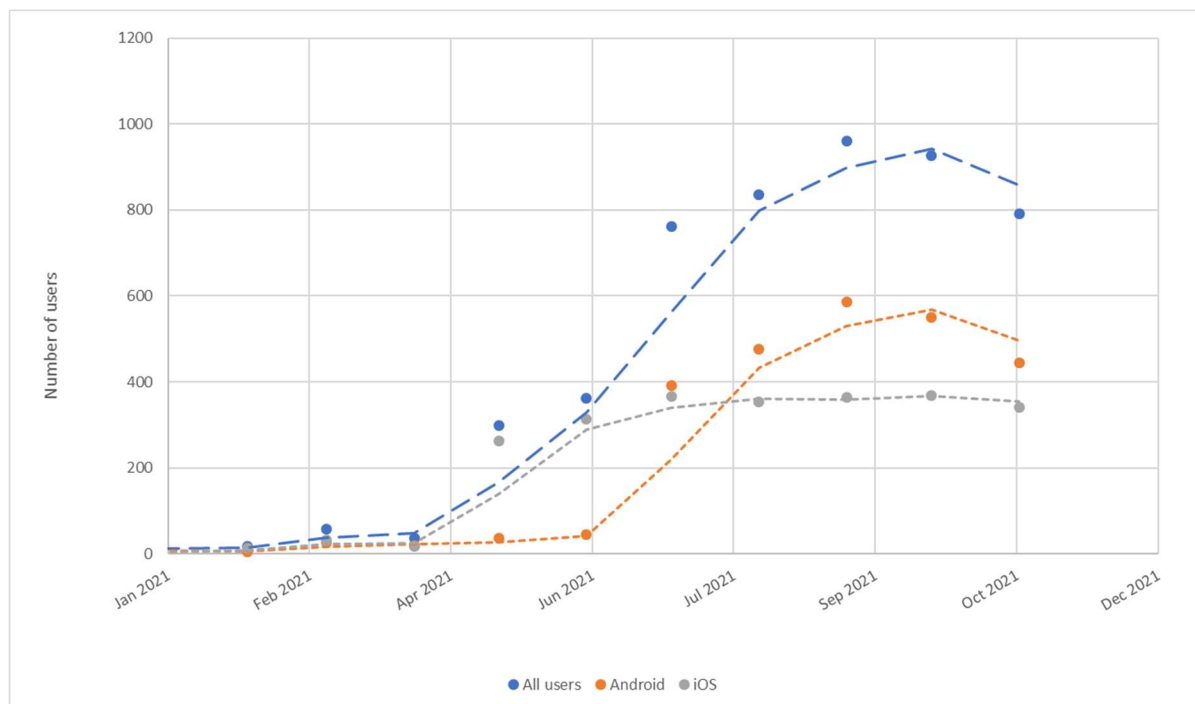


Figure 1 - Total number of users per month of INSA YOUNG compared to the number of Android and iOS users

INSA YOUNG has received very positive reviews in the Google Play Store as well as Apple's app store. In both stores the rating has an average above 4 out of 5, with the rating in the app store being 5 out of 5 and in the Google Play Store 4.4 out of 5.

During the test of the digital display of the student summer holiday ticket, the live-map and the check function were mentioned most often and rated as the best features. Furthermore, all testers of this workshop had plans to continue using the app in the future.

4. Conclusions

The release of the app was delayed due to complications during the development phase. Nonetheless a significant number of people have been using the app and are continuing to use the app. Since March 2021 the number of users has continually grown until October 2021. The following month showed a slight decrease in numbers, however at the time of analysis only 90 % of November can be analysed. In addition, the fourth wave of the pandemic started in the Autumn in 2021 leading to stronger measures such as a proof of vaccination, recovery or a negative test results in order to use PT services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the use of public transport across Europe and the world. Through measures to prevent the spread of the virus the use of PT services has decreased, as measures have included online teaching, working from home and the closing of various location (e.g. sports clubs, restaurants etc.). Therefore, the need for travel and the need for PT services including information applications was reduced.

In comparison to the existing app INSA, the number of INSA YOUNG users is rather small. However, this needs to be put into perspective as the parent app has existed for a large number of years and therefore has had more marketing campaigns over time, a greater chance to become known and a higher likelihood to be recommended by friends and family. Moreover, marketing materials have been directly aimed at the target group via schools, however it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of this kind of marketing, as it remains unclear how many schools passed the material on to their students.

A ticket purchasing function was not included in the app, as this in itself is an extremely large task that is time-intensive, very expensive and difficult to execute in general and in the context of a pilot almost impossible. Furthermore, many students already hold season tickets and therefore the use of this complex function is not expected to be in proportion to the costs. Nonetheless the test with the digital display of the student summer holiday ticket has shown, that there is a certain interest to have such ticket options available digitally. This kind of development could be considered in the future after further research. The development of the student summer holiday checking functions and in particular the related shortcut on the home screen of the app has highlighted a ticket that is only available for the target group.

The workshops with the target group have shown that overall users are satisfied with the app, but there is room for improvement. New functions such as the live-map, the online booking of on-demand buses and the personalisation abilities were received positively. Aspects of the app that were poorly received seem to be more linked to the offer of public transport services rather than the delivery of information of those services. The group of students in the second workshop seemed to be slightly overwhelmed by the volume of information available in INSA YOUNG. However, in the discussion part of the workshops, participants highlighted that despite areas of improvement they were satisfied with INSA YOUNG.

Overall the steady increase in users shows a general satisfaction of users. Furthermore, the feedback received by public ratings in the app stores underlines this.