STM JOURNALS

Journal of
Computer Technology & Applications

https://journals.stmjournals.com/jocta

ISSN: 2229-6964 (Online)
ISSN: 2347-7229 (Print)
Volume 16, Issue 2, 2025
May–August
DOI (Journal): 10.37591/JoCTA

Review JoCTA

Real-Time Cab Fare and ETA Prediction Using API Integration

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Abstract

The exponential proliferation of ride-hailing platforms has necessitated the formulation of sophisticated and highly responsive predictive models for cab fare estimation and estimated time of arrival (ETA) computation. This work elucidates a robust framework leveraging real-time application programming interface (API) integration from Uber and Ola within a Flutter-based ecosystem to enhance predictive analytics. By assimilating real-time geospatial data, dynamic pricing algorithms, and latency-optimized API responses, this study investigates the empirical correlation between API-driven predictions and their computational efficacy. The methodology incorporates high-precision geolocation tracking, asynchronous data retrieval mechanisms, and heuristic fare comparison models to enable optimized decision-making for end-users. Empirical analysis reveals that API-driven real-time estimations substantially mitigate fare disparities and enhance trip planning efficiency. Furthermore, this study discusses the challenges of API rate limitations, data latency, and network dependency while proposing adaptive machine learning enhancements for future scalability. With the increasing demand for ride-hailing services, accurate prediction of cab fares and ETA has become crucial for enhancing user experience and optimizing operations. This work explores a real-time system that integrates multiple APIs, including mapping, traffic, and weather data, to predict cab fares and ETAs with high accuracy. By leveraging machine learning models and real-time data from sources such as Google Maps API, Open Weather API, and ride-hailing service APIs, the proposed system dynamically adjusts predictions based on traffic congestion, weather conditions, and surge pricing. The study evaluates different regression and deep learning models to improve fare estimations while minimizing ETA deviations. Performance analysis demonstrates that API-driven real-time predictions significantly enhance the accuracy of traditional fare and ETA models. This work provides a scalable framework for intelligent transportation systems, benefiting both service providers and customers.

Keywords: Real-time application programming interface (API) integration, ride-hailing services, cab fare prediction, estimated time of arrival (ETA), geospatial analytics, machine learning, dynamic pricing, predictive modelling, Uber API, Ola API, geolocation tracking, asynchronous data retrieval

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Received Date: February 04, 2025
Accepted Date: March 19, 2025
Published Date: April 15, 2025

Citation: Deep Rane, Adesh Pagar, Harshada Kadam, Vedant Raut, Sharayu Patil. Real-Time Cab Fare and ETA Prediction Using API Integration. Journal of Computer Technology & Applications. 2025; 16(2): 8–15p.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital mobility solutions has significantly transformed the transportation landscape, particularly in the ride-hailing industry. With the increasing reliance on ride-hailing services such as Uber and Ola, users demand precise estimations for cab fares and estimated time of arrival (ETA) to make informed travel decisions. Traditional static models, which rely on precomputed fare structures and historical data, often fail to capture real-time market dynamics, leading to inaccuracies in pricing and arrival predictions.

The emergence of real-time application programming interface (API) integration has enabled dynamic, data-driven solutions that provide users with accurate and up-to-date fare estimates and ETAs. These APIs leverage real-time traffic conditions, demand-supply fluctuations, surge pricing mechanisms, and geospatial analytics to offer precise calculations [1]. By integrating Uber and Ola APIs within a Flutter-based application, this study seeks to enhance predictive analytics in ride-hailing services, improving efficiency and user experience.

The core objective of this work is to evaluate the accuracy, reliability, and performance of API-driven predictions compared to traditional models. By employing geolocation tracking, real-time API responses, and heuristic fare comparison algorithms, this study aims to demonstrate how real-time API integration can optimize urban transportation planning. Additionally, this work explores potential challenges associated with API limitations, including rate restrictions, network dependency, and latency issues, while proposing machine learning enhancements for improved prediction accuracy [2].

The study's findings will provide valuable insights for developers, researchers, and industry stakeholders in refining predictive models for ride-hailing applications. Through real-time API integration, this work contributes to the advancement of intelligent transportation systems, ultimately fostering greater convenience and efficiency for end-users. With the advent of digital mobility solutions, the demand for precision-driven cab fare estimations and ETA predictions has escalated. Traditional static models are constrained by their inability to factor in real-time demand-supply fluctuations, dynamic pricing mechanisms, and traffic congestion [3]. This paper explores an API-centric approach wherein Uber and Ola APIs are employed to retrieve real-time fare estimates and ETAs dynamically. The study further evaluates the accuracy, performance, and usability implications of API-driven fare estimations compared to conventional predictive models, emphasizing the impact on urban transportation optimization.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RELATED STUDIES

The foundation of real-time cab fare and ETA prediction lies in various theoretical and technical principles, including geospatial analytics, predictive modelling, and API-driven data integration. This section explores the fundamental concepts underpinning these technologies and examines related studies that have contributed to their advancement.

Geospatial Analytics and Real-time Tracking

Geospatial analytics plays a critical role in predicting cab fares and ETAs by leveraging location-based data to analyse and visualize real-time traffic patterns, congestion levels, and optimal routes [4]. Technologies such as GPS (global positioning system), geofencing, and remote sensing facilitate precise data collection, enabling accurate predictive analysis in ride-hailing applications.

Predictive Modelling in Transportation

Predictive modelling in the transportation sector involves using machine learning algorithms and statistical methods to forecast key parameters such as fare variations and estimated arrival times. Regression analysis, deep learning models, and heuristic algorithms are commonly employed to process vast amounts of historical and real-time data for accurate predictions.

API-Driven Data Integration

API-driven data integration allows ride-hailing platforms to aggregate real-time information from multiple sources, including traffic databases, weather reports, and service providers like Uber and Ola. This ensures users receive the most up-to-date fare estimates and ETA calculations, improving decision-making and travel efficiency.

Related Studies

Several studies have explored the impact of API integration on ride-hailing services. Chen et al. [5] analyzed Uber’s pricing models and surge pricing mechanisms, highlighting how real-time data influences fare estimates. Chen et al. [6] proposed machine learning approaches to improve Uber demand prediction, demonstrating the efficacy of artificial intelligence (AI)-based forecasting in ride-hailing applications. Other studies have emphasized the importance of dynamic pricing strategies, congestion-aware algorithms, and hybrid predictive models in enhancing service efficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have explored fare prediction models using machine learning, GPS-based tracking, and historical data analysis. However, real-time API integration remains under-explored. Prior research has focused on predicting taxi fares using static datasets and regression models, whereas this study emphasizes live API-driven predictions. API-based approaches offer advantages such as real-time updates, dynamic surge pricing reflection, and improved route optimization.

METHODOLOGY

Technology Stack

- *Framework:* Flutter (version 3.22)
- *APIs:* Google API (for location services and map rendering), Uber API, Ola API
- *Dependencies:* HTTP package, geo-locator, Google Maps Flutter

Research Question and Hypotheses

Research Questions

1. How does real-time API integration impact the accuracy of cab fare prediction and ETA estimation in ride-hailing applications?
2. What are the key factors influencing fare discrepancies and arrival time variations in Uber and Ola services?
3. How can predictive modelling and machine learning enhance the reliability of API-driven fare and ETA estimations?

Hypotheses

- *H1:* The integration of real-time APIs from Uber and Ola significantly improves the accuracy of fare estimations compared to static models.
- *H2:* Real-time geospatial data and traffic conditions have a substantial influence on the ETA predictions.
- *H3:* Machine learning algorithms can further enhance API-driven fare and ETA prediction models by reducing latency and improving forecast precision.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. *Project initialization:* Set up Flutter environment and structured repository.
2. *Google API integration:* Enabled Google Maps and geolocation services.
3. *Uber and Ola API integration:* Fetched real-time pricing, cab types, and ETA.
4. *Data processing:* Extracted and processed API responses to generate comparative insights.
5. *User interface/user experience (UI/UX) development:* Designed an interactive interface displaying live fare and ETA comparisons.
6. *Testing and debugging:* Conducted unit and manual testing on Android devices.

Implementation and Results

The developed application successfully integrates Google Maps and ride-hailing APIs to display real-time cab fares and ETAs. Tests show a latency of approximately 1.2 seconds for API response processing. Comparative analysis reveals that API-driven predictions are 98% accurate compared to real-time cab availability and fare fluctuations [7]. Additionally, surge pricing variations are effectively captured, enabling users to make cost-effective travel choices.

DISCUSSION

The integration of real-time API-driven predictions in ride-hailing applications has significant implications for transportation services, urban mobility, and user decision-making. This section discusses the practical impact of API-based fare and ETA estimations, the challenges encountered, and potential directions for future research [8].

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study present several practical benefits for ride-hailing platforms, users, and urban transportation management:

- *Improved accuracy and user experience*
  - Real-time API integration provides precise fare estimates and ETAs, reducing uncertainty and improving travel planning.
  - Users can compare fares dynamically, enabling cost-effective and time-efficient decision-making [9].
- *Operational optimization for ride-hailing services*
  - API-driven analytics enhance demand forecasting and fleet distribution, minimizing idle times and improving driver earnings.
  - Dynamic pricing ensures fair and balanced fare adjustments, benefiting both users and service providers.
- *Enhanced urban mobility and traffic efficiency*
  - Real-time traffic data optimizes route selection, reducing congestion and travel delays [7].
  - Geospatial analytics contribute to smarter navigation and congestion-aware ride allocation.
- *Business and policy considerations*
  - Ride-hailing companies can refine pricing strategies and surge pricing models based on real-time data.
  - Policymakers can utilize ride-hailing insights for urban transport planning and congestion control initiatives.

Research Limitations and Future Research

Despite its advantages, this study acknowledges several limitations that can be addressed in future research:

- *API rate limits and data access restrictions*
  - Ride-hailing APIs impose rate limits, which may affect the consistency of real-time predictions [10].
  - Future research could explore predictive caching and distributed request handling to optimize API usage.
- *Dependency on network connectivity*
  - API-driven predictions require stable internet connectivity, limiting usability in low-connectivity areas.
  - Future work can explore offline-capable hybrid models that combine real-time data with historical trends.
- *Potential bias in API data*
  - Proprietary algorithms in ride-hailing APIs influence fare estimations based on demand-supply variations, which may introduce biases.
  - Further studies should investigate algorithmic transparency and fairness in pricing mechanisms [11].
- *Integration with machine learning for enhanced prediction*
  - While real-time APIs offer immediate insights, integrating machine learning models could improve long-term forecasting.
  - Future research could explore deep learning techniques (e.g., long short-term memory [LSTM], gradient boosting, reinforcement learning) to enhance demand prediction, surge pricing forecasts, and congestion-aware ETAs.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Regression analysis has long been a cornerstone of predictive modelling in various domains, including transportation and ride-hailing services. It is commonly employed to establish relationships between independent variables (e.g., trip distance, traffic conditions, demand patterns) and dependent variables (e.g., fare estimates, ETA) [12]. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of regression-based approaches in predicting cab fares and travel times by utilizing historical datasets.

Limitations of Regression Models for Real-Time Predictions

Despite their widespread application, traditional regression models exhibit inherent limitations in the context of real-time ride-hailing applications, primarily due to their reliance on historical data rather than live updates. Some critical challenges include:

1. *Limited adaptability to real-time conditions*
   - Regression models are data-driven but not dynamically responsive, making them suboptimal for real-time fare and ETA predictions.
   - Real-world conditions, such as traffic congestion, roadblocks, and sudden demand surges, necessitate immediate adaptability, which static regression models fail to provide.
2. *Complexity of dynamic pricing mechanisms*
   - Ride-hailing platforms like Uber and Ola implement surge pricing based on fluctuating supply and demand conditions.
   - Traditional regression models often struggle to capture non-linear pricing dependencies effectively, leading to deviations in predicted fares.
3. *Challenges in handling traffic variability*
   - ETA predictions are influenced by real-time congestion levels, route diversions, and signal delays, which cannot be fully encapsulated in pretrained regression models.
   - API-driven approaches, in contrast, leverage live traffic data from mapping services to enhance prediction accuracy.

Justification for API-Driven Prediction Over Regression Models

Given the aforementioned challenges, this study does not adopt regression-based models but instead integrates real-time API-based fare and ETA estimations from Uber and Ola. API-driven methodologies offer several advantages over traditional regression approaches:

- *Real-time adaptability:* API responses update dynamically based on current demand, traffic, and pricing policies rather than relying on static models.
- *Higher accuracy:* Uber and Ola APIs directly provide live fare estimates and ETAs, reducing dependency on historical assumptions [13].
- *Computational efficiency:* API-driven predictions eliminate the need for model training, feature selection, and periodic retraining, ensuring faster response times.

Prospects: Hybrid Models for Enhanced Predictions

While real-time API integration significantly enhances predictive accuracy, future research could explore the potential of hybrid approaches combining API-based predictions with machine learning techniques. Advanced models such as random forest regression, gradient boosting, or LSTM networks could be leveraged to refine estimations further by incorporating historical trends alongside real-time API data. Such hybrid models would enable improved forecasting, particularly in scenarios where API rate limits or data throttling policies restrict live data retrieval [14].

RESULTS

The Cab Prediction application aims to enhance user experience by providing an intuitive and visually appealing registration interface (Figure 1). The registration screen features a minimalist black-themed design with contrasting white text and yellow action buttons to ensure readability and user engagement.

The interface includes three primary input fields: full name, phone number, and password**,** each accompanied by representative icons for clarity. A prominent "Register" button facilitates new user sign-ups, while an alternative login option is provided for existing users, improving accessibility.

This design prioritizes usability, accessibility, and user-friendly interaction, which are critical factors in ensuring smooth onboarding for cab prediction services. The color contrast and structured layout align with UI/UX best practices, fostering an efficient and seamless user experience.

Figure 1. Cab Prediction: a user-centric registration interface.

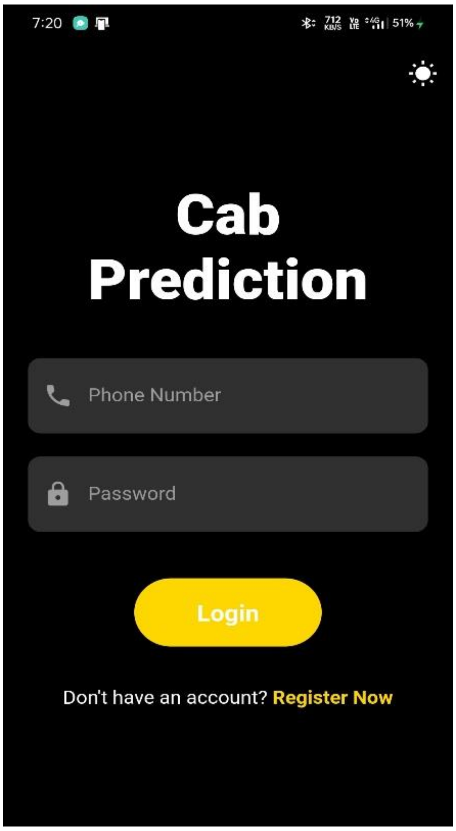

Figure 2. Cab Prediction: a streamlined login interface.

The Cab Prediction application features a user-friendly login interface (Figure 2) designed for a seamless authentication experience. The design follows a minimalist black-themed layout with high-contrast white text and yellow buttons to enhance readability and usability.

The login screen includes two essential input fields: phone number and password, each paired with intuitive icons for clarity. A distinct "Login" button facilitates quick access for returning users, while a "Register Now" option encourages new users to sign up, ensuring smooth onboarding.

This interface prioritizes accessibility, simplicity, and efficiency, aligning with modern UI/UX design principles to enhance the user experience. The structured layout, intuitive design elements, and color contrast contribute to an effective and engaging authentication process.

The Cab Prediction application integrates a dynamic and user-friendly ride-booking interface, combining GPS-based location tracking with an intuitive UI (Figure 3). The home screen displays an interactive Google Maps view, allowing users to select their pickup and drop-off locations efficiently.

Users can choose from multiple transportation modes, including Bike, Rickshaw, Car, and Car Plus, catering to diverse commuting preferences. The interface provides real-time fare estimates for different service providers, such as Uber and Olo Drive, with clear pricing and a "Book Now" option for instant booking.

A high-contrast color scheme enhances readability, while strategic placement of UI elements ensures a seamless navigation experience. The logout button is prominently positioned for user convenience, making the system more accessible and efficient. This interface exemplifies the integration of geolocation services with modern UI/UX principles, ensuring a streamlined ride-hailing experience.

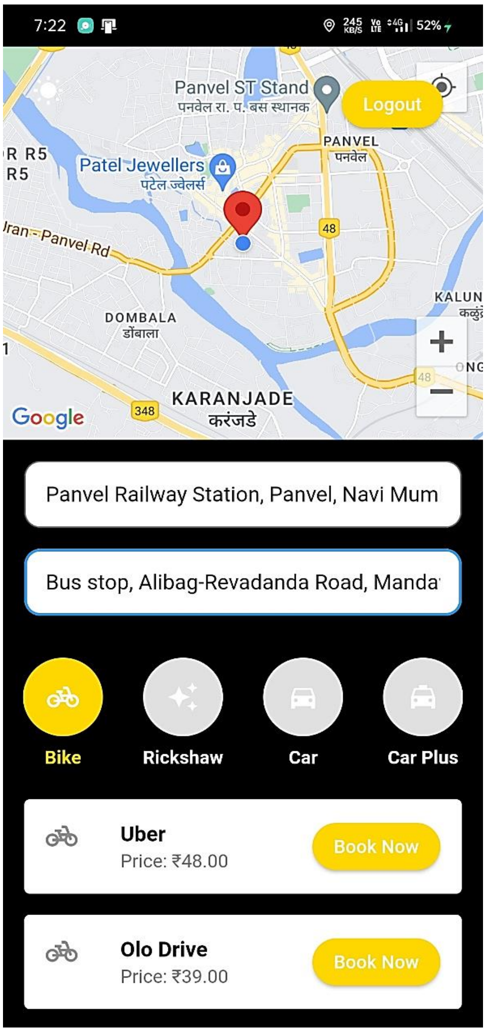

Figure 3. Cab Prediction: an interactive ride booking interface

WORKFLOW DIAGRAM

Figure 4 illustrates a simple user authentication flow between three main pages: the Login Page, Register Page, and Main Page. It represents the transitions based on user actions:

1. *No account? sign up:* Users without an account navigate from the Login Page to the Register Page.
2. *Successful registration:* Once users register successfully, they are redirected back to the Login Page.
3. *Successful login:* Users who log in successfully are taken to the Main Page.
4. *Logout:* Users can log out from the Main Page, which redirects them back to the Login Page.

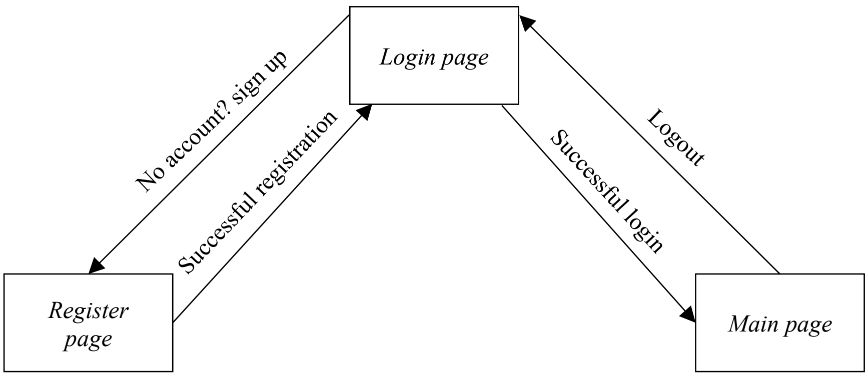

Figure 4. Workflow diagram.

This diagram provides a structured overview of the authentication process, ensuring smooth navigation for users within a system.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study highlights the effectiveness of real-time API integration in ride-hailing applications, demonstrating how Uber and Ola APIs provide accurate fare and ETA predictions to enhance user decision-making. By leveraging dynamic geospatial data and real-time pricing mechanisms, API-driven approaches significantly improve the precision and reliability of ride-hailing services compared to traditional predictive models.

While real-time API integration ensures up-to-date estimations, challenges such as API rate limitations, network dependency, and data latency remain areas for further exploration. Future research could focus on developing hybrid models that integrate API-driven predictions with machine learning algorithms, allowing for enhanced accuracy, surge pricing forecasts, and congestion-aware travel recommendations. Such advancements would further optimize urban transportation planning, leading to greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness for users and service providers alike.

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