In Spain, trains offer first chapter of novels through QR codes

The Netherlands has already introduced an initiative to get commuters reading through the VertragingsApp, which offers up short stories based on travel time. Now the Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government Railways) has placed QR codes with links to the first chapters of popular novels on its trains as part of the National Reading Plan, with the aim to encourage citizens of Spain to get into a good book.

On 13 April, the rail service teamed up with book publisher Random House to place posters on the exterior of the central carriages of ten services traveling between Vallès Oriental and Baix Llobregat. Each poster encourages commuters to join the 'reading train' and once inside, interior posters provide riders with a selection of 40 book titles from which the first chapter can be downloaded via their respective QR codes. According to El Periódico, authors on the list include Spanish language writers such as Ildefonso Falcones, Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as well as translated works by John Le Carré and Umberto Eco. The scheme is set to run for two months and will be repeated three times a year until 2016, with hopes to expand to include works from other publishing houses.

As well as seeking to improve the literacy of residents using the train service, the scheme also serves to publicize works of literature, while readers are also entertained during their commute. One to emulate in your part of the world?

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