

Press Release

OpenRide
Ridesharing 2.0

Need a ride? Just use your thumbs.

Issued by
Fraunhofer FOKUS

Find Local Rideshares Quickly via Mobile Phone

Berlin, September 2009 - Gas prices keep going up but most drivers in large cities ride alone. To make driving more affordable, Fraunhofer FOKUS (Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems) is currently developing a mobile ridesharing service it calls OpenRide. With it, drivers and passengers can easily find rideshares when they need them, even at a moment's notice. This not only saves money; it's also good for the environment and reduces city traffic. Recently, Fraunhofer FOKUS unveiled a prototype of the mobile ridesharing service in Berlin at the IFA 2009, the largest trade fair for consumer electronics in the world.

The mobile ridesharing service is versatile and easy to use. If you're a driver and you want a passenger, all you do is enter your destination on your mobile phone or PDA. This information, along with your current location, is then sent to a server equipped with special software that searches current ride requests. As soon as the software finds a match, it notifies you via your mobile phone. This way, you can find a passenger even if you're already en route. Our software's intelligent search engines can also factor in trip segments, small detours, and the current locations of passenger and driver. In the future, our developers plan to add rating functions and user histories to create an extra layer of security for users.

"OpenRide brings together end-user devices with navigation and route planning software to automatically locate rideshares," explains Dr. Matthias Flügge, project director at Fraunhofer FOKUS. This mobile ridesharing service is especially suited for trips in urban areas at short notice. OpenRide represents "a completely new market, as up to now ridesharing services have been unable to connect drivers and passengers for quick rideshares in everyday local traffic," says Flügge

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"We are investing in device-independent technologies to provide service to as many users as possible," stresses Anna Kress, the technology director of OpenRide. The open infrastructure gives ride sharing services new ways of bringing together passengers and drivers, and gives network providers and mobile telephone manufacturers new ways of expanding their services. The software, which can also be integrated into navigation systems, should be ready for market release sometime in 2010. A practice run with partners from the industry is scheduled for the end of 2009.

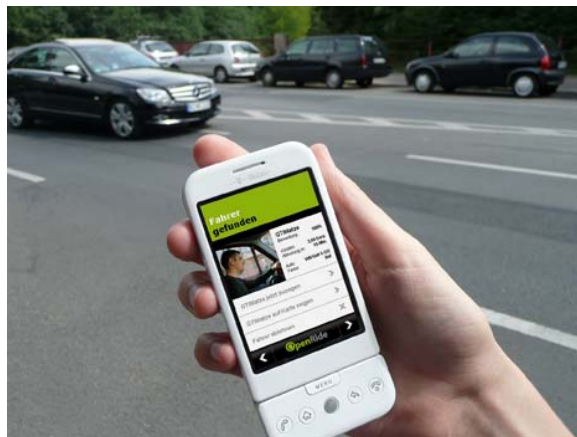
Fraunhofer FOKUS

The Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems, Fraunhofer FOKUS for short, is a Berlin-based research facility devoted to studying and developing communication and information technologies. It specializes in designing IT infrastructures and networks for cross-domain and cross-organization communication.

With more than 20 years experience, Fraunhofer FOKUS has become an important IT research partner for the telecommunications sector, the automobile industry, and media services. It frequently cooperates with agencies and software companies to create need-oriented eGovernment solutions and is a leading collaborator in projects funded by the European Union as well as by national-level sponsors.

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Caption:

Looking for a quick ride? Fraunhofer FOKUS is currently developing OpenRide, a service for finding local rideshares via mobile phone.

Source: Fraunhofer FOKUS

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