Green tickets helps travellers find the greenest and most cost-effective transport routes | Photo source Stefano Lombardo on Unsplash

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ROUTE PLANNING FOR GREEN AND COST-EFFECTIVE TRAVEL

TRAVEL & TOURISM

A new website and app are making it easier to rank the ease and emissions of different travel options

Spotted: While most people are aware that flying uses much more carbon than other forms of mass transit, they are likely to be less aware of the emissions to cost ratio of other modes of transport. To make things more confusing, at least in Europe, it is often difficult to book train tickets in advance when travelling through more than two countries, or to compare emissions on different services and routes. For example, is it better to fly or to take a train that uses electricity generated from coal?

To help travellers answer this type of question, entrepreneurs Marthijn Bontekoning and Jeppe Bijker started Green Tickets – an app and website that allows users to rank transport options to their destination by travel time, price, and CO2 emissions. Their goal is both to make it as easy to book a bus or train ticket as it is to book an airline ticket, and to provide transparency about emissions in a way that helps people make more informed decisions.

This transparency is very important because deciding the most sustainable method of transport can be more difficult that it appears. For example, Green Tickets calculates travel time from door to door, as many airports are far out of town, requiring additional travel before visitors can reach their final destination. Even airline emissions are not straightforward. For example, Ryanair has more seats on its planes than KLM, so they can emit less CO2 per passenger kilometre.

To compile its data, Green Tickets uses a variety of sources, including Google Maps for driving routes, open-source projects for European trains, and the back office of Skyscanner for flight information. The data allows users to quickly find the optimal itinerary for each trip, based on time of the year, availability, budget, carbon emissions, and personal preferences.
Everyone agrees that reducing carbon emissions is of vital importance, but not everyone agrees on how to achieve this. Luckily, there are a lot of ways of reducing emissions, and a lot of scope for innovation in this space. Some solutions recently spotted by Springwise include the use of sustainable aviation fuel and software that makes it easy to integrate carbon offsetting into travel booking.

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**Takeaway:**

Although train travel has become more popular, at least in Europe, many people still book planes out of habit, without considering alternatives. Green Tickets could change this through greater transparency. For example, many people may not be aware that it is faster to take the train from Amsterdam to London than flying, because you don’t need to arrive as early or spend time travelling from the airport to the city centre. Others may not be aware that there are night trains for longer routes, such as Prague to Budapest. Ultimately, more accessible information on options lets consumers make greener choices.