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## Mapquest Offers More Mobile Mapping Options

By Bary Alyssa Johnson

Looking to drive mobile customers in the right direction, Mapquest announced on Monday two new services that offer navigation capability via cell phone.

Mapquest unveiled a Web-based mobile service for use on cell phones with Internet access. Available as a free download, the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) gives customers access to maps and directions on a Mapquest Web site optimized for mobile phones.

The service is a joint venture between Mapquest and Infogin, an Israeli company whose flagship IMP (Intelligent Mobile Platform) product reformats Web content for viewing on small screens.

"Infogin is providing the technology for this service," said a Mapquest spokesperson. "They are helping us build a platform to offer access to Mapquest.com via mobile phones."

On a separate note, Mapquest also collaborated with Telmap, an Israeli company geared toward mobile mapping, to launch a mobile navigation application based on MOND (Mobile Optimized Navigation Data) technology. Telmap launched MOND in late March 2006.

Navigator, which Mapquest says will compete with existing in-car GPS systems, is designed to offer users relevant maps and vocal turn-by-turn directions to any destination via mobile phones.

A Mapquest Navigator GPS-enabled phone will look like a regular cell from Sprint or Nextel, for example, but when the user views their phone features they will see a built-in Navigator option or icon.

"Using only GPS-enabled phones, people will be able to get text, audio and visual instructions on how to get to the places they need to go," said Alan Beiagi, director and general manager for Mapquest Wireless. "We are working with all wireless carriers and expect the product to be available for around \$9.99 per month."

Navigator is part of Mapquests' broader vision for this year of making these devices available to consumers on all mobile devices, according to Beiagi.

Telmaps' [Navigator](#) is the only commercially available product that works on every major phone platform on the market – including Symbian, Java, BREW, and Blackberry – while remaining independent of individual cellular networks, according to the company Web site.

The product includes a number of additional features, like optimized routing calculation – shortest route or no tolls, for example – pedestrian navigation capability, color maps with zoom, pan and point on map functions, and plenty of POIs (points of interest). Navigator draws its POIs from the same database as Mapquest.com and also allows users to communicate locations with friends via SMS.

Mapquest maintains that the product is safe when used in a safe manner (i.e. mounting your cell phone in a cradle on the dashboard).

"We recommend you do your planning in advance, not while driving – go to [Mapquest.com](http://Mapquest.com), plan the route and program your Navigator device," said Beiagi. "It's there to guide you with audio instructions to your destination, but you also have the benefit of [seeing] visual instructions when you're at a stop sign or red light."

Once the user has planned their trip, Navigator stores that data on the device so driving directions are always accessible. There is no need to return to the server for updated or additional instructions while en-route.

"We realize cell phones have dead zones and that there are places where you may be out of the coverage area," said Beiagi. "Once you've planned your trip, the application downloads and stores that data on your phone, so if you do go into a dead zone there is enough information stored on the handset to guide you out."

Mapquest expects to make the Navigator product widely available by Q3 2006, via all wireless carriers that offer GPS-enabled phones. Details on specific partnerships have not yet been made available.