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Analyse the first bus app from the perspective of an older retired person

Design Contexts (UFCFBL-30-1)

Coursework: Project and Portfolio

A project analyzing the design elements and usability of a Bristol based service.

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Mood board



Research into user group

Font and Colour:

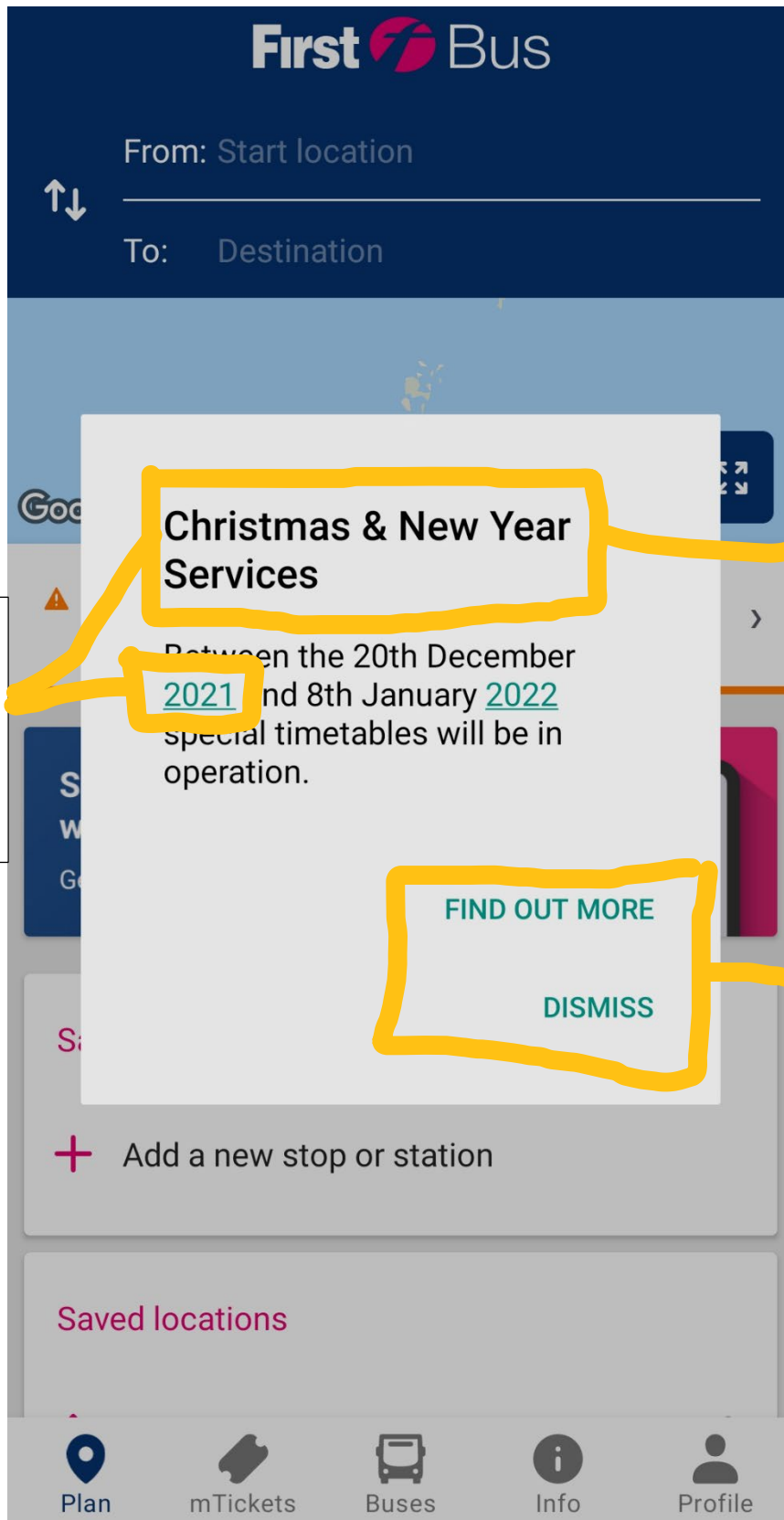
The font size should be kept a readable size around the 36-48 point range and a default font as they are usually the easiest to read. Additionally, the text should also be in contrast with the background to stand out and make easier to read. Bright colours should be avoided as this could harm users with sensitive eyes. In addition to this, as a few people age there detection of colour may get worse. Therefore, an app that covers a service this large should have a consistet colour scheme with little variety, at most it should be different shades of a specific colour. Furthemore, colours are capable of symbolism, this means colours should be picked with considertation and not at random. The best colour choice would be highly contrasting colours, in the case of the first bus app it is black on white or pink on white.

Layout:

Items/widgets should be clearly visible and accessible. An example of a bad widget on the first bus app would be the updates section on the first page this is not the most obvious section, hard to miss and the icon for it is small and barely visbile. Furthermore, there is no break between the updates and the map, having a break in between sections is important as it allows the users to click on a specific section easily without accidentally clicking something else. In addition to this, an app should avoid complicated navigation and the navigation bar should be visible at all times in case users want to go back.

Visual analysis

Pop-up on front page



Occasionally, first bus app will have pop-up information when you first load up the app - this is useful for all. For example, they recently had a pop-up reminding people to wear masks on public transport.

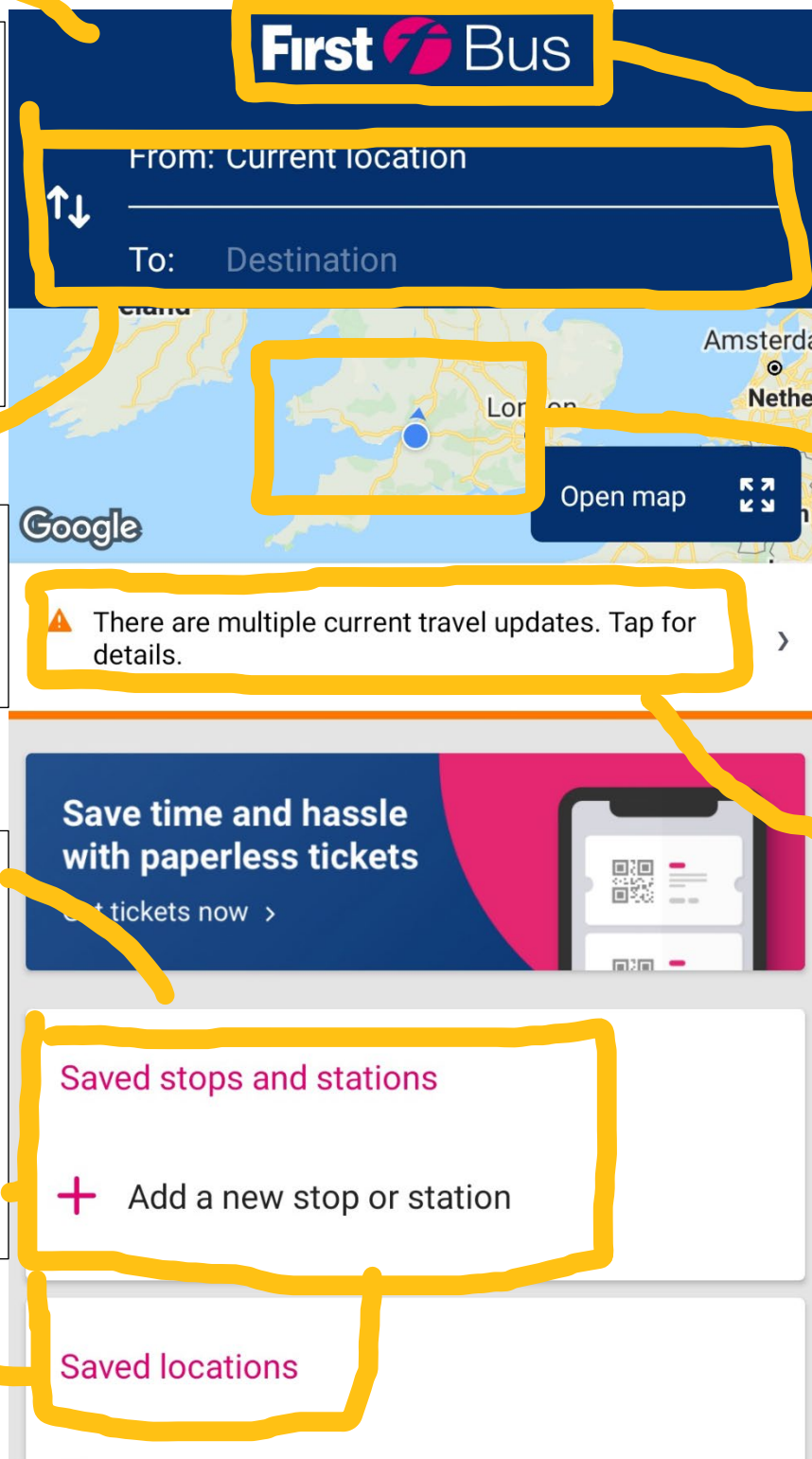
The layout of the information is clear and easy to read due to the hierarchy. This is good design and important information is highlighted or in bold.

Here the user is given two options.

This pop-up information could potentially affect that user, or this information could be useless to a user so they can easily dismiss the information.

In addition to this, the user cannot remove the pop-up without clicking dismiss. This is significant because a user may be in a rush and potentially miss the information. This stops any accidental miss clicking from occurring – useful to all.

Plan page



First Bus

From: Current location



To: Destination

Google

Open map



There are multiple current travel updates. Tap for details.

Save time and hassle
with paperless tickets

Get tickets now >

Saved stops and stations



Add a new stop or station

Saved locations

First bus logo is apparent on the front page. This makes the user aware of which company they are using.

The map is not the most responsive and is hard to follow for anyone of any age. It is slow to tell you what angle you are facing. Not so clear as to where your start and end point is.

Get the latest news of travel. If clicked this takes the user to a website stating all the changes. For a retired person or someone who may not be familiar with technology, suddenly changing screen could be quite daunting and they could easily lose track of where they were.

Example of bad design – to an older person the update symbol may not be visible as well as the section being small they may not see it entirely.

The app has a consistent colour scheme. This could make users have a more pleasant experience as there is little change in appearance.

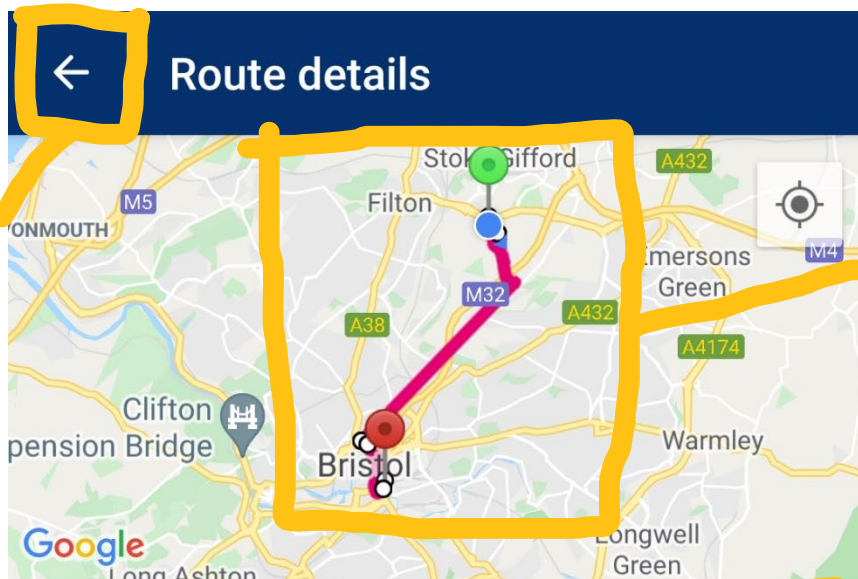
Contrasting colours is useful and makes the page easier to read.

This is clear for most people; it can get confusing when location is not turned on as it will show multiple results.

Saved stops makes it easy for users who are frequent bus users pick their destination quickly. This can be effective for anyone any age as it enables people to quickly determine their destination without going through the destination bar every time.

Route details

A clear back arrow is an example of good navigational elements and it allows user to take one step back rather than restart their process again by clicking the tab bar at the bottom.



Map is not clear and rather slow on response. A user would be better off looking up the stops name on the google maps app or maps online.

The colouring of start and end is not obvious, a colour code could potentially help.

Clear outline of time of travel and the requirements of travel.

29 min 17:28 - 17:57

4 > m1 > 2 >

However, the bus needed to be taken may not be as obvious. One is labelled while the other is not.

There are zero notifications or information to let people know whether the bus is late or early. With a service like this it is imperative to know ETA.

For example, on the arriva bus app it tells users predicted ETA and will even state whether it is on time.

Predicted time helps plan a journey, however the walking speed is the average walking speed. This could be higher or lower based on a variety of reasons. Some users may not consider this and end up late to the bus stop.

Start 17:28 307 Coldharbour Ln, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS16 1ZH, UK

Walk about 4 min

17:33 UWE The Gardens

m1 towards Hengrove Park 11 min (4 stops) First Bristol, Bath and the West

17:44 Cabot Circus (S2)

A lot of important information is in a rather small font size and could be hard for users to see/read.

This can also be said for the symbols on the side. While they are aligned to the right for better viewing this could also be seen as 'out of the picture and potentially be missed completely.

Imagery is very useful as it helps people identify which transport method will be occurring at what given time.

Navigation bar



The navigation bar is confusing to all but from the perspective of a retired person it could be quite intimidating to look at. The title “Plan” is not very direct and has many connotations. It is slightly grounded with the location symbol, however not all is clear. “Buses” would seem like a more suitable place to put the plan icon and information.

“mTickets” is slightly more self-explanatory with it being where your tickets are stored. Although the “m” at the beginning of it could possibly cause confusion with users. However, the image of the ticket reiterates the idea that your digital tickets will be here. This could potentially be confusing to a retired person who may not be the most comfortable with technology. While you can still pay for tickets on the bus, this could potentially lead to someone overthinking and believing that tickets are only available via the app.

“Buses” is slightly confusing and misleading, since you start off on the “Plan” page which, to many users, contains all the information you would assume to be under “Buses”.

“Info” has the universal info image and to many it is obvious what the “Info” page entails.

“Profile” may not seem so obvious to a retired person; this would be common to many users from the use of social media. However, to a retired person this could possibly be a grey area in which they could guess what would be here, although, they may not seem confident in understanding it.

Good use of colour contrast on the navigation bar to show where the user currently is, this can be seen with the blue plan icon while the rest of the icons are dyed out in grey. Although, the text is rather small and overpowered by the images meaning the images portray the most information. In this case, the ‘pin’ icon for plan is not very effective as it doesn’t portray all the information the page contains through the one image.

mTickets Wallet

mTickets

WALLET

BUY



Sign in to access your wallet or do a one-time
ticket transfer from another app or device.

Two options on this page:

Wallet – where you store your tickets.

Buy – where you purchase your tickets.

The options could have better visibility as the shade of blue is not very different to the headings shade of blue. This could easily confuse people who may be colourblind or the older generation who are possibly losing their ability to detect colour as well.

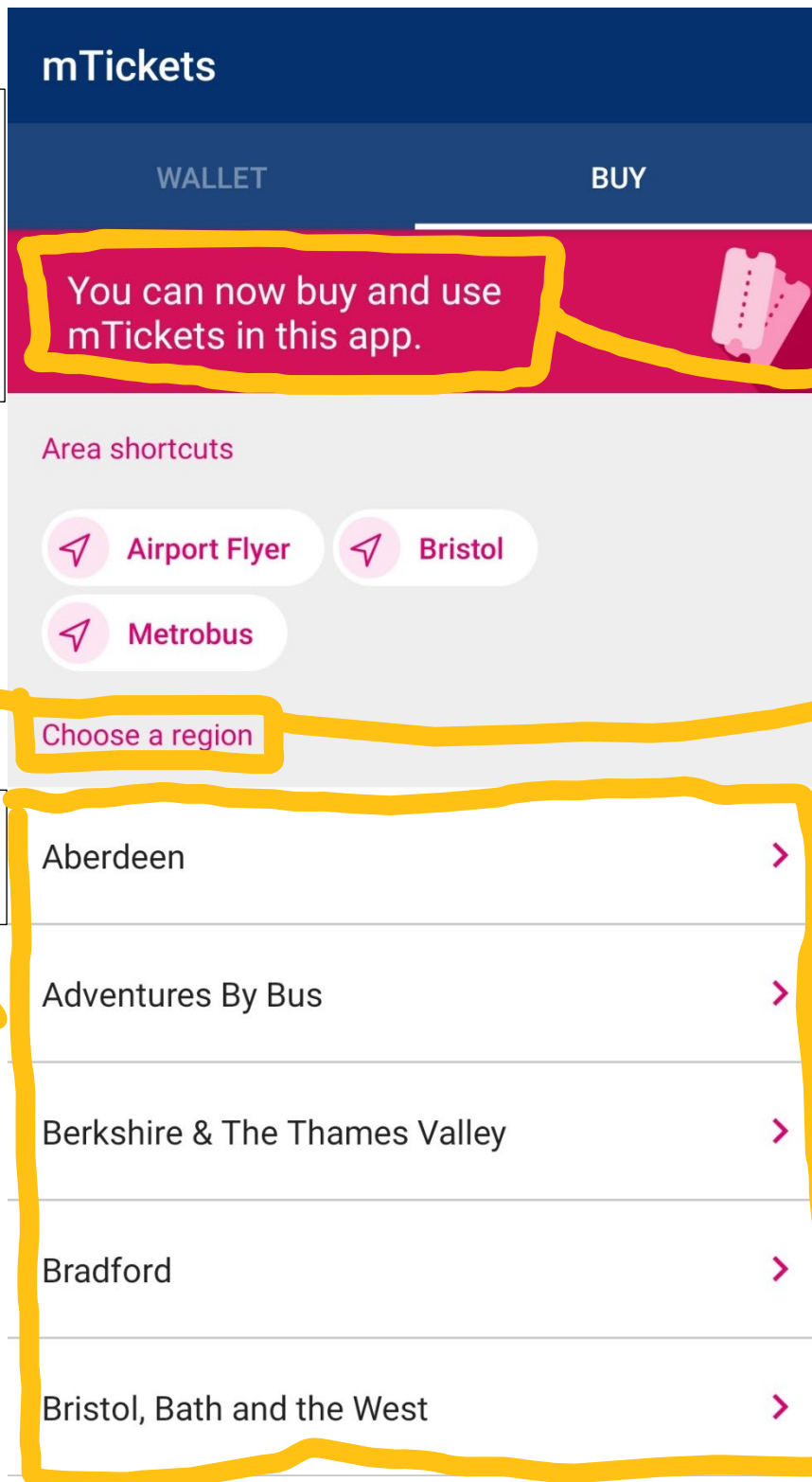
For those who may not be a consistent user of the first bus app there is a recommendation to sign in/sign up so you can access tickets across multiple devices. This is significant as a retired person may not understand the method to purchase a ticket via the app. This enables a relative or someone close to set up an account and purchase one for them. This lets the retired person have the 'simple' job of opening the wallet for their ticket, giving them access to the bus service.

Alignment of the title has changed – this could be uncomfortable for a user as the consistency you were shown on the first page (plan) has changed.

The icon of the wallet indicates to the user that this is where you store your items, a ticket in this case. This is good use of imagery as it easy to depict for anyone the connotations the wallet has.

While the image is rather clear a darker shade of grey or potentially black would make the wallet more visible and easier to depict for those with poor eyesight.

mTickets Buy



At first glance this page has a lot going on and is very intimidating. This reinforces my point about a relative or someone close to the retired person purchasing the ticket for them.

The option of the virtual ticket is new instalment and could potentially be confusing to many, especially a retired person who may struggle with technology.

A clearer indication on what to do on this page would be useful. This could be fulfilled by increasing the text of the page.

Here the user is left to pick their region they will be travelling in.

mTickets Buy – ticket options

This is the next page after picking your region – in this case I picked Bristol.

The monochromatic colour scheme is soothing to the eye and can make the stressful amount of ticket options a little less daunting. Especially with a light colour such as pink.

mTickets

WALLET

BUY

Promotions

Student Travel

Single

Day

Night

Week

Month

Month+

This page contains all the ticket options available for purchase.

This has a few confusing options such as “Day” and “Night” as well as “Promotions”.

The “Day” and “Night” options are not explained on the app. This could confuse many users especially a retired person or a first-time user.

mTickets Buy – purchasing options

Similar to bread crumb navigation.

← Single



Bristol Flat Fare Single Adult
£2.25



Multiple options can be quite unnerving as you want to buy the correct ticket as well as taking into consideration the most cost effective. To any user this is a confusing/complicated process, more so for a retired person.

Colour coordinated tickets – this makes it easier for a more experienced user. To a retired person or a first-time user this has very little significance to them.



West of England Single Adult
£3.85



Good widget size and spacing – stops any accidental clicks while making each ticket more accessible.



Bristol Flat Fare Single Student
£1.60



Similarly named tickets can cause/lead to complications in understanding of what exactly you are purchasing. Many buses are strict on age group tickets, and this could result in not being allowed on or having to purchase another ticket.



West of England Single Student
£2.70



Bristol Flat Fare Single Young Person
£1.60



Giftable

The ability to 'gift' a ticket is a convenient tool however it could also confuse users into possibly thinking this option is available for all tickets.



West of England Single Young Person



Buses page

Buses



Search bus routes

Decreased opacity in font could make this challenging for users to read.

The wording of this page is quite similar to the "Plan" page and could lead to confusion. Especially when they have overlapping information. Although, this page is more specific in its search.

Change in colour scheme from the 'mTickets wallet' page. This is black n grey in comparison to black on white.

This colour scheme is neater and easier to read.

Inconsistency in colour scheme.

The advert at the bottom of the page could potentially confuse audiences into thinking this is another part of the app. However, for an experienced mobile user they will recognise the icon that states a new tab will be opened.



Find bus information

Search for buses to see their route maps and timetables.

The image implies looking for something – this can be seen through the use of the magnifying glass on the bus. This helps identify the goal of this page and allows an audience at first glance to interpret the use of this specific page.

This is then reinforced with the use of text. The hierarchy of the text as well as font size/boldness enables an audience to have an easy time reading and understanding the information.

The caption grounds the image and directly tells the audience the use of the page. In addition to the caption, there is a body of text which presents more information and gives the significant specific details of the page.

Plan a quiet journey with Space Checker

See how busy your service is



Info page

Information

Customer support

For technical support, questions about the app and customer service.



View
tutorial



Bus time
display



Journey
planner



Contact customer service

Further info

FirstGroup websites

Terms and conditions

Layout is very clear with a consistent colour scheme that represents the first bus app – pink, blue and white.

The page being put into segments via a break makes it clear to an audience that these are separate 'places'.

Images for the caption that follow may not be clear to some users and some images could be misleading or uninformative. For example, the image for "Bus time display" does not imply its purpose.

Not clear to a user what kind of customer service experience they will receive. The user must assume it will be done via messages due to the message symbol next to "contact customer service" to a retired person this may not be there most comfortable way of communicating and they could perhaps prefer a phone call as typing may not be the easiest method of communication to them.

Link to a website as this may be an easier method of support for some users.

Profile page

Profile

Your preferred region

Bristol, Bath and the West

This will set the app to your preferred region, ensuring you get the best promotions and travel alerts for your local area.

Your mTickets account

Sign in

Map of services near you

5 mins walk time

10 mins walk time

15 mins walk time

This changes the radius of the map on your home screen

More

Location services

[Clear recent searches](#)

This allows the app to focus in on your area and make easier/specific transport more accessible.

Description between each section is useful and helps users understand what each section is for.

Text may not be visible to most considering the size and font colour of it.

Font does not contrast enough and could thus be hard to read (dark grey on light grey background).

This tool can be useful for retired people as it helps home in on services closer by. The significance of narrowing down on services is the fact it helps reduce potential strain on the retired persons body if they were to walk to one fifteen minutes away instead of the one five minutes away.

Clear up some of your searches so it makes it easier to manage where you want to go. This can be useful for those who travel a lot.

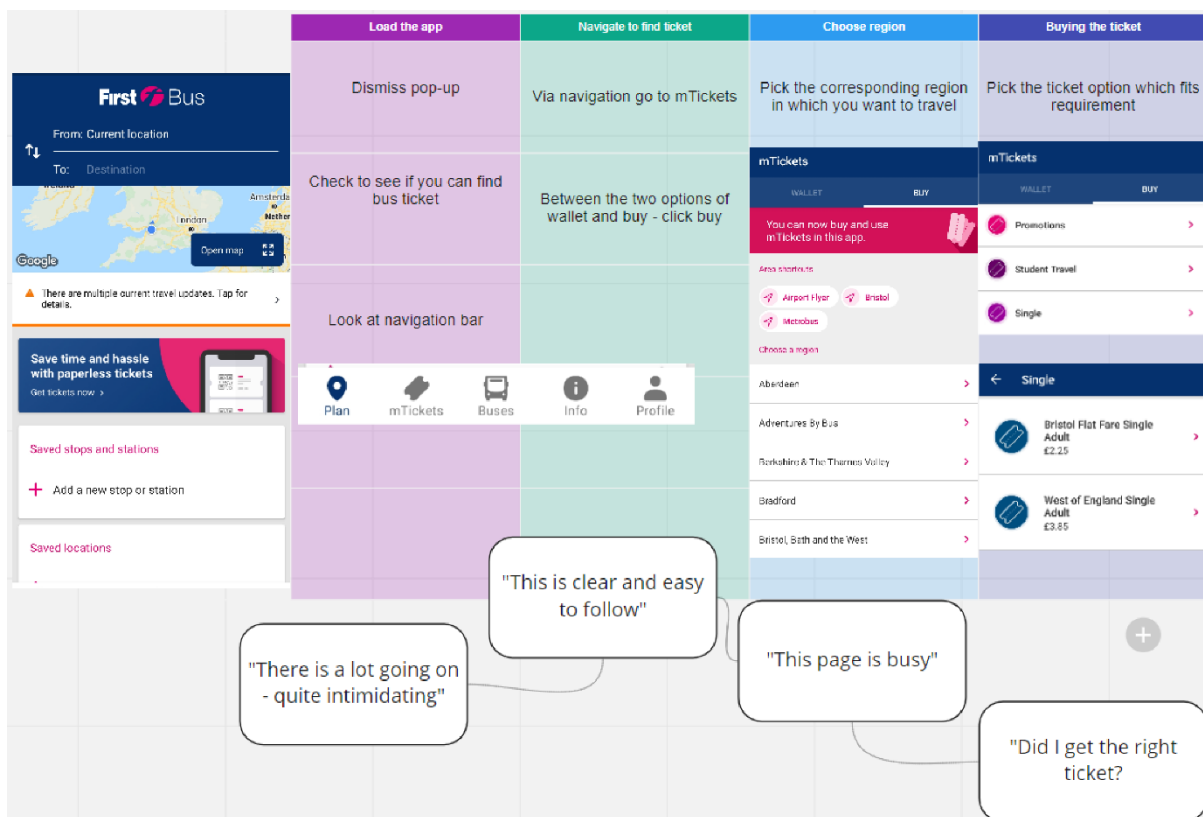
USER JOURNEY MAP *Buy a ticket using first bus app & travel via first bus app*

Old Retired Person

A grandad is leaving their grandkids university (UWE) and is currently planning their way home. To get home they need to take the bus to catch the train from Bristol Temple Meads.

Expectations

- Easily purchase a ticket without struggle
- Arrive at destination on time – without struggle



User journey for buying a ticket

Design critiques

The app achieves the bare minimum, it is outdated and needs an update to its layout. The app looks uncared for and lazy – to a customer this is quite off-putting. This is significant as the customer will generalise the apps poor outdated condition with the service. Furthermore, slow response time with the map can cause frustration. For an old, retired person who may already struggle with technology, this is a detriment to their experience. In addition to this, meek colours like grey, can be quite boring or depressing to the user's eye, the grey background could imply to the audience that first bus is quite a worn-down service. This experience could be changed with a lighter shade of grey or possibly a light blue to fit the colour scheme.

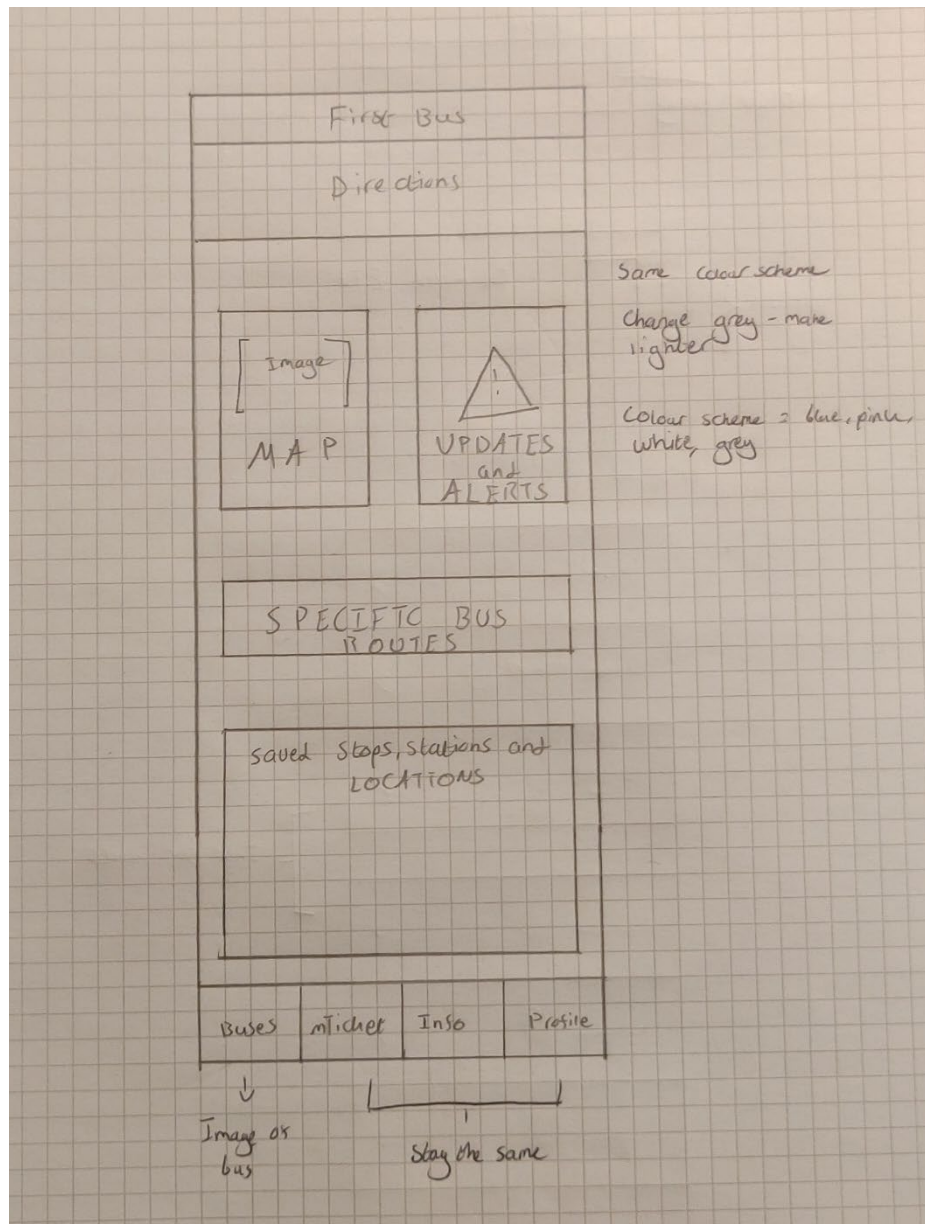
Imagery used on the app is rather poor and sometimes unclear. For example, on the info page under 'customer service' is an image of a clock captioned "bus time display". At first glance it is unclear what the image is, and it could easily be mistaken for something else such as a tick. This is also a problem seen on the navigation bar, the word 'plan' can be interpreted in multiple ways and may not be clear to users. Additionally, the image does not do an adequate job of anchoring or possibly implying what the caption means and vice versa.

Moreover, information on the app is rather scattered and customers could end up lost or confused navigating for information. While images are there to ease the experience, as mentioned before; a significant proportion of images are of poor quality or do very little to help guide a user. The consequence of this, would be users leaving bad reviews on the store or giving up with the app entirely. In the case of an old, retired person this could leave them stressed or perhaps feeling helpless after not having clear instructions to find the information they seek.

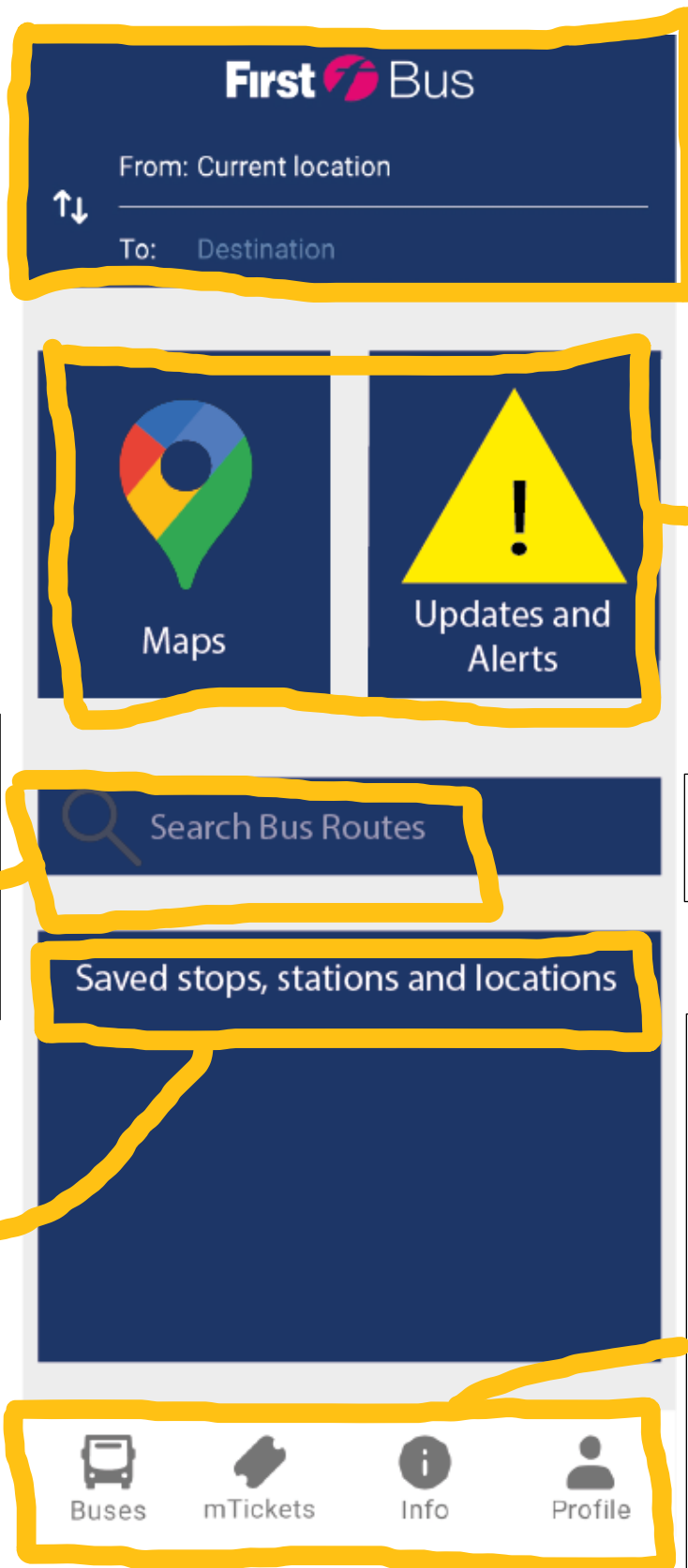
However, there are some positive aspects. The consistent column design suggests to a user that this is a scrolling app which is good design as it advises the user to scroll and they may find the information they are looking for. Furthermore, a consistent colour scheme throughout the app can make a user feel more comfortable in using the app, especially when there is a minimal number of colours. Additionally, a consistent colour scheme stays in the mind, for example the McDonalds colour scheme of yellow and red is recognisable at a glance. This is significant as a user may be reminded of first bus when they come to think of bus services.

An example of a good page optimised for mobile use is the profile page. It has a very simple layout with ample breaks in between each section a modern interface with the 'map of services near you'. Furthermore, in between each break is a small body of text describing the function of each section. This is important as the idea of a profile is a rather modern idea and to many is quite self-explanatory, however, to an old, retired person they could find the description helpful and informative.

Re-Design concept/Recommendations



Front page re-design on paper



Kept the header of the app the same as it was one function that didn't need changing.

Increased the breaks in between each section so it has a clearer layout. Furthermore, sections have been rescaled, for example updates and alerts can now be seen easily and the maps will be an external link to google maps for a more responsive map.

Kept the change in opacity but it can also be made more visible on 100% opacity.

Navigation bar has been decreased to four tabs instead of the five. The 'plan' page and 'buses' page has been combined and is simply called buses. This is more straightforward and will cause little confusion in comparison to two similar implying titles such as 'plan' and 'buses'.

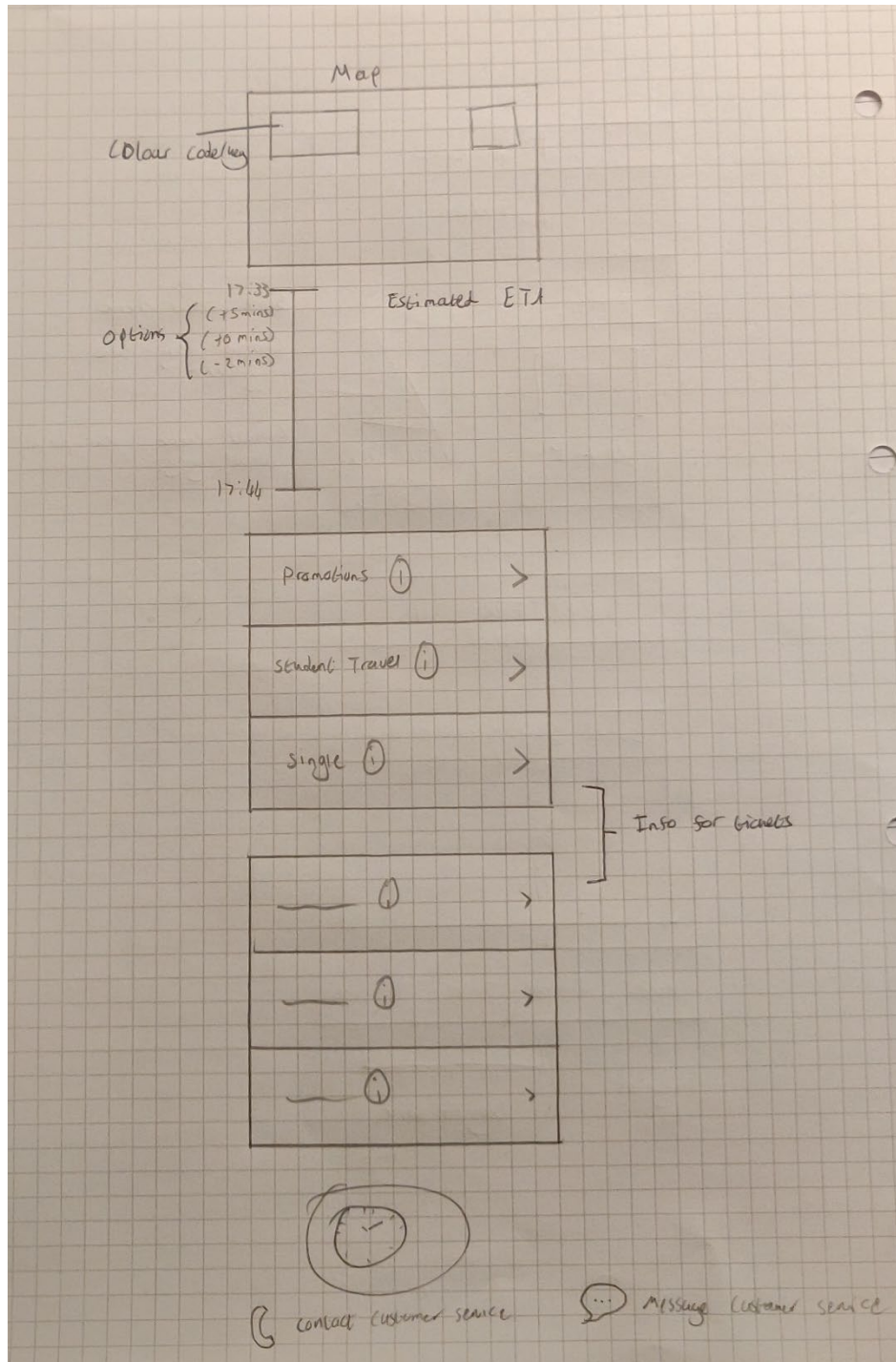
The highlighted navigation bar would stay to say what page you are on but it should be made pink instead of dark blue to increase contrast and be made more visible.

Colour scheme has been kept the same with the blue and pink. I made the grey a lighter colour, so it is more appealing to the eye and less depressing. The blue could potentially be made a lighter shade as well. Although, this shade of blue is first buses signature blue.

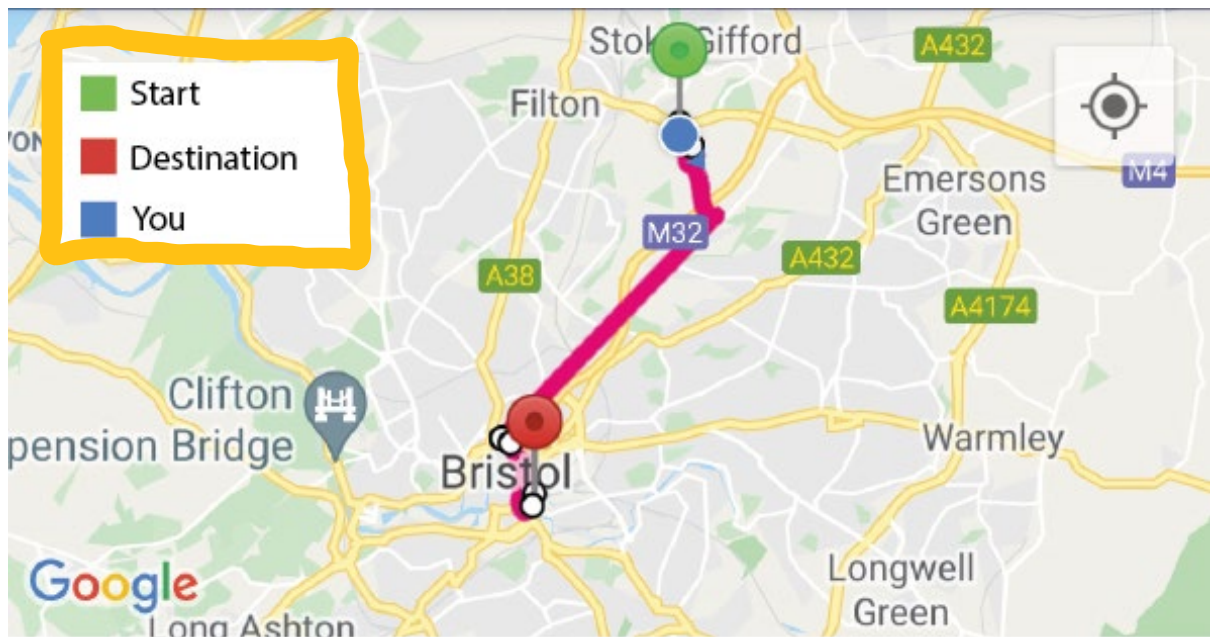
Increase in font size makes text more visible – further increased with contrasting colours.

I combined the plan page with the bus page so now the 'search bus routes' is a segment on the first page. This enables similar information to be on one page meaning information is less scattered as well as there being one less page.

Combined saved stops and stations with saved locations as they have a similar function, and it would be easier and easier to understand if they were together rather than separate.



Other re-designs on paper



A colour key helps people identify what each colour represents. This can be very useful on a map which may be unclear to many, especially when it is as compressed as it is. The significance of a colour key is that it would be very hard to get confused with where you should go. The only possible fallback is that it doesn't consider those who are colour blind. This could be made more effective by changing the shape of each icon.

A criticism of my new design is that it could possibly be hard to see on the real page, however the contrasting colours of black and white should still be fairly visible to all users. In addition to this, if shapes for each code were to change as well this would no longer be a problem.

29 min

17:28 - 17:57



Start
17:28

307 Coldharbour Ln, Stoke
Gifford, Bristol BS16 1ZH, UK



Walk about 4 min



17:33
- 2mins

UWE The Gardens


















m1 towards Hengrove Park
11 min (4 stops)
First Bristol, Bath and the West

17:44
+ 5mins

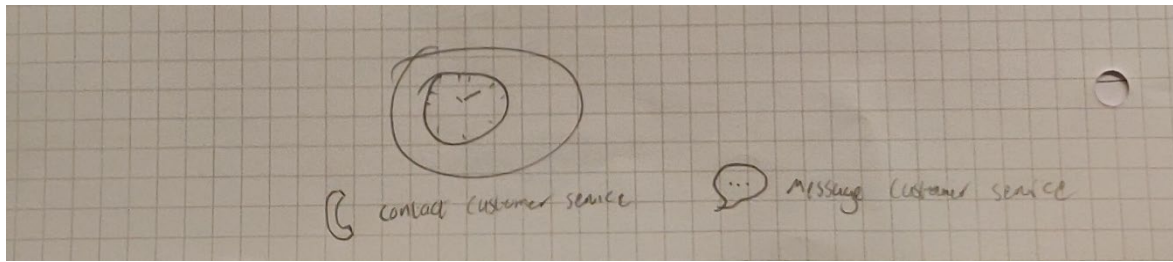
Cabot Circus (S2)

Once again, a colour coded system but this time it informs people of live bus times and possible early or late buses. This idea is very simple but has a lot of value. It can help people plan their journeys better and let others around them be more informed of their actions and ETA.

The text is rather small and may be hard to read for a user but I have tried to get around this by changing the colour of the text.

	Promotions		
	Student Travel		
	Single		
	Bristol Flat Fare Single Adult £2.25		
	West of England Single Adult £3.85		

Info next to each ticket can help people understand the specifics of each ticket and whether they are eligible for certain tickets. This will be significant to an old, retired person as they most likely qualify for many discounts they would otherwise not find because of the confusing titles of each ticket.



The customer support page has a very poor design for a clock a simple addition of markings inside the clock to further imply it is a clock could make a significant difference to the way the image is interpreted.

In addition to this, adding the capability to phone customer service is valuable as not many people are happy or capable of talking via message. Especially when it comes to describing a specific problem.