Toyota starts traffic data service for businesses

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Toyota is using live-time traffic information from 700,000 Toyota vehicles on Japanese roads to offer what it calls a "big data" service to local governments and businesses that helps drivers during disasters.

Toyota Motor Corp. said Wednesday the 200,000 yen ($2,000) a month service will start June 3 in Japan. Overseas services are being considered but nothing has been decided, said managing officer Shigeki Tomoyama.

Data from Toyota vehicles on roads is already being collected automatically. The new service processes the data, and makes that available to clients who sign with the service.

Toyota said it will also offer some of that information for free on smartphones, and will allow drivers to share their own observations on road conditions, including blocked paths and strong winds, with other drivers.

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