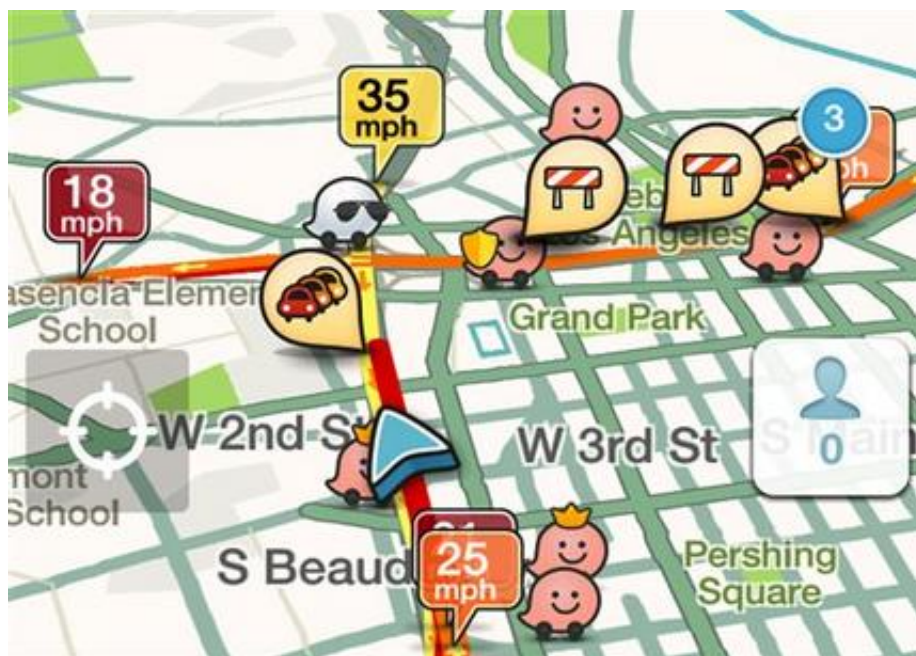


Thanksgiving travel woes? There's an app for that

November 26 2014, by Toby Sterling



This cell phone screen capture shows traffic alerts along a route displayed on a cell phone app called Waze, in Los Angeles on Monday, Nov. 24, 2014. Whether traveling by plane, train or automobile, getting from Point A to Point B can be a headache. Technology provides relief in the form of apps that can let you know which roads are clogged, how long the wait is at the airport and whether the trains are running on time. Credit: AP Photo/WAZE

Traveling by plane, train or automobile can be a headache. Mixing in Thanksgiving can make it a throbbing migraine. Technology provides some pain relief in the form of apps to let you know which roads are

clogged, what gate your flight leaves from and whether trains are running on time.

The American Automobile Association forecasts that the Wednesday through Sunday period will see more than 46 million Americans travel at least 50 miles from home - the most Thanksgiving road warriors since 2007. About nine in 10 are expected to drive - or be driven - with about 3.6 million flying.

Here are some ways to make the journey a bit less taxing.

PLANES

FlightAware tracks not only your flight's status but also any delays or cancellations, even gate changes. Set it up for a specific trip and it will send alerts so you don't have to keep checking for changes.

Seats matter, especially if you're traveling with kids. The ExpertFlyer app has a feature called "seat alert," which informs you when a seat you want to snag becomes available.

If you have the pleasure of a connecting flight, consider FlightBoard. Every five minutes, it updates with the latest from airport departure boards at over 3,000 airports worldwide. If you're picking up at the airport, it's one way to find out whether the flight will land on time.

Or, if you want to keep it simple, get the app of the airline you're flying. That will typically let you do things such as get a boarding pass or - gulp - rebook your flight.

TRAINS

While Amtrak has an app that lets you make or change reservations and

check the status of your train, local and regional public transit doesn't have the same range of resources as air travel.

At least 70 percent of larger transit agencies have apps that offer real-time travel information, according to Darnell Grisby, director of policy development and research at the American Public Transportation Association. As for using your phone to buy and manage tickets - that's not as common an option, but some agencies offer it.

AUTOMOBILES

Traffic apps are a familiar friend for many commuters. Some, such as Sigalert, offer color-coded highway maps - red for "jammed up," yellow for "slow," green for "full speed ahead." Sometimes the data that inform the maps are just outdated enough that they can lead a driver onto a freeway that may have been traffic-free five minutes ago, but now has a building bottleneck.

The popular app Waze tries to solve that problem by asking drivers to report traffic and other problems, which the [app](#) then shares with other users.

AND JUST IN CASE

Should everything go sideways, and you're suddenly stranded, Priceline and Hotel Tonight can help you find a room nearby.

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