

# Lab by Transport for Wales to showcase innovation and tech talent

July 20, 2021



A pioneering scheme designed to support start-up businesses and stimulate growth in Wales is showcasing the best of innovation and tech talent in August.

Lab by Transport for Wales, a scheme developed by TfW and [Alt Labs](#), sees business innovators from across the Wales and Borders region develop their ideas to improve customers experience on the railway.

Seven start-up companies were given dedicated mentoring by business experts at a state-of-the art facility in Newport to develop their products, ideas and innovations.

The virtual demo day on Tuesday 3 September will feature some of the best and brightest tech talent from Wales and the rest of the UK and give a first look at some of the innovations that will be coming to Transport for Wales.

The 10-week accelerator programme has been delivered virtually during the covid-19 pandemic, allowing start-ups to work safely and participate from home, and the demo day will now be broadcast on YouTube on 3 September.

This is the third cohort of companies that Lab by Transport for Wales has worked with. During the previous two cohorts, they worked with 19 start-up companies, of which 13 were accelerated to work with Transport for Wales.

The current cohort were tasked to respond to a number of key challenges facing TfW, including:

- "How can we ensure we keep our colleagues and customers safe?"
- "How do we ensure we are getting the best out of our infrastructure?"
- "How can we make rail more sustainable?"
- "How can we encourage people to choose public transport?"

The innovative ideas that have been developed in response to these challenges include a new multi-modal journey planner and passenger assistant app which aims to minimise stress for passengers with autism and hidden disabilities when using public transport, an ultra-fast train communications system to transform passenger WiFi, a low-code machine learning platform, and virtual and augmented reality systems.

Video presentations pitching the final products will be shared from all seven of the start-up companies along with the opportunity to ask questions and to learn more. The demo day will inspire innovation within businesses and will offer an insight into some of the cutting-edge developments coming to the Wales and Borders rail network.

Whilst TfW is unable to pursue every start-up company's innovations, the advice, guidance, and support of working with the Alt Labs team and business experts has been invaluable to the development of those companies' products, on occasion still leading to opportunities to work together despite not being chosen on demo day.

Michael Davies TfW's Insight and Innovation Manager, said: "It's great to have been able to continue working with several of the talented companies from the two cohorts we've held so far. Our industry needs innovation and to nurture new talent and ideas to deliver an even better experience for customers.

"For our third cohort, we have widened the scope of our search to meet some of the other challenge areas we feel exist, including fresh ways of tackling one of the biggest challenges public transport has faced in recent times: how we encourage people to choose public transport in the future. We're excited to learn more about the innovative ideas that have been developed by the third cohort of start-ups on 3 September."

Adam Foster of Alt Labs added: "We're really excited following the success of the first two cohorts of Lab by Transport for Wales accelerator programme. We've seen first-hand exactly what is achievable in terms of problem solving and developing solutions for Transport for Wales, and how start-ups are making the most of the opportunity that the Lab presents. The shift to virtual delivery isn't without challenge, but has allowed the Lab to continue accelerating the many great start-ups that applied for cohort 3."

The seven start-up companies are:

**Immersity** – developing cloud-based XR Enterprise Studio solutions to create a unique, rapidly deployable and adaptable, experiential environment for operators & trainers inside existing mass-adopted desktop, VR and mobile devices

**Ingram Networks** – developing an ultra-fast train communications system to transform passenger WiFi

**Jnction** – developing Aubin, a new multi-modal journey planner and passenger assistant app which aims to minimise stress for passengers with autism and hidden disabilities when using public transport

**Quinean** – developing a low-code machine learning platform that allows domain experts to deploy digital twins, test hypotheses and optimise outcomes at speed

**RoboK** – developing efficient AI-based computer vision solutions to democratise safety in transportation

**Stofl** – developing infrastructure and solutions that combine Blockchain and Low-Power-WAN technologies, allowing machines to communicate and solve some of the world's most pressing problems more efficiently, securely and in locations further afield

**Utility AR** – work with innovators in industrial sectors to unlock the potential of Augmented Reality applications which allow the user to interact with the real world while accessing existing databases and software systems

*Photo credit: Transport for Wales*