

Google Introduces Free GPS Navigation for Android 2.0

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Google today announced a free, turn-by-turn GPS navigation application for the new Android 2.0 smart phone platform. This new feature comes with everything you'd expect to find in a GPS navigation system, like 3D views, turn-by-turn voice guidance and automatic rerouting. But unlike most navigation systems, Google Maps Navigation was built from the ground up to take advantage of your phone's Internet connection. Among the features included in the application:

- Up-to-date map data: Automatically includes latest map data from Google, which is constantly being refined by Google and by users submitting corrections
- Plain English search: Locate destinations by entering business name or landmark; no address needed
- Voice search: Speak destinations and Google Maps Navigation will automatically interpret and plot routes
- Live traffic data: Indicator warns of upcoming traffic issues
- Search along route: Find businesses along path of travel
- Satellite view: 3D view of route to aid in understanding directions
- Street View: first-person perspective of route and destination images

A video preview of Google Maps Navigation has also been posted.

The first device to carry Google Maps Navigation for Android 2.0 will be the Motorola Droid. The first in a series of "Droid" phones, the initial device will launch on November 6th and be priced at \$199.99 with a two-year Verizon agreement after a \$100 mail-in rebate.

CNET notes that Google and Apple are in fact working to bring the application to the iPhone, although no details of a launch timeframe have been released. However, Google is working with Apple on bringing it to the iPhone, and it's not ruling out licensing the software to makers of portable navigation devices used in cars throughout the world, said Gundostra, vice president of engineering at Google for mobile and developers. The process involving Apple is slightly different from the usual App Store submission process, because Maps is a built-in iPhone application, he said.