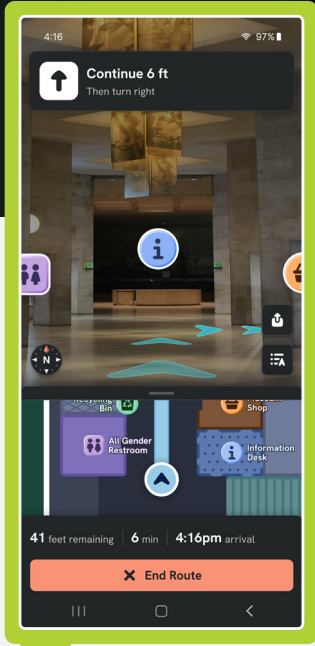# GoodMaps with Network Rail

Network Rail is the government-owned infrastructure manager for the British rail network. And, while owning **20,000+ miles of track** and serving **2,500+ stations** across the country, most of these stations are managed by one of twenty-plus Train Operating Companies (TOCs). However, the **twenty** they operate (including London-based stations like **Victoria**, **Euston**, and **Waterloo**) are all mainline stations and major mobility hubs.

When Network Rail and GoodMaps partnered to explore how they could best work together, it began what was to be an intriguing and productive conversation. These discussions revolved around how GoodMaps' wayfinding service could be integrated across the network. And as such — due in part to the project's likely scale and the possibility for wholesale change for all travellers — it was a nuanced, complex, and groundbreaking process.

The Challenges of Wayfinding For Everyone

There were several reasons for Network Rail to want to work with a wayfinding provider like GoodMaps. However, the primary early motivator was a departmental desire to embrace a customer-first approach. (Network Rail is primarily an engineering and infrastructure company.) The team from their customer experience and accessibility department was keen to provide a holistic and consistent personalized navigation service for all travellers. After testing multiple engineering options, it became apparent that any solution that only focused on accessibility would not be enough, that they needed a service that could foster inclusivity and thus assist the largest possible audience. After being championed by several other UK train operating companies (TOCs), Network Rail realized there was an opportunity to embrace and disseminate the service throughout the network.

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Connecting people is about more than building the right infrastructure.
– Network Rail on Social Performance –

Network Rail Facts & Figures

- In the UK, there are over **1.5 billion** rail journeys per year.

- **10% of transit** in the UK is via public transport.

- There are over **250,000 Disabled Persons Railcards** in circulation, with an estimated **25% of the population** experiencing some form of disability.

- Over the last ten years, passenger assist requests have **risen by around 50%.**

  (Between October 16, 2022 – January 7, 2023, this equated to **300,000 requests**. A figure that is only likely to increase over time.)

Too often, when passengers arrive at unfamiliar stations, they feel uncertain about exactly where to go. And, even if they are familiar with the station, if construction work has occurred or a service has been moved, it could easily lead to confusion. Alongside these issues, whenever Network Rail evaluates the merits of a new service, it also needs to consider whether it would work in an unstaffed location. These concerns, as well as the opportunity to augment and increase the capacity of their existing passenger assistance services, were what Network Rail wanted to address first and foremost. And so, what impressed them most during early conversations was GoodMaps' beginnings as an accessible navigation aid for blind and low-vision users and the broad inclusivity of its developing platform.

Not only could the partnership help travellers who had disabilities (including those who are deaf, wheelchair users, people with neurological conditions, or anyone anxious about travelling), but there was a way to supplement and improve wayfinding for all their visitors. They understood that by using GoodMaps, they could refine their instruction management (navigation, schedules, notifications) and alleviate the effects of extreme disruption (breakdowns, accidents, re-routing), all while creating a consistent user experience from one station to another. It would also enable them to address further Safety, Health and Environmental Performance (SHEP) considerations.

This customer-first approach would mean that everyone, irrespective of their reason for requiring navigational guidance, information, or support, would be met on their terms with a wholly inclusive service.

Building a Robust Solution

Another area where GoodMaps stood out was that it is infrastructure-free, meaning – in an industry often based in listed buildings, where alterations are either not allowed or complicated to receive permission for – it would be easy to integrate.

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All that would be required was a non-intrusive scan of the station with a handheld LiDAR scanner (usually taking just a few hours), an obvious priority for a busy and continually active transit hub. Network Rail could seldom afford, either socially or economically, to close stations for several days or weeks to have beacons or signs installed. It also negates the necessity for significant, ongoing maintenance, another consideration that would cause continued delays for commuters, especially given the size and daily usage of the UK's rail network. This lack of physical infrastructure would also support Network Rail's push for increased sustainability.

> *Rail is already the greenest form of public transport*
> *and we're on a journey to a cleaner, greener future.*
> **– Network Rail on Sustainability –**

And so, in late 2023, Network Rail selected GoodMaps as its delivery partner and awarded a national contract to provide inclusive digital wayfinding at all of their mainline stations from April 2024. This ongoing process has already proven beneficial and bodes well for the future of an increasingly interconnected rail experience.

Looking Towards an Accessible Network

Following mapping at their mainline stations (including those in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Birmingham, and London), Network Rail would now love its customers to have a consistent experience across the UK. And so – to help create a wholly accessible and completely inclusive network – they are championing adoption with their partners, including the Rail Delivery Group and the Department for Transport.

Network Rail × GoodMaps

- Over 2023, in collaboration with multiple TOCs, GoodMaps was deployed at four **North West & Central** (NW&C) stations to assess the effectiveness of the technology; this test period facilitated approximately **7,000 routes**.

- During its 2024 launch in **Q2 across nineteen mainline** stations – with no promotion – the GoodMaps app enabled over **2,000 journeys** (approximately 150 weekly requests).

- Includes **1,000s of unique** destinations across multiple stations.

- And **130 hours** to scan all 19 mainline stations.

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