

SatGuide Welcomes Free GPS Navigation From Nokia

Nokia's move will benefit the growth of personal navigation devices (PNDs) in the Indian market, according to SatNav Technologies.

Nokia has made walk and drive navigation free on its smartphones. The new version of Ovi Maps will include all essential car and pedestrian navigation features, such as turn-by-turn voice guidance for 74 countries in 46 languages, and traffic information for over 10 countries, as well as detailed maps for over 180 countries. Ovi Maps is immediately available for download for 10 Nokia handsets. Current owners of Nokia smartphones that are compatible with the new Ovi Maps, can download it for free. Amit Prasad, founder MD and CEO, SatNav Technologies has welcomed the move by Nokia.

The opening up of navigation software for all Nokia phones will make other phone OEMs move from their fence-sitting strategy and work out a focused plan for maps and navigation. SatGuide offers maps with navigation software to all phone OEMs and most of them have been worried about the bill of material (BOM) cost addition even though our pricing is the most competitive. As a result in some models it is bundled, but in many other models it is only an optional add-on which mostly is not communicated well enough to the consumer at the point of sale.

Net effect is that consumers are being deprived of the great value add that their smartphones can offer. We hope this will now change, and our phone navigation software and maps business will therefore pick up even more since Nokia's handset competitors should not buy maps from their mapping company and should prefer partners like us leading to higher sales in this segment. To add here, SatGuide also offers a Try and Buy version of navigation software for Nokia handsets, which will be extended to other OS soon. This will now enable consumers to compare both and then decide which one to use in India. We are confident Nokia users too will see that our maps are better than what they can get anywhere else.

This move will also benefit the growth of personal navigation devices (PNDs) in the Indian market. While we know that the future of PND is being debated, at least for the next three-four years it can be safely said that till some major technology change first takes place, the mobile navigation phone and the PND will co-exist and grow together just like digital cameras and camera phones have in the last couple of years. We believe the PND market growth will benefit our company, thanks to this strategy of Nokia.