

New Fringe app announced for this year's festival

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society has published details of a new app, which will be available just before this year's festival.

Last year there was a great deal of outcry when the Fringe eventually admitted it was not going to be available in 2022 as it would have cost £100,000 to update their app and they simply did not have the money to do it.

Chief Executive Shona McCarthy answered criticism last year by responding on the Fringe website about the lack of any app for Fringe customer. She said then: "The app was due for an upgrade after Fringe 2019 by rebuilding a mobile website to replace its functionality and integrate with the main website.

"The development required in 2022, including changes to app store policies, payment processing and e-ticketing, would have cost in excess of £100,000, with work requiring to begin in December 2021 to meet all the associated, and necessary, compliancy testing. This was simply impossible.

"It is a sad reality of the impact of Covid that there was nothing to consult about. We have had to make lots of tough choices to help as many people as possible to survive the effects of the pandemic, and this was one of them. Note that the Fringe app has just 7% of users compared to edfringe.com – more than nine in every ten app and web users still prefer the website."

Support from Playbill and Synatec

The new app will include many navigational features which will support audiences in exploring the Fringe.

Users will be able to view and search full programme listings, book tickets on the go and use a nearby now function in the same way as you could in the app which worked until Fringe 2019, to find shows starting soon, which are close to you.

Based on feedback from audiences, artists, participants and venues following the 2022 Fringe, the new app will also include new features which were not available previously.

Last year the tickets were all digital, and this year e-ticket QR codes will be stored in the app's planner area and will then be seamlessly integrated with users' day-by-day show schedules. Users will also be able to add tickets for multiple shows in one transaction,

Two festival-time additions will mean that users will have the option to enable notifications when their next show is about to start and will also have a new 'Shake to Search' function which will provide users with a random show suggestion simply by shaking their phone.

The development of the 2023 app has been made possible through support from Scottish Enterprise, and new sponsors [Playbill](#) who provide the theatre programmes for Broadway shows and Synatec.

Since the start of 2023, the Fringe Society have been working with Australian-based agency equ about developing a new app for this year's festival. equ previously supported the Perth Fringe Festival with the development of their app. Throughout the development phase, the Fringe Society team say they have also already started exploring potential additional features for Fringe 2024 and beyond. Through festival-time, users will

be invited to submit feedback on the new app, encouraging suggestions of any additional features they would like to have to get more out of the Fringe as well as providing feedback on their experience of the new app.

equ Managing Director, Warren Gibbs said: “We are thrilled by the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing success of the world’s largest arts festival, and will be looking to create a platform that adds significant value for all stakeholders including artists, venues and customers.”

Shona McCarthy, Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, said: ‘Developing an app required to support the scale and complexity of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe takes a significant period of time and resource, and we are delighted to be able to share the exciting features which will be launched within the app for this year’s festival. We recognise the app is a key tool for Fringe artists, with many audiences using it to explore new ideas and performances they may not have yet experienced, and the “nearby now” functionality is particularly useful for performers who offer free shows within the programme.

“We’ve ensured that the new app does all that and more, and while there’s still a few more weeks before it’s fully ready, I can’t wait for Fringe audiences to download it and support the thousands of artists performing in Edinburgh this summer.’

The new Fringe app is designed for use in August, and will be available for download in late July, ahead of this year’s Fringe.