

SUPSI

SocialCar: a new mobility service integrating public transport and carpooling

Axis 2 – Energy systems

Interview with Francesca Cellina, project head for ISAAC



What initial results have been obtained?

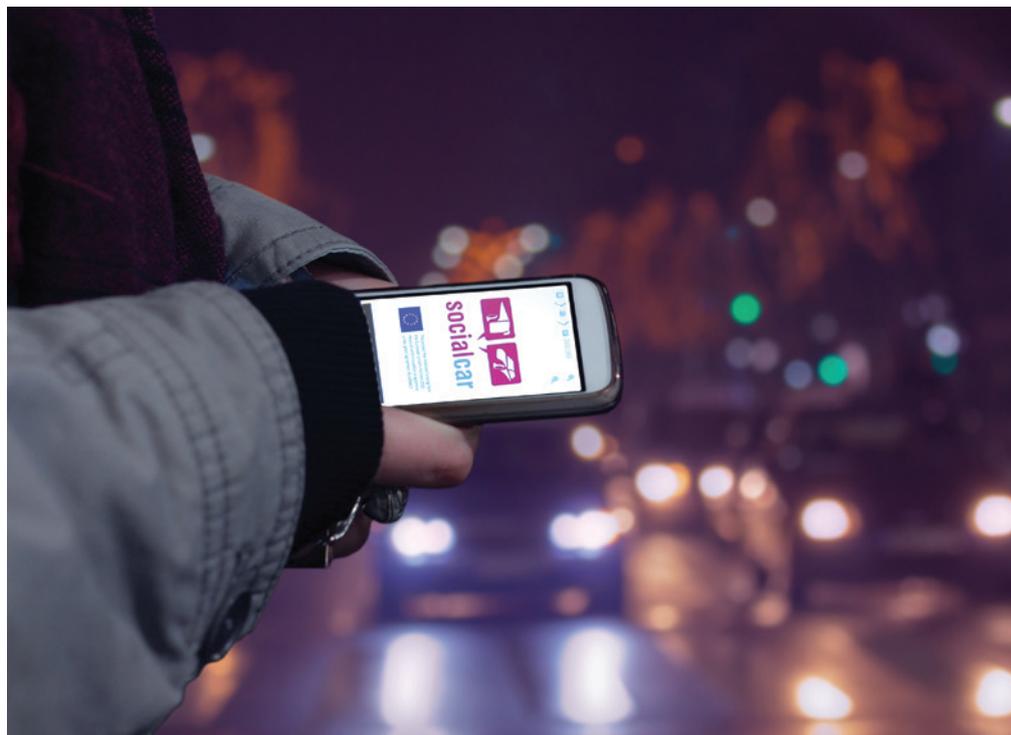
The project is entering its most important phase: after a couple of years of work, the app and the algorithms that automatically match the transportation supply and demand are now ready. We will do some field testing this September and October, allowing us to evaluate the efficacy of the system in real-life contexts. Together with Ljubljana, Brussels and Edinburgh, Ticino is one of the European sites where we will test the "Ride-MyRoute" app developed by SocialCar. I would like to invite SUPSI colleagues and students to take part in this trial! In the next few weeks we will publicise the ways in which you can get involved, and the prizes that can be won by enthusiastic participants.

What are the strong points of the project? And any problems?

The innovation lies in offering tangible alternatives to individual car use, looking at public transport and ridesharing between individuals as potential allies, and not as competitors. However, the efficacy of the system is undermined by two critical factors: will we manage to create a critical mass of users who are willing to offer rides? And, above all, will we manage to overcome the wariness aroused by sharing a car-journey with someone you don't know? SocialCar tries to overcome these types of initial resistance by means of a user evaluation and feedback system. The field testing will help us to understand if this mechanism will be enough to create new mobility habits.

Tell us briefly about the SocialCar project, starting with the problem tackled.

Our mobility style is dominated by people using their own cars individually. How can we encourage citizens to change their mobility choices and choose other means of transport? One of the most commonly-found barriers to change is the lack of high-quality public transport (frequency, ease of access at stops, flexibility and interchange rapidity). And, in fact, there are often no realistic alternatives to using a car. Taking these considerations as its starting point, SocialCar overturns the traditional viewpoint, focussing on the integration between various means of transport rather than on how they compete against one another. The project objective is to develop a smartphone app that facilitates the integration between carpooling (sharing car journeys) and public transport.



Do you remember anything interesting, amusing or unusual that occurred during the project?

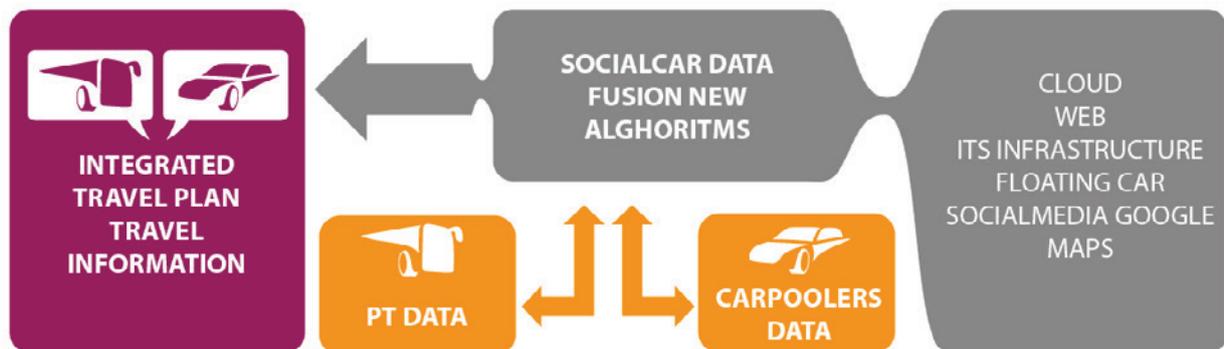
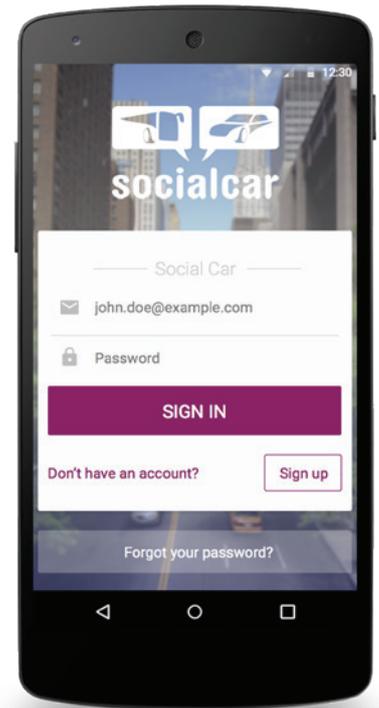
The most interesting episodes haven't happened yet! In fact, the field testing will start in September. The project launch event is already expected to be particularly lively. All the details will be announced in the upcoming announcements about the testing...

Could other projects develop from this one?

Of course! SocialCar is a research project: we create a prototype for a new mobility service and we test its efficacy in the field. All the material produced is open-source in nature: if the prototype is successful, companies operating in the transport sector will be able to make use of the results, developing a commercial product. This is what we have been working toward right from the start, and in all the project sites the main sector operators have been involved in the process.

Apart from you, who else was on the project team?

SocialCar is a European Horizon 2020 project, conducted under the coordination of FIT Consulting (Italy). Two SUPSI institutes are involved: IDSIA (DTI), which coordinates the project activities for SUPSI, developing the algorithms that match the demand and supply of transport; and ISAAC (DACD), which instead coordinates the field experimentation phase.



Project type: European Horizon 2020 project
Financing body: European Commission
Project partners: Internal and external
Project leader: FIT Consulting, Rome