

Hello, and welcome once again to “As It Is,” our daily show for people learning everyday American English.

I’m Christopher Cruise in Washington.

Today on the program, we tell about a new app for those who are caring for people with Alzheimer’s Disease.

“It is not easy and we hope this will make it a little easier for people.”

But first, we tell about a navigation app that helps predict traffic problems.

From New Delhi to Beijing, commuters spend a lot of time stuck in traffic.

The VOA’s Faith Lapidus tells us about a scientist and a student who are trying to do something about it.

In the United States, Los Angeles and San Francisco tie for second place for having the worst traffic problems. Washington, D.C., is in first place with the worst traffic, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

In Los Angeles, drivers spend 61 hours every year stuck in traffic. These drivers know all too well how bad the traffic can be.

“It’s a prison of cars. There’s too many cars, you can’t move around a lot.”

“I get very frustrated. I try to listen to some music, maybe snap my fingers or something to try to pass the time.”

Professor Cyrus Shahabi also knows about traffic jams. He lives more than 65 kilometers from his office at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles. He is always late -- even with the help of a navigation system.

He and PhD student Ugur Demiryurek decided to develop an app for that. The ClearPath app claims to do what other navigation systems cannot. Professor Shahabi says his program uses historical data to predict traffic conditions even before the driver leaves the house.

“What’s unique is that we utilize a lot of data that’s currently become available including traffic data, weather data, and we analyze that so that we can predict what’s going to happen in front of you when you leave home.”

ClearPath uses two and a half years worth of traffic data from 9,000 sensors on the roads of Los Angeles. It also collects information on accidents.

“Now you are driving and there’s an accident in front of you, but the accident is 20 minutes away. And you know from historical data that that accident would clear by the time you get there. We can take that into account and send you towards the accident because we think by the time you get there, there wouldn’t be any accident.”

Professor Shahabi says his system does more than just respond to current traffic conditions. With ClearPath, he says, a driver can enter what time he wants to leave on a specific time and date, and ClearPath will give the fastest route. It looks at the entire road network, including surface streets as well as highways, before the driver hits the road.

Ugur Demiryurek says they will launch the free ClearPath app for roads in Los Angeles in two months. In a year, he and Professor Shahabi hope to have ClearPath available nationwide and overseas once they can collect traffic data from other cities.

“I thought always that L.A. had the worst traffic, but now I know that Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, believe it or not, Singapore, Hong Kong definitely are examples that can immediately utilize this.”

Professor Shahabi hopes to license this new technology to companies that already have navigation systems, such as Google and Apple.

I’m Faith Lapidus.

Alzheimer's disease is mostly a condition of old age. Life expectancy is getting longer around the world, and the number of people affected by the brain disease is expected to triple in some countries by the middle of the century.

People with Alzheimer's often have other medical needs that require the services of numerous health care professionals. Caregivers often have a hard time keeping up with all the medical information.

More and more, family members are being called on to help care for loved ones with Alzheimer's. It is a responsibility for which most people are unprepared. This is why the Hebrew Home, a private health care group in Riverdale, New York, developed an iPhone and iPad application called "Balance."

The VOA's June Simms tells us about it.

The app offers caregivers advice on recognizing symptoms and on feeding, bathing and providing a healthy environment for the patient. It can be bought on the Internet for four dollars.

David Pomeranz is Hebrew Home's program development director, and he created "Balance."

"It is not easy and we hope this will make it a little easier for people."

The Hebrew Home is a not-for-profit organization that provides care to 75,000 patients throughout New York City.

“We are dealing with their family members because, as a philosophy, we feel that we need to care for the caregiver equally in our (response to the) care needs (of) the clients themselves, since if the caregiver does not have the proper supports, they simply cannot be a caregiver.”

Mr. Pomeranz says the “Balance” software is designed to let users organize medical and other information so they can easily keep track of the person’s health. It helps caregivers manage doctor’s appointments and share information with doctors about the patient’s daily emotional changes.

Interest in the app is not limited to the United States.

“It has been interesting to see that we have had apps purchased (in countries) from Egypt to the Netherlands to Greece. It is like the United Nations every day, to see where people are buying this.”

David Pomeranz says software developers are working on a version of “Balance” for mobile devices using the Android operating system.

In a separate but unrelated story, scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Missouri have identified genes linked to Alzheimer's disease. They say the discovery could help researchers develop new drugs to fight the brain disease.

I'm June Simms.

And that's "As It Is." We hope you enjoyed our program today.

Our thanks to Faith Lapidus and June Simms for their reports.

Every day on "As It Is," we explore the latest events and report on issues that concern you. We would love to know what you want to hear on the show. Write to us at:

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I'm Christopher Cruise, and that's "As It Is" on The Voice of America.