

Citymaps aims to make maps social

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(AP)—Maps are where it's at. Just ask Google, which bought maps app Waze for more than \$1 billion, or Apple, which snapped up two small mapping startups earlier this month.

Enter Citymaps, which bills itself as a social map that helps people discover new places rather than simply get directions to a destination. The New York-based startup launched a new, expanded version of its navigation app on Thursday that includes all U.S. cities and 15 million businesses. An earlier version included just a handful of test markets, including New York. The free app is currently available for the iPhone. An Android version is in the works, the company says.

Citymaps lets people customize maps so that no two look alike. Users can create and share their own maps, such as "best coffee shops" or "late-night food." They can also collaborate with friends to make maps, and follow celebrities, magazines and others.

Of course, Citymaps can be used for old-school navigation, too. But the company is betting that in the age of customized search results and news feeds, maps should follow suit.

Elliot Cohen, the company's founder and CEO, recognizes that Google Inc. has cornered the maps-for-navigation market.

"There is no way we can compete with Google fighting their fight," he says. "But we can if we look a few years out."

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