

Interview: Transport Tycoon Creator Chris Sawyer Talks Porting to Mobile Platforms

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[Transport Tycoon](#) allows users to grow an empire of over 150 different vehicles in over 40 scenarios and 20 years later modern gamers can take the same ride on iOS. We jumped at the opportunity to talk to Chris Sawyer, creator of **Transport Tycoon** and [Rollercoaster Tycoon](#), about the challenges in bringing a deep PC experience to mobile platforms.

Over the years, **Transport Tycoon's** visual style may have fallen out of what typical PC gamers look for in their software entertainment, but the simulation gameplay continues to hold up both throughout the greater genre and in the self-contained experience Sawyer debuted over 20 years ago.

"The biggest challenge has been to keep the game's scale and depth and detail while adapting it to play well on mobile platforms," Sawyer said. "This was really important to us as we didn't want to simplify or dumb down the game."

Sawyer said that doing so presented a technical hurdle for the team, but that marketing the experience to mobile gamers more accustomed to quick flings with birds or bouncing doodles was "quite challenging" as well. "We want players to understand **Transport Tycoon** is in fact the actual classic game brought to life with the same depth and strategy," Sawyer explained.

To that end, the team has developed a brand new tutorial for touch-screen gameplay. "The approach with mobile and touch screen interfaces was to provide as much hands-on guidance that allowed players to use the mechanics and interface the same as the original tutorials."

Players attempting to make their own mogul-like grasp on varying forms of transportation will now find a tutorial that delves deeply enough into the menus and mechanics, even if everything is commanded by touch screen. **Transport Tycoon** on iOS and Android also offers a few new achievements to boot.

The goal in creating new achievements was to "introduce a bit of fun to the progression," Sawyer said. "Morlock" is awarded after building a station underground (see [here](#)) while "Swiss Cheese" is awarded for building lots of tunnels.

After so many years, Sawyer says **Transport Tycoon** and the franchise's success has been hugely important to him. "The game put me in a position where I am free to experiment a bit with ideas and one of those experiments ended up being **Rollercoaster Tycoon**. It doesn't feel like 20 years!" Sawyer told us.

"Time seems to pass so quickly and these days it seems it takes a very long time to bring games to fruition," Sawyer said when asked about the development process on other projects. "It's difficult to believe how short the development period of the original **Transport Tycoon** was."

"Platforms are evolving, players expectations are changing, and methods of marketing and funding games are evolving as well. We had to buck the trend a bit with **Transport Tycoon** by keeping the game as large and in-depth as the original rather than creating a simpler form of the game," Sawyer explained. The team has discovered that they were correct in delivering such an experience to mobile platforms, though Sawyer himself couldn't pinpoint a design decision he would have changed in creating **Transport Tycoon's** original process given what he knows about gaming now.

"We've kept the gameplay almost identical to the original game. This was something we always wanted to do from the start," Sawyer said. "I think the original game design really suits mobile platforms as it is."

You can download **Transport Tycoon** on your mobile device now. The app runs \$6.99 on [iTunes](#), [Google Play](#), and the [Amazon App Market](#).