

18 February 2004

## **NEW LOW-COST INTERNET BUS TRAVEL FOR £1**

The UK's first low-cost internet bus service was launched nationwide today (Wednesday), allowing passengers to use the state-of-the-art service to travel between major cities from just £1.

megabus.com, Stagecoach's low-cost bus service, will roll out a new network of routes next month linking London with a dozen cities in England and Wales.

From today (Wednesday) passengers can use the online booking service at [www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com). The first journeys, using high-capacity double decker buses, will run from Monday 1 March.

Trials of the ground-breaking service, based on the same concept as the low-cost airlines, have shown an appeal to a wide audience, including students, commuters, families and "silver surfers" - the over 55s market who use the internet.

Tickets can be purchased for the following new megabus.com routes:

- Birmingham-London
- Plymouth-Exeter-London
- Swansea-Cardiff-London
- Bristol-London
- Bournemouth-London
- Southampton-London
- Portsmouth-London
- Brighton-London

The massive expansion across the UK is in response to megabus.com's huge success since the first trials were launched in August 2003, with passenger numbers now approaching 200,000.

A pilot scheme was rolled out across Scotland and several English cities, including Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, with exceptional results.

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Brian Souter, Chief Executive of Stagecoach Group, said: “megabus.com is one of the biggest changes to bus travel in decades. It is simple to use and will make inter-city bus travel affordable for everyone. We think it has the potential to transform the demand for medium-distance bus travel in the same way the low-cost operators have done in the airline industry.”

Stagecoach has developed megabus.com by adapting the low-cost, no-frills approach of the budget airlines. Seats on the web-based ticketless service are yield managed in the same way as the budget airlines, with slightly higher fares for last-minute bookings or popular journeys. All reservations are subject to a 50p booking fee.

Around 400,000 hits have been registered on [www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com) during the trial and there is an average of one booking for every three visits, an extremely high hit-rate for such services.

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