ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MASS PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Executive Summary
THE STUDY

The research topic: Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Mass Public Transport, is the first study to be conducted by UITP Asia-Pacific Centre for Transport Excellence (AP CTE) under a joint-funded research programme between International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and Land Transport Authority (LTA). The year-long project commenced in late 2017 with the following insight collection approach: review of literature, quantitative survey, use-cases, experts’ blogs, expert roundtable and ideation workshops.

The recent boom of artificial intelligence (AI) over the last decade has been triggered by advances in machine learning and deep learning. Many industries are adopting AI and integrating this technology into their services and products, impacting peoples’ everyday life. The objective of this study is to demystify AI, raise awareness in the public transport sector by landscape analysis and provide insights to organisations who may be considering AI-powered solutions.

The report outlines current use-cases of AI applications in public transport and what the future might hold for AI in public transport systems. Early adopters and progressive public transport stakeholders anticipate that artificial intelligence is, and will be, further embedded in the future of mobility.

Our approach was to build upon the extensive network of UITP membership to get first-hand data and insights from authorities, operators, industry providers and research institutes on the current and future uses of AI in mass public transport. AP CTE received direct feedback on key lessons learnt and challenges to overcome for successful implementations of the AI technology.

The study focused on the use of artificial intelligence for customer excellence, operational excellence, engineering excellence, and security and safety management, while the use of AI in self-driving (private) vehicles was out of scope. The report equips the industry with a comprehensive collection of concrete examples and best practices to enable public transport stakeholders to be better prepared for the mobility of tomorrow.

This study is led by AP CTE in collaboration with Land Transport Authority of Singapore, and Trans-consult Asia as the lead partner.
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT (UITP)

UITP is a passionate champion of sustainable urban mobility and is the only worldwide network to bring together all public transport stakeholders and all sustainable transport modes. Established in 1885 and headquartered in Brussels, UITP has 16 offices across the world and 1,500 member companies giving access to over 18,000 contacts from 96 countries.

UITP ASIA-PACIFIC CENTRE FOR TRANSPORT EXCELLENCE (AP CTE)

The Asia-Pacific Centre for Transport Excellence was officially launched on 2 July 2012 with joint efforts between the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and Land Transport Authority of Singapore (LTA). The Centre’s mission is to share and consolidate knowledge, conduct research and educational/training programmes to support the development of efficient public transport policies/solutions, and foster sustainable mobility systems, which meet Asia-Pacific needs, and enhance life standards.

LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE (LTA)

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is a statutory board under the Ministry of Transport, which spearheads land transport developments in Singapore. LTA plans, designs, builds and maintains Singapore’s land transport infrastructure and aims to provide convenient options for walking, cycling or riding the trains and buses. LTA also leverages innovative technology to strengthen its infrastructure to provide exciting options for future land transport.

TRANS-CONSULT ASIA

Trans-consult Asia is an advisory enterprise specialising in urban transport operations and management, green transport solutions, and smart mobility solutions. Adopting a data and technology driven approach to enhance efficiency, performance and/or experience, it is committed to creating human-centric solutions and better living environments. Head-quartered in Hong Kong, it works on projects around the world.

DISCLAIMER:

Use cases, surveys and discussions are based on voluntary contributions by experts. UITP and LTA shall not be held responsible for the accuracy of the examples provided.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all experts who have participated and contributed to the study.

Listed below (in alphabetical order) are the organisations that supported the project by either submitting a use-case, participating in a roundtable or workshop and/or writing a blog article for UITP Asia-Pacific website.

> AI Singapore
> Artificial Intelligence Society of Hong Kong
> Ansaldo STS | A Hitachi Group Company
> Atkins, member of the SNC-Lavalin Group
> Awaait Artificial Intelligence S.L.
> Axis Communications AB
> Axon Vibe AG
> Brookfield Centre in Real Estate and Infrastructure, Schulich School of Business, York University
> Cittati Technologia LTDA (Cittati)
> Concinnity Limited
> Delhi Integrated Multi Modal Transit System Ltd (DIMTS)
> East Japan Railway Company (JR-EAST)
> Efacec Engenharia e Sistemas S.A. (Efacec)
> Egis Rail (Thailand) Co., Ltd
> Fancy Happiness Limited
> Frost & Sullivan
> Fujitsu TDS GmbH
> Giro Inc.
> GrabTaxi Holdings Pte Limited
> IBM China/Hong Kong Limited
> IBM Research, IBM Singapore
> INIT Innovations in Transportation, Inc.
> InTraffic B.V.
> Live With AI
> moovel Group GmbH
> MTR Beijing Corporation Limited (BJ MTR)
> MTR Corporation Limited (MTR)
> Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
> NEC Laboratories Singapore
> NEC Laboratories Europe GmbH
> New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB)
> Passengera S.R.O
> PTV Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
> Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI)
> RATP Dev
> RATP Dev Transdev Asia
> Réseau Transport de la Capitale (RTC)
> Rocketbots Hong Kong
> Scania (Hong Kong) Limited
> Scooter Technology Limited
> Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
> Shenzhen Bus Group Company Limited
> Société de Transport de Montréal (STM)
> SMRT Buses Ltd
> SMRT Trains Ltd
> Siemens AG
> Sopra Steria Group SA
> Systra MVA Singapore Pte Ltd
> Systra Scottlister Pty Ltd
> Thales Transport and Security (Hong Kong) Limited
> The University of Hong Kong (HKU)
> Traffic Control Technology Co., Ltd
> Transport for London
> Tuv Sud Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
> TUM Create Ltd
> Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore (URA)
> Vincent Tan Consult
> WSP Singapore Pte Ltd
> Zhengzhou Yutong Bus Co., Ltd
> 9292 – RESinformatiegroep B.V

We would also like to thank the 48 organisations that completed our online survey to understand the scope and potential of AI in public transport.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, the world has entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is driven by seamless automation, endless connectivity and characterised by merging physical and digital advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, the internet of things, and blockchain.

The growing importance and maturity of artificial intelligence (AI) bring opportunities to people and economies. As a disruptive technology, AI also poses risks and challenges to existing markets.

According to PwC’s analysis, the global GDP will be up to 14% higher in 2030 as a result of the accelerating development and take-up of AI.

Accenture predicts AI could double annual economic growth rates in terms of gross value added (a close approximation of GDP) by 2035 across 12 selected countries.

44% of 203 senior executives (from various industries and countries) say delaying AI implementation will make their business vulnerable to new, disruptive tech start-ups.

AI – A MOVING DEFINITION

There is no universally accepted definition of ‘artificial intelligence’ because the meaning of ‘intelligence’ is arbitrary.

Definitions of Al are debatable and some are even “self-defeating” (Antonio L. Elias, John D. Pararas). For instance, the World Economic Forum defines AI by its ability to “do things traditionally done by people”, which makes the definition subject to change as technology progresses and takes up more tasks.

What do our Public Transport Experts Think of AI?

Experts suggest that artificial intelligence should consist of the following qualities:

> Ability to learn.
> Ability to adapt.
> To mimic as well as exhibit creativity.
> To fulfil its purpose to improve existing processes.

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI in Industry Sectors

Artificial intelligence is impacting all industry sectors with some industries, such as financial services, leading in AI adoption. The report highlights the impacts AI has on health care, retail, agriculture and the legal profession, all sectors that the public transport industry can learn from.

AI in Government Policies

The US and British governments were the first to heavily fund artificial intelligence research back in the 1960s.

In the recent years, there has been a growing interest, supporting policies and investment in AI by national governments. In particular China, a late adopter, announced the fundamental role of AI in its 13th Five-Year Plan in 2015.

The map highlights countries/regions that have made major public announcements to support the development of AI technologies.
What we did....

- **Quantitative Survey**
  48 companies across the public transport sector

- **Expert Roundtable (Karlsruhe, Germany)**
  Attended by 28 public transport experts in IT, Innovation and Product R&D.
  Objective: To gain deeper insights on challenges faced and lessons learnt from experts who have experience in deploying or are currently considering deploying AI projects.

- **2 Ideation Workshops (Hong Kong & Singapore)**
  Attended by 57 experts from public transport and the field of AI.
  Objective: To bring two worlds of experts to brainstorm the future of AI in public transport.

- **17 in-depth use-cases**
  Contributions from organisations & CTE research

- **7 experts blog entries**
  Expression of views and opinions

Where we focussed...

The project focussed on the use of artificial intelligence in the context of four main areas:

- **Customer Excellence:**
  Use of AI applications to achieve better customer service and intelligence amongst authorities and operators.

- **Operational Excellence:**
  Using AI to improve system and operational efficiencies through business process optimisation.

- **Engineering Excellence:**
  AI-powered solutions for inventory and asset management and predictive maintenance.

- **Safety and Security Management:**
  AI applications to improve operational safety and security measures, including offences that involve revenues and property.

The scope of the study excludes AI technologies relating to autonomous passenger vehicles whilst autonomous shuttles/buses (as mass public transport) were included.
The online survey conducted by UITP generated 48 responses from public transport related organisations, including 9 authorities, 15 operators, 22 industry providers and 2 research institutes. Key survey findings are outlined below.

Adoption of AI is gaining momentum in public transport...

62% of the surveyed public transport organisations are involved in AI technologies projects and solutions.

Among them:
- Half are at trial and R&D stage.
- Half have adopted AI technologies.

11% of the surveyed organisations are AI adopters who started their AI journey between January 2017 and March 2018.

... and currently led by industry providers.

4 in 5 surveyed industry providers are offering or trialling AI-powered solutions to public transport clients.

Four key applications of AI in public transport

- Real-time operations management
- Customer analytics
- Predictive Maintenance
- Network Planning and Route Design

1 in 4 responded public transport stakeholders are currently using AI in both of these applications.

In the future, 1 in 3 are considering the integration of AI technologies in these three applications.

Five main challenges faced by public transport authorities and operators

1. Improve data quality (i.e. reduce fragmentation and incompatibility of data)
2. Build capacity and knowledge in AI deployment
3. Overcome data privacy issues
4. Meet the requirement of data volume (i.e. sufficient data-sets)
5. Establish commitment from top management to drive the cultural and process change required
OVERVIEW OF CURRENT APPLICATIONS OF AI IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The study collected in-depth information on 17 use-cases across the four key areas of focus, with the applications and main stakeholder organisations listed below. AI is clearly gaining traction in the public transport sector.

Key outcomes from use-cases

AI applications have been deployed in public transport to:

- Improve the quality and efficiency of tasks undertaken by employees.
- Reduce employee workload from mundane tasks to focus on more value-adding activities.
- Tackle specific problems, in particular those that require solutions relying on complex analysis of data and predictions in dynamic, ever-changing environments.
- Provide efficient, safer and cost-effective services to customers.

Current AI applications in public transport have NOT been designed to replace staff.

The mindset of “Start small and grow incrementally” helps to the successful deployment of AI. It also allows organisations to source funding progressively and minimise risks.

Low hanging fruits

Not all AI applications require multi-million dollars investment. AI powered video analytics and chatbots are two types of applications that are relatively easy to deploy with fewer barriers to development. They can be viewed as a place to start when thinking about deploying AI technologies, with a view to developing more complex applications in future.
THE EVALUATION OF AI TECHNOLOGIES

During the evaluation of AI projects, there are a number of distinct areas that need to be considered to ensure a robust and relevant assessment has been undertaken:

- AI is new in public transport: be cautious of early results and adopt an inquisitive mind.
- AI is a self-learning technology that feeds on data: be aware of the learning curve.
- AI is only a tool: use common key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure its impact of solving a right problem statement.

KPIs

Study of the impact of the 17 use-cases on KPIs revealed the following:

- AI applications have the greatest positive impact on customer service and operational reliability.
- Use of AI is expected to improve financial efficiency and uptake of public transport.
- Experts expect more safety- and security-related AI application to be developed.

TOOLBOX: LEARNING FROM AI ADOPTERS

The study collected knowledge from the public transport industry and UITP provided opportunities for extensive peer knowledge sharing that helped identify building blocks and commonly faced hurdles.

Four building blocks to follow for a successful deployment of AI

- Lead with an innovation mind-set without fear of failure
- Foster a multidisciplinary, collaborative stakeholder management approach
- Develop a long-term, comprehensive and sustainable data management strategy
- Move towards a data-orientated organisation culture
- Develop a long-term, comprehensive and sustainable data management strategy

Challenging requirements of AI in mass public transport projects

- Develop Legal and Policy Framework
- Avoid the Trap of Over-Relying on AI
- Reform Traditional Procurement Processes
- Develop Unbiased AI
- Source funding
WHAT IS NEXT?

AI is already positively impacting the public transport sector and the technology is evolving and improving rapidly over time. Experts gave their valuable insights on the likely short to medium-term trends of AI in public transport.

Combining AI with the internet of things or blockchain can give rise to further opportunities...

**Internet of Things (IoT)**

Devices and sensors connected through the IoT generate a significant amount of unstructured data, which AI can:

- Make sense of, or recognise patterns in.
- Provide optimised outcomes to specific problems and predict likely future outcomes.

**Blockchain**

Blockchain can:

- Improve security of AI-enabled tools.
- Track, understand and explain decisions made by AI.

WHAT COULD THE FUTURE OF AI LOOK LIKE?

AI experts and public transport stakeholders brainstormed the AI-driven innovative concepts that could help overcome the rising challenges of the industry such as building intelligent transport systems, responding to the growth of on-demand mobility and sharing economy solutions, achieving safety and security of public transport systems and solving workforce shortages.
LIMITATIONS

AI, like any other technology, faces limitations. There is an important role for humans to play to maximise the benefit that can be realised from AI solutions and avoid undesirable pitfalls, there remains an important role for humans to play. These are summarised as follows:

Artificial is not Human:
- Public transport systems need human interactions.
- AI is task-specific; humans should manage the bigger picture.
- AI is only a tool and enabler to unlock creative ideas.

External Constraints:
- AI is human resource intensive: the right capabilities need to be strengthened and/or built to enable and exploit full potential of AI applications.
- AI cannot get smarter than its training data sets.
- Overly strong data-protection regulations or inadequate framework on data ownership and usage may slow down the progress of AI technologies.

OUTLOOK ON AI

Artificial intelligence is developing and its capabilities are advancing over time.

AI will inevitably transform the public transport sector. It is key to understand the impact or potential of AI for the industry. Public transport stakeholders should proactively look at the opportunities brought by AI to improve their services and build the mobility of tomorrow.

The report highlights the following expert conclusions:
- Data is the foundation of AI systems.
- All public transport stakeholders have a role to play including end-users because AI is a living application, which learns from user input.
- Stakeholders should engage in collaborative partnerships to build synergy and form highly-skilled multi-disciplinary teams.
- Management should lead the change to foster innovative culture and adopt ‘try-and-fail’ mind-sets. Most importantly, organisations should learn to ‘fail safely’ because AI requires a trial and error approach.
- With AI’s potential in taking over mundane and repetitive tasks, human resources must be continuously upskilled to respond to the needs of future public transport.