

Google Maps guides travellers offline

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Turn-by-turn directions and precise business information are available offline in the latest iteration of Google Maps for Android devices, the company said November 10, 2015, with updates for Apple devices coming soon

Google on Tuesday updated its free map service to guide users of Android-powered smartphones to destinations without relying on Internet connections.

An offline navigation feature previewed at a Google developers conference early this year began rolling out in an updated version of Google Maps application tailored for Android-powered mobile devices.

A version crafted for Apple smartphones or tablets is coming soon, according to Google product manager Amanda Bishop.

"Google Maps is taking steps to help people across the globe find directions and get where they're going, even when they don't have an Internet connection," Bishop said in a blog post.

"Now you can download an area of the world to your phone, and the next time you find there's no connectivity - whether it's a country road or an underground parking garage - Google Maps will

continue to work seamlessly."

Earlier versions of the application let people download digital maps for viewing offline but did not provide turn-by-turn directions; allow searches for precise locations, or display information such as the hours businesses are open.

The new version of the application builds capabilities once limited to online maps into maps downloaded to smartphones while visiting Wi-Fi hotspots to avoid telecommunication service data charges.

Approximately 60 percent of the world still lacks Internet coverage, making it unrealistic to use online smartphone mapping services for finding one's way, according to Bishop.

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