

Orbimage To Provide Microsoft With Imagery For MSN Virtual Earth

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Orbimage Holdings announced Wednesday that its subsidiary Orbimage signed an agreement with Microsoft to supply high resolution global satellite image data for MSN Virtual Earth, a key component of MSN Search.

The agreement was unveiled at the O'Reilly Where 2.0 conference in San Francisco during a keynote presentation delivered by Stephen Lawler, general manager of the Microsoft MapPoint business unit.

"MSN Virtual Earth gives consumers a deeply immersive local search experience where they see what it's like to be in an actual location," Lawler said.

"High-resolution satellite imagery is an important component of creating an immersive experience for users. The unique global satellite imagery captured by Orbimage will enable us to offer the Virtual Earth experience to customers around the world."

Under the terms of the 5-year agreement, Orbimage will allow Microsoft to incorporate Orbimage's global library of satellite images into MSN Virtual Earth.

Microsoft will also have an exclusive source of updated imagery that Orbimage will continue to produce with its OrbView-2 and OrbView-3 satellites as well as new satellites it plans to place into service in the next 18-24 months.

The OrbView-3 satellite, the newest high-resolution commercial imaging satellite in operation today, can collect up to 210,000 square kilometers a day of panchromatic (black and white) imagery at one-meter resolution, and color imagery at four-meter resolution of virtually any area on earth.

"On-demand satellite imagery is another compelling way that people can bring to life their search experience," said Orbimage Chief Operating Officer Bill Schuster. "This collaboration represents a significant step forward in bringing a wide range of valuable search applications to both consumers and businesses."

Capable of measuring, mapping and monitoring objects smaller than automobiles and spectrally differentiating thousands of land use/land cover types, OrbView-3 imagery supports mapping, environmental monitoring, urban planning, resource management, homeland defense, national security and emergency preparedness.

Over 10 million square kilometers of imagery has been collected since the launch of OrbView-3 in June 2003, which includes imagery of most of the world's capital cities, airports, and other areas of interest.

When OrbView-5 is launched in 2007, this next-generation commercial imaging satellite will acquire up to 700,000 square kilometers of imagery each day at the unprecedented resolution of 0.41-meters.

Slated for availability this summer, the first release of MSN Virtual Earth will provide a one-of-a-kind local search experience offering a core set of reference points such as maps, aerial imagery, photos, consumer and business directories, and ratings and reviews.

In addition, MSN Virtual Earth will allow the broader community of consumers and businesses to contribute their own location-specific information to create an always-expanding, dynamic and relevant local

search experience.

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