

Technology In Our Lives

Cell Phones: The Right Call For Transit Riders

(NAPS)—A new way to pay is said to be just the ticket for mass transit riders. The method, which first involved the use of microchip technology on “smart cards,” is designed to streamline fare collection, increase system efficiency and provide riders with a satisfying experience.

This means the ridership, using compatible cell phones and applications, can use a cell phone in place of transit smart cards or credit cards to pay for their fare.

This type of payment system is starting to gain mainstream acceptance and implementation through many large firms including Google, Verizon, AT&T and various credit card agencies.

Increasing Convenience

The creators of the fare collection system—a company called VIX Technology—saw that various types of cards, such as student and employee IDs and credit cards, were using microchip technology to record transactions with much success.

It reasoned that applying that same kind of technology to mass transit would make it possible for riders to pay their fare with technology that they already had in their possession—any card or device with a standards-based microchip in it.

“The system is easy for riders to use. They never have to fumble for exact change or even wonder how much their fare is,” said Michael Cook, vice president of open payment systems at VIX Technology. “And it’s open because they can link any participating card to it.”

The System in Action

Here’s how the system—named eO for “easy open”—works:

- A rider taps a card against a device called a validator in order to ride the system.

- The validator either permits or denies access to the system.



New technology will soon make it possible for mass transit riders to use a cell phone to pay their fare.

- To leave the system, the rider once again taps a card against the validator.

- The information is transmitted to a server, which calculates the cost of the ride and subtracts money from the rider’s account.

Other Applications

The technology platform created by VIX is now being applied to other devices as well. For example, Salt Lake City, Utah, recently committed to a pilot program that would let mass transit riders use their mobile phones to board the transit system instead of using a card with a chip in it.

The system activated by the phone—called Isis—would perform the same calculations, such as access to the system and deducting a fare, as if a rider had activated it with a card.

The current on-board infrastructure is standards based and will support any of the commonly utilized wireless card and chip standards used around the world. As a result, any device with a chip in it, be it a cell phone, a university or employee ID, a credit card or even a smart card-like sticker applied to the back of a phone, can be used by this system to accept fare payment.

To learn more about eO and new electronic fare technology, visit the website www.vixtechnology.com.