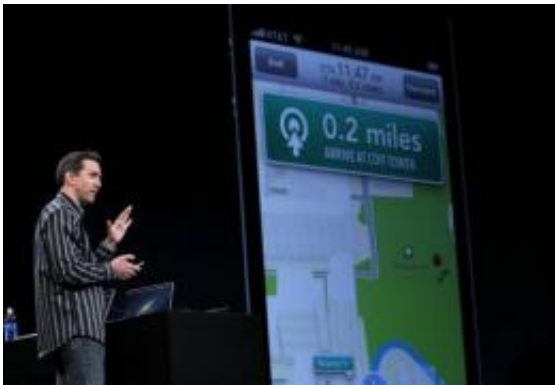


Apple maps disaster may solve China-Japan islands row

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File photo shows Scott Forstall, Apple Senior VP of iPhone Software, demonstrates the new map application featured on iOS 6 in June. Apple's new iPhone 5 may have inadvertently provided a diplomatic solution to China and Japan's ongoing row over disputed islands.

Apple's new iPhone 5 may have been criticised for its glitch-ridden new maps program, but it may have inadvertently provided a diplomatic solution to China and Japan's ongoing row over disputed islands.

The new smartphone, which has dumped [Google Maps](#) in favour of its own version, has been ridiculed for misplacing major landmarks, shifting towns and even creating a new airport.

But amid a row over an outcrop of islands claimed by both Tokyo and Beijing, Apple's new iOS 6 software has provided a resolution of sorts.

When a user searches for the Tokyo-controlled Senkaku islands in the East China Sea, claimed by Beijing under the name Diaoyu, two sets of the islands appear alongside each other.

"The map has one set of islands for each country. Is this a message from Apple that we civilians must not get engaged in a pointless dispute?" one Japanese blogger wrote.

The new mapping program was released this week as part of Apple's updated mobile [operating system software](#), which powers the new [iPhone 5](#), released Friday, and can be installed as an upgrade on other Apple devices.

To the chagrin of many, the new operating system replaces [Google Maps](#), which had been the default mapping system in Apple devices until now.

As of yet there is no stand-alone Google Maps app available for the [iPhone](#), although some reports say this is coming.

The East China Sea islands, strategically coveted outcrops, have been the focus of a territorial dispute between Tokyo and Beijing, with tensions escalating dramatically after the Japanese government bought three of them from their private owners.

Tens of thousands of anti-Japanese demonstrators rallied across China, with some vandalising Japanese shops and factories, forcing firms to shut or scale back production.

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