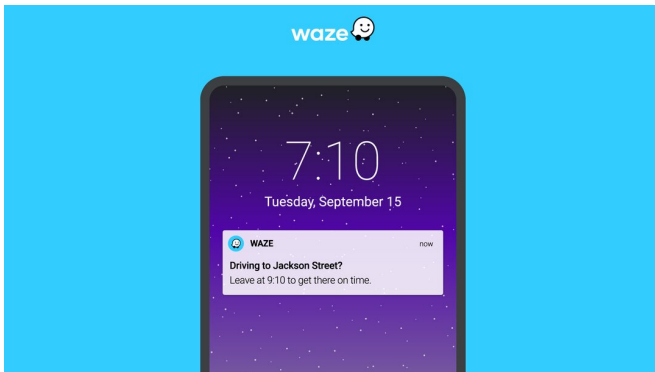


Waze knows some new ways to make your drive better, down to which lane you should pick

15 September 2020, by Jefferson Graham, Usa Today



Credit: Waze

Noam Bardin, the CEO of popular traffic app Waze, admits that traffic hasn't gotten any better in the 12 years the app has promised to ease the highways.

But if you'll just hear him out, and start planning ahead with the app, things will improve for you, he insists.

"The only real way traffic can be solved is with massive participation," he says. "Traffic wasn't created by aliens. It's all of us. And no one is going to solve it but us."

Bardin believes that "even our most passionate users" have no idea about even "half of the features," Waze offers, so it planned an online conference for "Wazers," to find out more, called WazeOn. (You can see it on Waze's YouTube channel here.)

Among the WazeOn announcements:

—Trip suggestions: Personalized recommendations

on what time to leave, based on your driving history.

—Recent locations: Open the app, and instead of having to type in addresses of places you go to frequently, they will appear on the front of the app.

—Lane Guidance: Beyond suggesting the best route, Waze will start to tell you which lane to drive in as well.

—Amazon Music: The music service will play within Waze, similar to a recent alliance with Spotify.

Waze, with 140 million monthly active users, is owned by Google, which also has its own popular app, Google Maps. Waze is different in that "it's only a traffic app, period," says Bardin, while Maps also shows you places to eat and what to do when you arrive.

Instead of jumping in the car with the expectation of a 30-minute or hour ride, Bardin would like to see you checking in with Waze the night or morning before and altering your schedule so you leave at the correct time, and await better notifications from Waze, being introduced at WazeOn, about when exactly to leave.

Leaving a little earlier, based on Waze's estimations, would start to make a small dent in the numbers of cars on the road, he says.

For the past two years, Waze had been pushing people to join together on their commutes with car pooling set up within the Waze app, and had gotten to 1 million riders monthly, pre-pandemic, and then watched as ridership went to practically nothing as people started working at home.

Bardin says it's starting to inch back but will take some time.

The Lane Guidance feature was an idea born from the pandemic, as people stopped flying and instead started taking longer car trips, often to places they were unfamiliar with.

Waze learns traffic patterns simply by drivers turning on the app. It tracks the speed of your car, "and even if you don't report anything on the traffic, we now know the speed of the driver behind you and can help spread out the traffic."

Bardin's advice to urban planners is to not worry about adding more lanes to highways. "I'd leave the roads just as they are, and instead provide incentives for people to drive later and earlier."

His most important message to readers: "We all need to get involved because [traffic](#) is a collective problem and it requires collective solutions."

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