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New app helps transit users

BY SCOTT LARSON, THE STARPHOENIX OCTOBER 3, 2012

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Chad Jones and Jess Richard of CollegeMobile unveil a new app for city transit users. Photograph by: Greg Pender, The StarPhoenix

Not sure where to catch the bus in Saskatoon, which route to take or when a bus will arrive?

A new free iPhone app can answer all those questions, and more.

Local company CollegeMobile has developed the new iPhone app that will help transit users do everything from locate the nearest bus stop, find out when the bus is scheduled to arrive and even set reminders for themselves.

"After a discussion with the City of Saskatoon we realized the need for a transit app for the city," said CollegeMobile CEO Chad Jones.

The Saskatoon Transit Touch & Go is a free app that should be available in the iTunes App Store any day now.

The app allows users to:

Locate bus stops nearest to you and select your desired pickup location;

Obtain predictions of upcoming departure times for your selected stop;

Set reminders to ensure you don't miss your bus;

View and follow the route to your destination;

Favourite the bus stops you regularly use;

View information on fares and more.

Jones said the app, which will be available on the iPhone, iPad and iPod, is able to figure out where you are, and then shows you the bus stops nearby.

"It will load up the information, tell you the buses that are coming, and it will show you the route."

Kevin Peacock, with the city's corporate information services, said the app will benefit people using Saskatoon Transit Services.

"It's all going to improve the experience for people using transit," Peacock said. "What I like about it is you can choose your favourite route, which is the only route you use and not worry about anything else."

Jones said he thinks the reminders are also an important feature of the app.

"You can set your reminder, go back to what you are doing and then get that notification 15 minutes before your bus arrives," said Jones, who worked on the application at night and on weekends with a couple of colleagues, Daniel Crampton and Zunyi Lin.

Making it a free was also important, he said.

"We are one of the few groups that could do this, and thought this would be a valuable thing we could put together and give to the city," Jones said. "Part of what we want to do is to give back to the community and this is our way of giving back."

CollegeMobile is also working on a transit app for the City of Regina.

To download the free iPhone app visit: iTunes App Store and search Saskatoon Transit Touch & Go.

CollegeMobile is a developer of smartphone and tablet apps for Apple iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows Phone. The company, which now has 20 employees, has published more than 40 apps on all of the popular App Stores, including: Carleton University, University of Saskatchewan, Credit Union Central of Canada, itracks, Sask. Party and Affinity Credit Union.

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