

A full-page background image of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, under a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The tower's intricate lattice structure is prominent. In the foreground, there are green trees and a stone bridge with arches over a river. A semi-transparent dark blue geometric shape, resembling a stylized 'A' or a large letter, is overlaid on the left side of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

Apple and Thales power IDFM's Paris transport ticket revolution

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Payment Services

The Paris public transport system experienced a remarkable year in 2024. During the summer, France's capital played host to the world's biggest sporting festival, the Olympics Games. An estimated 15 million spectators descended on Paris over just three weeks, heading to a multitude of permanent and temporary venues. That's on top of the 50 million tourists the city already attracts annually from all corners of the world. With Paris under the global spotlight like never before, local public transport authority, Île-de-France Mobilités (IDFM), faced unprecedented pressure to keep both visitors and locals moving smoothly and safely.

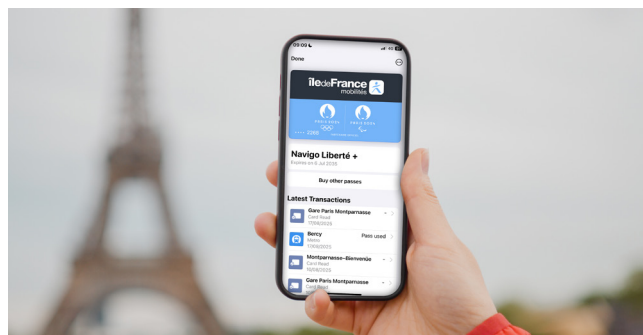
Public transit unlocks the Paris experience

The challenge should not be underestimated. Visitors to Paris typically aim to cram as much as possible into their stay, including trips to iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame, and the Louvre. With so much to see and do, every second counts. As Etienne Catte, Head of Transit at Thales PAY, explains, this has significant implications for the public transport network: "People don't want to waste time queuing to buy Métro tickets or asking questions about the best way to get from A to B. That's where technology really can make all the difference."

It's a view shared by IDFM, which co-ordinates the various companies operating public transport services in Paris and the surrounding Île-de-France region. In the run-up to the capital's blockbuster summer, the public transport authority took bold steps to ease bottlenecks and enhance the travel experience, despite the vast numbers of people making their way around the city. Uppermost among these initiatives was a scheme enabling Apple iPhone users to skip the queues for ticket kiosks and machines, and catch a ride on public transport with nothing more than a tap of their handsets.

Going mobile with 'passe Navigo'

Developed in conjunction with Thales Banking and Payment Solutions and Apple, IDFM's groundbreaking plan to integrate its Navigo range of travelcards (passe Navigo) onto iPhones was an instant hit. Within just a few weeks of launch, the mobile Navigo card was downloaded over one million times. What's more, while memories of the Olympics may now be fading, the scheme continues to grow in popularity and now extends not only throughout the city but across Île-de-France. By the end of 2024, millions more cards had been downloaded by both locals and visitors.



Supercharging the smartphone

The Apple iPhone already served as a powerful tool for travellers, particularly newcomers to Paris. Apple Maps provides real-time travel information to help passengers navigate their way around the city, including departure and arrival times, journey connections, and updates on traffic and travel incidents.

IDFM's new scheme takes this smartphone-centric experience to an entirely new level. Travellers can now buy their Navigo cards via the IDFM iOS app or directly from Apple Wallet, then simply tap their way onto public transport using readers at Métro or train station gates, and on board buses and trams. In other words, it's a genuine revolution in the IDFM fare offer.

Once a passenger uploads a Navigo card to their phone, there's no longer any need for them to visit a ticketing machine or reload a physical travelcard at kiosks. Everything can be purchased and managed directly from the IDFM, Bonjour RATP and SNCF Connect iOS apps, or Apple wallet.

Etienne notes: *"Travelling has never been simpler. Just tap your phone and get on board – no need to open an app or even wake up the phone. This saves time, reduces queues, and builds greater convenience into passenger journeys."*

Game-changing travel for visitors and locals

The mobile Navigo is a gamechanger for visitors and locals alike. What's more, IDFM continues to build on its successful launch. For visitors and thanks to the geofencing capabilities of the wallet, visitors get notified, when entering Île-de-France, that a Navigo card is waiting for them in the wallet.

Regular users, such as commuters and students, can upload their weekly and monthly Navigo mobile card into Apple Wallet and enjoy the new tap and go experience. Additional benefits include the freedom to choose how many days ahead of a pass expiring a reminder is sent. Digital tickets can be purchased and passes renewed with just a few clicks using a debit or credit card in Apple Wallet. The payment process is every bit as intuitive and straightforward as taking the Métro, a bus, train or tram.

Catte adds: *"Thales is unique in supporting a transit user experience that matches iPhone owners' expectations. Through experiences and partnerships dating back more than a decade, we're well equipped to connect Apple with transit authorities and banks around the world."*



Thales builds the foundations for a ticketing revolution

Thales's in-depth expertise was critical in making Paris's fare revolution a reality. On the surface, the mobile Navigo is all about simplicity, control and convenience for iPhone users. However, below the waterline, Thales worked closely with both IDFM and Apple to address the complex challenges that come with such a significant step forward in public transit ticketing.

Safer journeys as standard

Security and privacy are obvious priorities. Navigo passes stored in Apple Wallets tick both boxes. All card information is encrypted and stored in the Secure Element; a certified chip designed specifically for this purpose that is embedded in the iPhone. Moreover, unlike physical cards or cash, if a passenger misplaces their handset, they can use the Find My app to lock and locate it.

Payment authorisation is another potential friction point. To counter this, Apple designed its Express Transit Mode built-in security system with travellers' convenience in mind. Mobile Navigo users can simply tap their devices to pay, without performing any additional form of authentication. Even if an iPhone battery is flat, the handset runs on a power reserve dedicated to transit ticketing. In other words, no one is left stranded because they forgot to recharge.

D1 gets it right from day one

Managing payment and ticketing issuance involves yet more complexity. Here, the cloud-based Thales D1 transport ticketing platform provides a robust link between IDFM's existing ticketing back office and Apple's servers. Crucially, on the day IDFM first introduced the scheme, the Thales platform ensured users had seamless and immediate access to all the relevant fare products. In the year of the Olympics, IDFM could not afford any false starts. This right-first-time experience was then repeated in January 2025, ensuring an equally smooth launch for the IDFM's latest ticketing offer.

In addition to digitising all types of payment cards, the D1 platform supports key functionalities essential for making the IDFM and similar initiatives a success. This includes enabling tickets and passes to be sold from Apple Wallet and various transit apps, including IDFM Mobilités, Bonjour RATP and SNCF Connect, and cards and tickets to be provisioned in OEM wallets. D1 also opens a direct channel of communication between public transport authorities and customers, facilitating real time messaging to users via smartphones and other connected devices.

Selling Paris to the world

As Cotte concludes, the new scheme is a success story not only for travellers and the IDFM, but the entire city. *"It ensures visitors to Paris return home with a positive experience of the transport network. Equally importantly, ease of use increases ridership and reduces the need for IDFM to buy and maintain ticket vending equipment. These are priorities for transport providers worldwide. Similarly, virtually all city and government authorities aim to improve air quality, reduce CO2 emissions, and cut road congestion by encouraging drivers to leave their cars at home and take public transport instead. With the mobile Navigo scheme, IDFM and Paris are helping show the world how it is done."*



Paris and Île-de-France in numbers

- **Île-de-France regional population:** 12.5 million
- **Paris city centre population:** 2 million
- **Annual transport transactions on the public transit network:** 3.5 billion
- **Métro lines:** 14 - serving 303 city stations
- **RER commuter/transit train lines:** serving 249 stations in Paris and the Île-de-France region
- **Transilien commuter train lines:** 8 serving 392 stations in Paris and the Île-de-France region
- **LRT tram lines:** 13
- **Buses:** 105,000 buses – completing five million passenger journeys every day
- **Navigo cards in circulation:** Over 6 million



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