

Google merges online and offline worlds in Maps

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Google Earth and Maps vice president Brian McClendon speaks in June 2012 in San Francisco, California. Google on Wednesday took another step in its quest to merge the Internet with the real world with Maps and put itself at the heart of mobile gadget lifestyles in the process.

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The California technology titan added Poland and the Ukraine to the list of more than 200 countries and regions where people can correct, update, or enhance [Google](#) Maps with local insights or expertise.

"Google has been about searching the online world, but most people live in the offline world, the physical world," Google Earth and Maps vice

president Brian McClendon told AFP.

"We want to be able to provide a map where ever you are going; a way to have the best answers for what is within walking distance and transmit them in a fast, interactive way."

Google began tapping into [collective knowledge](#) for cartography in 2008 with the launch of a Map Maker tool in India, where details regarding streets in cities was meager to non-existent.

"There were some places in the world where, even in big cities, the map was essentially a blank canvass," said Map Maker product manager James Kelly.

"We have taken the tool from just adding roads to adding all kinds of features like [speed limits](#) and suitability for bicycles," he continued. "We also made it possible to add businesses and other points of interest."

The tool allows people to update Google Maps to show local features ranging from bicycle paths and foot trails to parking lots or [playgrounds](#).

Verified or trusted editing changes go live in minutes and spread across the more than 800,000 websites that embed [Google Maps](#).

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