

Woman sues Google over Utah walking directions

June 1 2010, By PAUL FOY , Associated Press writer

(AP) -- A pedestrian injured by a motorist while following an online route has filed a lawsuit claiming Google Inc. supplied unsafe directions.

Lauren Rosenberg filed a lawsuit on Thursday seeking more than \$100,000 in U.S. District Court in Utah. It also named a motorist she says hit her.

Rosenberg used her phone in January to download directions from one end of Park City to the other.

Google Maps led her to a four-lane boulevard without sidewalks that was "not reasonably safe for pedestrians," according to the lawsuit filed by the Northridge, Calif., resident.

The case has become a sensation on tech blogs, websites and cable television channels, with critics assailing the woman for ignoring her own safety to blindly follow online directions. Her lawyer, Allen Young, said the truth was different.

Rosenberg believed she could reach a sidewalk on the other side of Deer Valley Drive and tried to cross the boulevard, but didn't even make it to the median, he said.

She was struck by a speeding car on a pitch-black night and received multiple bone fractures that required six weeks of rehabilitation, Young added.

"We think there's enough fault to go around, but Google had some responsibility to direct people correctly or warn them," Young said. "They created a trap with walking instructions that people rely on. She relied on it and thought she should cross the street."

Rosenberg is seeking compensation for medical bills, plus more for lost wages and punitive damages. The lawsuit provided no other information about the woman, who has been misidentified online as a Los Angeles publicist by the same name.

Young said the woman is a native of Northridge in her mid-20s and is unemployed. No phone listing could be found for her.

Google spokeswoman Elaine Filadelfo said the company had not received a copy of the lawsuit and couldn't discuss it, but she disputed Young's assertion that Google Maps provides no warning that walking routes may be missing sidewalks or pedestrian paths.

Every software version for desktop computers and mobile devices has had that disclaimer since Google Maps was launched in 2008, she said.

Park City police said some segments of Deer Valley Drive have sidewalks but not the stretch that Rosenberg reached. The boulevard has a walking path on the side Rosenberg failed to reach, police Capt. Rick Ryan said.

Young said the walking path was "totally snowpacked" and of no use to pedestrians in January.

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