

# Satellite Applications

## SME Case Study

### iGeolise

Solutions that let individuals and businesses view online content by travel time



## The Company

Company Name	iGeolise
Managing Director	Charlie Davies, Peter Lilley
No. of Employees	15
Launched	2009
Location	Guildford, London and Kaunas, Lithuania
Sector	Online search technology

[www.igeolise.com](http://www.igeolise.com); [www.traveltimeplatform.com](http://www.traveltimeplatform.com); [www.minutemapr.com](http://www.minutemapr.com)

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iGeolise thinks about location in terms of travel time, preferred forms of transport and time of day.

The business platform can analyse geographical information based on travel time for locating premises or marketing.

## Overview

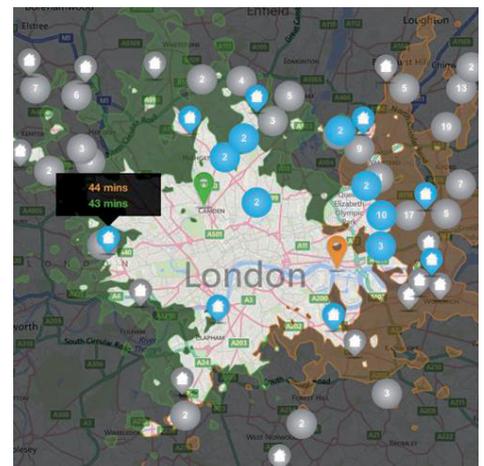
Distance is almost universally measured in miles or kilometres, but the founders of iGeolise think differently – instead they think about locations in terms of how long it would take to travel, as for many practical applications this is a more useful figure to know. As a result, since its launch in 2009 iGeolise has produced solutions that let individuals and businesses view online content by travel time, taking into account details such as preferred forms of transport and time of day.

- Developed an application programming interface (API) to locate, rank and sort content by travel time that can be integrated into consumer-facing websites or apps. This platform is live in seven countries and trialed successfully in nine others.
- Business platform can plot and analyse geographical information based on travel time for projects such as locating offices and/or stores, and marketing targeted by catchment areas.
- Now turning over in excess of £1 million per annum.

## When Time Matters More Than Distance

In a classic moment of inspiration, such as those which tend to lead to some of the best discoveries and innovations, iGeolise was 'born' when one of its founders was running late while driving to an appointment. The time it took to get somewhere was, Charlie Davies realised, far more important than pure distance when travelling, given that humans can't travel 'as the crow flies'. Not only that, but each traveller has a different perspective based on their mode of transport – and the time of day.

That was in 2009 and soon afterwards Davies joined up with Peter Lilley to form iGeolise, with the aim of solving the time versus distance conundrum. Its first external funding came in April 2011, initially through an angel investor and then via a Space Innovation grant from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). A year later the beta version of the TravelTime platform launched in the UK and the following month the first customers went live.



*iGeolise platform – measuring distance in time*

Searches conducted using TravelTime typically double the number of relevant results compared with distance-based searches.

Research shows that 50% of consumers who conducted a local search on their smartphone visited a store within a day.

It was at this point that Davies and Lilley started to get concrete results to prove that their concept worked, with trials demonstrating that searches conducted using TravelTime typically doubled the number of relevant results compared with distance-based searches.

From here things changed quite rapidly: in June 2012 iGeolise joined a UKTI mission to San Francisco, launched a beta version in the US and carried out successful trials in eight other countries. Then, just a month later, the company was awarded a £55,000 grant from Innovate UK called Destination Local, allowing it to start adding all UK public transport timetables to the platform.

## Home and Away

When iGeolise won the UK leg of the European Satellite Navigation Competition in October 2012, possibly the best result was a contract with its first major corporate client, the UK's largest property services group Countrywide plc (see Case Study).

Other high profile clients now include VisitBritain, which in August 2014 started to use TravelTime to help tourists discover what's near any attraction they are planning to visit, restaurant reservation site OpenTable and major recruitment site JobSite.

Presenting accurate and helpful search results is vital. For example research shows that 50% of consumers who conducted a local search on their smartphone and 34% who searched on a computer or tablet visited a store within a day.<sup>1</sup> The TravelTime API integrates with positional data on client sites to produce results: this can be particularly powerful on GPS-enabled mobiles where users do not even need to know their location to get relevant results. With nearly 30 different features in the TravelTime API, clients can choose which to integrate with their own platforms to match their customer profile.

In October 2013 the company won an £85,000 Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) contract from Innovate UK called 'Future Cities', to extend TravelTime by adding features such as estimated financial cost of different journey options, the CO<sub>2</sub> generated and real-time travel updates; the ultimate aim being to "help people search and navigate their way through a [UK] city", explained Peter Lilley. Then in June 2014 it garnered another Innovate UK contract by winning Phase 1 of a competition called 'Re-imagining the High Street', thus adding the option to search by several transport modes simultaneously.

## Business-to-Business

iGeolise uses the same time-based approach in its business tool, MinuteMapr. Key uses for this include: relocation analysis taking into account employee commute times; calculating catchment areas of potential store locations; direct marketing campaigns; and scheduling deliveries. MinuteMapr has already won major clients including Pitney Bowes, the Greater London Authority, Guardian Media Group and TalkTalk.

## The Future

As well as the UK, iGeolise has clients in Thailand, Republic of Ireland, France, Switzerland and Australia. TravelTime is also live on both coasts of the USA and has been trialled successfully in nine other countries.

"We can now go live in almost any country relatively quickly," explains Peter. "We do this in three stages. First, we build a geospatial database for the country – there's good quality open source data for most places that allows us to do this in less than a week. Then we add every public transport timetable – this can take longer, depending on how much data there is and whether it is open source. And finally we 'humanise it' by adding granular information which helps provide more accurate travel times, such as how long it takes to walk from a car park to the platform to arrive in time to catch a train."



TravelTime used by property site Zoopla

“The Catapult was exceptionally good at opening the door to people who could be helpful, and this continues to this day.”

As well as expanding geographically, iGeolise want to move forward with other applications for the technology, including ‘smart routing’ for repairs, servicing and delivery teams, and working further with resellers who are integrating iGeolise APIs with their GIS software. It also plans to further develop a third application called MeetUp, which can be used to minimise the overall travel time for groups of people travelling from multiple places to a single destination. Ultimately, although iGeolise won’t ever be able to make traffic jams and rush hours disappear, it may make travelling, for whatever reason, far more predictable.

### Case Study:

## Property Searches

Countrywide Estate Agents is the UK’s largest estate agency and property services group. Its interest in iGeolise was piqued by The Guardian’s coverage of its success in winning the UK leg of the European Satellite Navigation Competition in October 2012 with TravelTime.



A screenshot from Propertywide, Countrywide’s online portal

Twelve months later the TravelTime API was integrated into the online property search function on Propertywide, Countrywide’s online portal which aggregates properties from around 54 of its estate agency companies. Here, potential buyers and renters can search for properties within a specified travelling time of a destination, such as an office or school, with results taking into account the time of day and the mode of transport. This can highlight residential pockets that a buyer may otherwise not have considered, such as around train stations, as well as showing available properties situated just outside the travel time specified.

TravelTime has since been integrated into two other leading property search websites – Zoopla and PrimeLocation – going live in May 2014. Since then, both Countrywide and Zoopla (which also owns PrimeLocation) have reported that TravelTime generates three times more conversions – defined as house hunters requesting property details or booking viewings – than distance searches.

## Catapult Support

iGeolise experienced the benefits of the Harwell community when, as part of its prize for winning the European Satellite Navigation Competition in 2012, it was given office space at the European Space Agency’s Business Incubation Centre at Harwell for 12 months. “Since then, we have made a lot of use of the Catapult’s hot-desking facility at Harwell, which is fantastic,” explains Peter.

“The Catapult also has a number of business experts who we have called on from our early days who have helped and advised us. I also attended some of their courses and now I even present at some of these.”

“But there’s one thing they did which I don’t think anyone else could have done for us. Because of the Catapult’s profile and visibility they had a stream of well-connected and important people that they could introduce us to, including some in politics and government as well as business. They were exceptionally good at opening the door to people who could be helpful, and this continues to this day.”

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### Source

1. Ipsos MediaCT (sponsored by Google); May 2014.