

Nokia to offer free mobile navigation services

January 21 2010, By MATTI HUUHTANEN , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- Nokia Corp. said Thursday it will offer free navigation services globally for users of its smart phones, in a drive to counter a similar move by Google Inc.

The application, with detailed maps for more than 180 countries, will also have voice guidance in 46 languages in 74 countries.

It will be immediately available for download on Nokia's Ovi Map site, and from March all new [Nokia](#) GPS-enabled [smart phones](#) will include the new version of Ovi Maps. Users will also have free access to Lonely Planet and Michelin travel guides that have information on more than 1,000 destinations globally.

"We can now put a complete navigation system in the palm of your hand, wherever in the world you are, whenever you need it and at no extra cost," Nokia Executive Vice President Anssi Vanjoki said. "By adding cameras at no extra cost to our phones we quickly became the biggest camera manufacturer in the world. The aim of the new Ovi Maps is to enable us to do the same for navigation."

The announcement follows a similar move by [Google](#) Inc. to provide free navigation services on handsets. It also will pose a challenge for makers of personal navigational devices, like U.S.-based [Garmin](#) Ltd. and TomTom NV of Netherlands, that help car drivers plan where they want to go and how.

Nokia's share price closed up less than 1 percent at euro9.23 (\$12.98) on

the Helsinki Stock Exchange.

The mobile phone industry has been hit hard by saturation in markets - especially in Europe - and the global financial crisis, forcing handset makers such as Nokia to increasingly turn to providing services for users, such as music and video downloads, navigational maps and games.

Nokia says that by 2011 it expects some 300 million active users of its services.

Nokia said that research firm Canalys estimates that in 2009 some 27 million people worldwide were using the [global positioning system](#), or GPS, on handsets. The Finnish company's new service could increase the number of [GPS navigation](#) users to 50 million, through a download of the new Ovi Maps available immediately, Nokia said.

"This move has the potential to nearly double the size of the current mobile navigation market," Nokia said. "The new version of Ovi Maps includes high-end car and pedestrian navigation features, such as turn-by-turn voice guidance."

In an \$8 billion deal, Nokia in 2008 bought U.S. navigation-software maker Navteq Corp., a major provider of digital [map](#) data and content.

In October, Nokia reported its first quarterly loss since it became the world's biggest handset maker in 1998 and said it would focus on smart phones, based on "user experience improvements," to help it boost performance.

In 2008, Nokia sold 468 million handsets, up 7 percent on 2007. It maintained its No. 1 position in the third quarter last year, with a 38 percent global market share and sales of 108.5 million handsets.

Nokia is due to release its fourth-quarter and 2009 full-year earnings on Jan. 28.

The company, based in Espoo employs 123,350 people worldwide.

More information: Navigation download site:
<http://www.nokia.com/maps>

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