MICHAEL JAMES DESIGN CONTEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Analyse the First Bus app from the perspective of an older retired person.

- First Bus is owned by a British multi-national transport group, based in Aberdeen Scotland called First Group PLC

- It is also the second largest regional bus operator in the UK owning approximately 5,000 buses

- First Bus is accessible in 40 of the UK's largest towns and cities and employs 14,500 people across all operations

- Environmental successes include their minimal carbon footprint, and their aim to operate zero-emissions by 2035

- First Bus are also recognized for their advancement in technology for example digital transformation making ticket purchases easier as well as going contactless across all their buses

- First Buses underlying aim is to be more respondable and reliable to the user ultimately encouraging people to move out of their cars and onto buses, which would result in greater profits for the company as well as improving air quality and reducing emissions
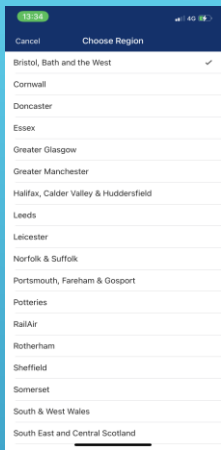
FIRST BUS

- Arthritis is a common problem an older retired person would face. It causes joint pain and inflammation which can restrict your movement. This can make any experience in life become uncomfortable. Relating to the First Bus app, a person with this problem may want to sit down straight away to minimize the pain they feel. If they are having trouble maneuvering their way around the First Bus app to show their ticket this could cause unprovoked stress making their experience unbearable resulting in them not wanting to use the service again.

- Another common problem would include asthma. Common symptoms include; a tight sensation in the chest, loss of breath and more fatally an asthma attack which can result in death. Similarly, to my last point, it is important that the user journey is swift and easy for a person suffering from this problem. This is because the person can feel pressured by other people waiting to get on the bus. For example, people queuing getting ready to show their ticket on their phone using the first bus app may feel frustrated waiting for an older person struggling to use the app. An older person may feel overwhelmed by the situation triggering a disruption in them breathe resulting in an asthma attack.

- Blindness or reduction of sight is a problem which makes people's lives much more difficult. As we develop as society technology progresses and most things have transformed to a digital version. Although you can still buy a bus ticket verbally with cash and card it is proved that using an app such as the First Bus app is way more efficient and easier. An older person may be encouraged by younger people such as their grandchildren or even their own children to follow the social trend of contactless and mobile apps. The problem here being text can be small on a screen and hard to read. This goes the same for icons along a navigation bar, an older poorer sighted person may struggle to work out what they are tapping on.

- My final problem I want to speak about that may affect the user journey and experience from an older retired person using the First Bus app is dementia. Dementia is a progressive disorder that affects memory and overall brain function. This could heavily affect and cause problems for an older retired person using the First Bus app. This is because an affected memory can result in forgetting the process of simple task they have done before multiple times. Examples of this could be that the person could forget where they want to travel to, whether they have paid, which bus to get, what stop to get off at and in general how to use the app. Most people with dementia go into intensive care and would not be likely travel around like how a younger person would. But for someone who is in the early stages of dementia and is too old to drive they would have to take the bus to get to where they want to.

COMMON PROBLEMS OLDER RETIRED PEOPLE FACE

- Arguably the main feature that makes the First Bus app efficient and accessible is the navigation bar along the bottom. This consists of 5 different sections which store related information to its navigation title, making it easy for the user to find what they are looking for.

- The plan section is there for planning your journey. This is where you can work out which journey you would like to take to get to your destination. Usually there are more than one option. This is a useful feature to an older retired person because they can customise their journey. An older retired person is likely to be less mobile meaning they may want to walk less so they can decide to pick a longer journey route (taking an extra bus) to benefit them by walking less.

- The mTickets section provides the user with a virtual wallet which stores valid bus passes, in addition to this you can purchase tickets and decide whether you want a: single, day, night, week, month, month+, student travel or active promotions. The useful feature of this is that the layout complimented by different colours per category makes it easy to see and tell the difference between each ticket category. An older retired person can be overwhelmed by a lot of text on a screen especially if they have poor vision.

- The buses section is where you can search for buses to see their route maps and timetables. As well as this it includes a feature called "Space Checker". Space Checker lets you check which bus services are likely to have space on them at different times of the day. The amount of space on the bus is predicted by passenger data which is usually accurate. This feature is useful to an old retired person that may be in a wheelchair can check beforehand how many wheelchair spaces are available.

- The info section provides technical support, questions about the app and general customer service. An older retired person someone likely to be new to technology may find this section very helpful. This is because it includes a visual tutorial with description of how to work your way around the app. Furthermore, it includes a customer service contact point where further issues not displayed with a solution can hopefully be solved by the First Bus app team.

- The profile section is where you can set your preferred location and customise map of services near you. The user has the choice of 3 map of services near you (5 min, 10 min or 15 min walk). This can be useful to an older retired person as they can select a tighter region of services. This will reduce the number of buses and bus routes limiting travel, but this increases connivence as the older retired person won't have to walk as far to get a bus.

CURRENT ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN FIRST BUS APP

1) Open First Bus app
And find your region.

An older retired person may require assistance when selecting a region due to the miniature font size. However, this can be changed in the settings of your phone, not the app.
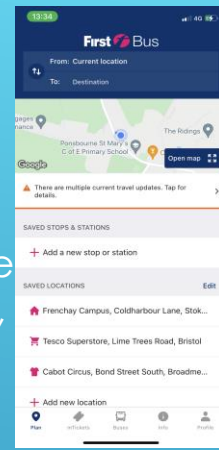
2) To plan a journey, use the navigation bar at the bottom of the screen and tap 'Plan'.

An older retired person may use the saved stops & stations feature so they will not go through all the effort to typing in manually their destination.
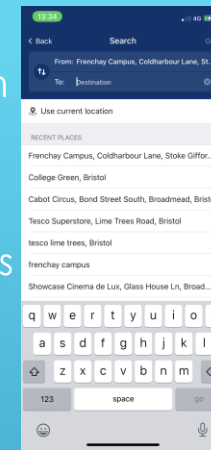
3) Select where you are travelling from, and where your desired destination is.

There is a feature at the top titled 'use current location'. This can be useful to an older retired person as the location they type in may not be accurate.
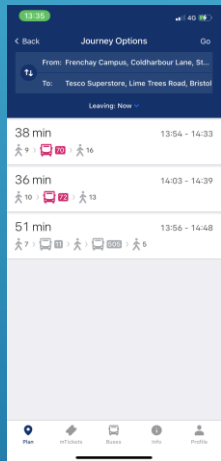
4) Choose which bus route you want to take.

An older retired person can choose whether they want to take a longer journey which will require getting another bus but will reduce the amount they will have to walk.
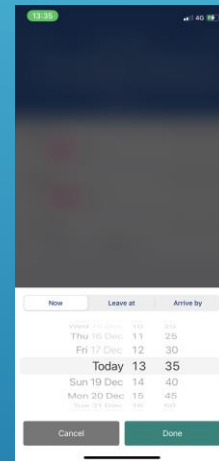
5) Select/Change your departure time.

The arrive by tool allows people to plan to get to the destination on time.
This is useful for an older retired person as travelling to the bus stop may take them longer than the average person.
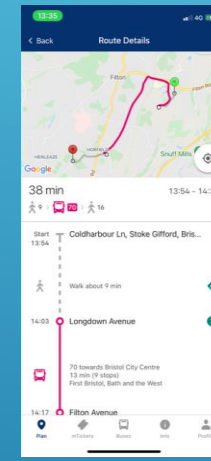
6) Explore the route details.

Specific details regarding the journey are displayed here. An older retired person can use this to their advantage by finding out how long each part of the journey will take.

ANNOTATED VISUAL ANALYSIS OF MOBILE APP

This mood board displays:

First column – Why someone may use First Bus (travel to work, to meet people and to travel in general)

Second column – Process of using public transport (finding which route/bus stop to go to, waiting for the bus to come and then paying for your ticket).

Third column – First Bus Brand (Logo, colour pallette and region of operation).

ANNOTATED VISUAL ANALYSIS 2 (MOOD BOARD)

First Bus customer

Phase 1: Plan your journey

Actions/Tasks:

- Open First Bus app
- Tap plan in the navigation bar along the bottom
- Select where you are travelling from
- Select where you are travelling to
- Select which route you would like to take
- Walk to bus stop

Emotions/Pain points:

- Understanding what each time stamp means

Opportunities for features/Improvements:

- Clearer selection process Highlighting time stamps with different colours to stand out which may support the needs of an older retired person who is poorly sighted or new to using technology such as mobile apps.

First Bus customer

Phase 2: Payment

Actions/Tasks:

- Open First Bus app
- Tap mTickets in the navigation bar along the bottom
- Tap Buy and select the ticket you wish to purchase
- Buy with Apple pay if you have an iPhone or choose a different payment method then proceed
- (Optional) Add voucher or promo code to redeem

Emotions/Pain points:

- Expiration date
- Security risk if someone gets access of your phone/First Bus app

Opportunities for features/Improvements:

- To improve security a pin could be asked for already saved card details
- Loyalty reward scheme relating to chosen form of payment (customer receives benefits for choosing how they want to pay – apple pay or Visa or Mastercard or debit card)

First Bus customer

Phase 3: Journey

Actions/Tasks:

- Finding a seat
- Pressing stop
- Waiting to get off at desired stop

Emotions/Pain points:

- Having no recollection of where you are (no info screen/speaker to let know which stop you are at) - this is made more difficult in the dark if you have not been to the destination before

Opportunities for features/Improvements:

- Alert user with notification on First Bus app at which stop they are at (visually or spoken) with remaining stops left

USER JOURNEY

- From my analysis the two main problems an older retired person would face using the First Bus app conclude lack of experience with advanced technology and not being able to see the key features or small writing on the screen due to impaired vision. Lack of experience regarding technology is a common problem older people face when using mobile apps because they did not grow up with the kind of technology that is presented to us today. First Bus app combat this by including an info page that displays a tutorial of how to use the app. The First Bus app includes many more features that can improve user experience. An example being 'saved stops & stations' where someone with dementia may find useful as they are not required to retype their destination and current location. An older retired person with impaired vision may struggle to find features like this as they are not bold enough on the app. They also may not understand what every bit of information on the screen means. This is where my design concept provides a solution for this, bringing up a key highlighting small bits of blunt text with a detailed description in bold writing what it means. A lack of understanding information can knock an older retired persons confidence and cause them not to use the First Bus app but instead go back to traditional ways. Nevertheless, there are a lack of constraints regarding the First Bus app as it is free to use and available for everyone. The only problem is if you don't have access to a mobile device, you will not be able to use the First Bus App, however, this does not stop you from using First Bus services.

DESIGN BRIEF (ANALYSES KEY ASPECTS AND KEY DESIGN CHALLENGES)

Here I created a new concept in which the user would open their First Bus app, and this would be the first thing they would see. This is a much simpler design that would address the needs of an older retired person. It is a known fact that aging is the most common reason for people's visual quality to decrease which is due to macular degeneration. I believe this layout is a much more obvious and simpler way for older retired users to access the main reason why they downloaded the app – to find out how they are going to travel to the place they wish to go.
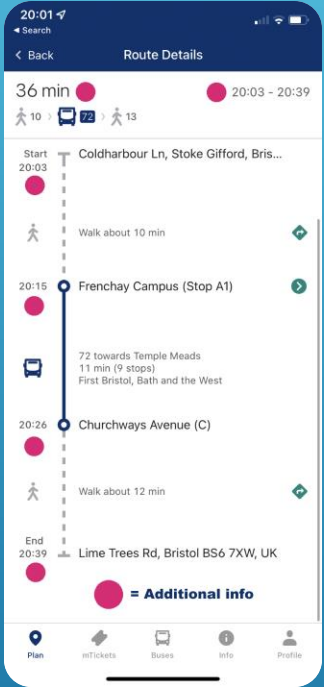
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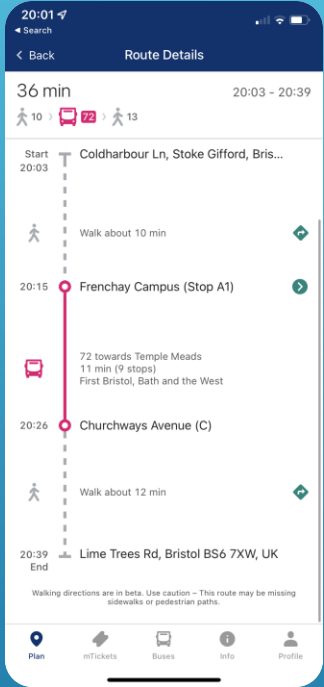
In my second concept I try to address the needs of an older retired person, more specifically, someone with dementia. On the old interface there are many different time stamps throughout the plan your journey section. These time stamps can be obvious for many people but for those who have an affected brain and have memory loss, simple time stamps can become confusing resulting in a miscalculation of arrival times. My new concept implements a key system where you hold your finger over the pink circles next to the time stamp a definition comes up explaining what each time stamp means. For example, if you held your finger over the pink circle in the top left a definition would pop up saying "Total journey time expectancy: 36 minutes".

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS AND RE-DESIGN CONCEPT