MOBILITY AS A SERVICE

A NEW MOBILITY MODEL WITH DATA AS ITS RAW MATERIAL

The increasing use of personal means of transportation during the last decades, combined with the growing demand for less motorized traffic in city centers, means that the mobility issue does not currently have a ready-made solution. The focus on 'king car' will shift to alternative transportation options.

But how can we ensure that the use of these alternative transportation options, often set up by different providers, each with their own (software) platforms, can equal the convenience and autonomy of a car?
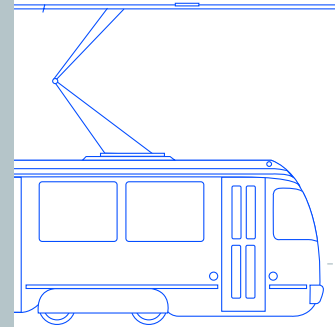
To provide an answer to this, more and more companies and governments are focusing on developing comprehensive 'MaaS' solutions. Also curious about what this entails? Learn more in this brAInfood!

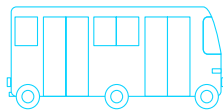brAInfood of the Knowledge Centre Data & Society

WHAT IS MAAS?

MaaS is the **integration** of different forms of transport services (both public and private) into **a single mobility service** offered via a digital platform (an app). It comprises **a single channel of payment** instead of multiple ticketing and payment operations. Moreover, a combination of services are clustered: advice, information, ticketing, payment and travel. The MaaS operator forms the bridge between the demand for mobility (traveller) and the mobility offer (the carriers).

Here below are a couple of **examples** of MaaS services:
- Whim combines all modes of transport in one application.
- Olympus Mobility is a business to business provider and is focused on ticketing and handling of various predefined options from which employees can choose.
- Modalizy offers a system that allows companies to manage the mobility needs of their employees and their travel expenses.
- Floya collects all transport possibilities in Brussels (the four public transport organisations, a taxi service, and several shared bikes, -steps and -cars).

WHAT ARE THE (DIS)ADVANTAGES?

MaaS offers a new way of mobility that brings many **advantages**:
- It offers users more **flexibility and convenience**: with one service, you can get from A to B, even if you use various mobility services.
- Because you are **not the owner**, but the tenant, you do not have to worry about repairs, insurance or extra costs.
- With MaaS, mobility solutions are used in a much **more efficient way**: fewer cars are needed per inhabitant and therefore fewer parking spaces, fewer traffic jams, less road maintenance, fewer accidents, …
- MaaS is a **sustainable solution** for cities and users, because it can greatly reduce CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions from the transport system.

However, there are also **obstacles** that may hinder the implementation or use of MaaS:
- **Sharing data** between the different mobility services and integrating them into the (digital) service is not an easy task, both technically and in terms of privacy. With whom are all these data shared (coordinator of the platform, partners, …)?
- Many mobility services focus on the individual user, which conflicts with the pursuit of the 'collective good' of public transport. In MaaS, both public and private players must **work together**.
- By switching to a MaaS platform, you risk **excluding certain people**. Not everyone has a smartphone, uses mobile data, or is familiar with the use of such platforms.
- The **government structure** and the **division of powers** in the area of mobility make it difficult to develop regulations for MaaS.

CONCLUSION

Mobility as a service is a **revolutionary concept**, but like many other innovations (think of self-driving cars), its **realisation is slowed down** by the reality of our complex society. In our country, for example, mobility policy is not only coordinated at the federal level, but also the regions, local authorities and the European level have a say in it. Because the pieces of the puzzle are divided among different stakeholders, the **regulatory process** takes a long time.

Nevertheless, a lot is already happening at companies with mobility solutions. Governments and MaaS providers hope for large-scale use, but according to recent figures, the growth in the number of users of MaaS platforms is still small. To truly launch the concept, people will have to be **convinced to use MaaS applications**.