CitySwift raises €2m following launch of "powerful" AI platform

Galway start-up CitySwift has raised €2m after launching an AI platform which predicts passenger capacity across bus networks.

Galway-based transport data company CitySwift has announced that it has raised an additional €2m, bringing the company's funding to date to €3.5m.

Founded in 2016 by Brian O'Rourke and Alan Farrelly, CitySwift has developed a cloud-native, data-driven technology platform for urban bus networks.

The company intends to use the funds to hire 25 additional staff in Ireland and remote, over the next 12 months, and to speed up product development. The hires will be across commercial and technical roles including business development, customer success, product, data science and engineering, accelerating the expansion of the business in the European market, where they are already working with a number of public authorities.

CitySwift's industry-leading data engine for public transport has been rolled out by a number of the UK's largest listed passenger transport companies, including National Express and Go-Ahead Group, who have collective revenues of over €8 billion, where it is being used to reduce operating costs and increase reliability.

The technology has enabled an agile response to social distancing measures and lockdown restrictions being eased assisting bus companies in planning and reacting to the new normal.

CitySwift's latest solution, a passenger-facing bus capacity checker using AI predictions, works like Google Maps but with the added feature that passengers are able to see how busy their bus is going to be up to two weeks in advance of travelling.

It generates dynamic predictions of bus loadings to inform passengers' journey choices whilst capacities are restricted and as new travel patterns emerge.

Passengers can access a colour-coded timetable of bus routes, which shows what buses are likely to be busy or have space, on a stop-by-stop basis. This technology has recently been deployed across Go-Ahead Group's entire UK operations via 'When2Travel.co' with other bus operators showing interest in rapidly deploying the solution to encourage passengers back onto the bus.

"One thing we've come to learn through Covid-19 is just how important data is - whether for

businesses trying to operate, governments trying to reopen or individuals trying to understand this pandemic," said Brian O'Rourke, CEO of CitySwift.

"This has been even more evident for public transport companies as they monitored the effects of lockdown restrictions on their networks and model and plan for future scenarios as restrictions have begun to ease.

"The CitySwift platform has been leveraged to enable our clients and their passengers to make informed, data-driven decisions as they navigate the road to recovery in these ever-changing times," he added.

On CitySwift's new When2Travel solution, Martijn Gilbert, managing director of Go North East, said CitySwift have brought a more detailed and comprehensive solution to the market.

"I think it could be the most powerful use of big data yet in terms of aiding local bus networks and customer service. That's a bold statement, but we are really excited about it."

CitySwift's latest funding round was led by Irelandia Investments, Act Venture Capital, Mike McGearty (former CEO of CarTrawler), and other notable Irish transport entrepreneurs.

By Stephen Larkin

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