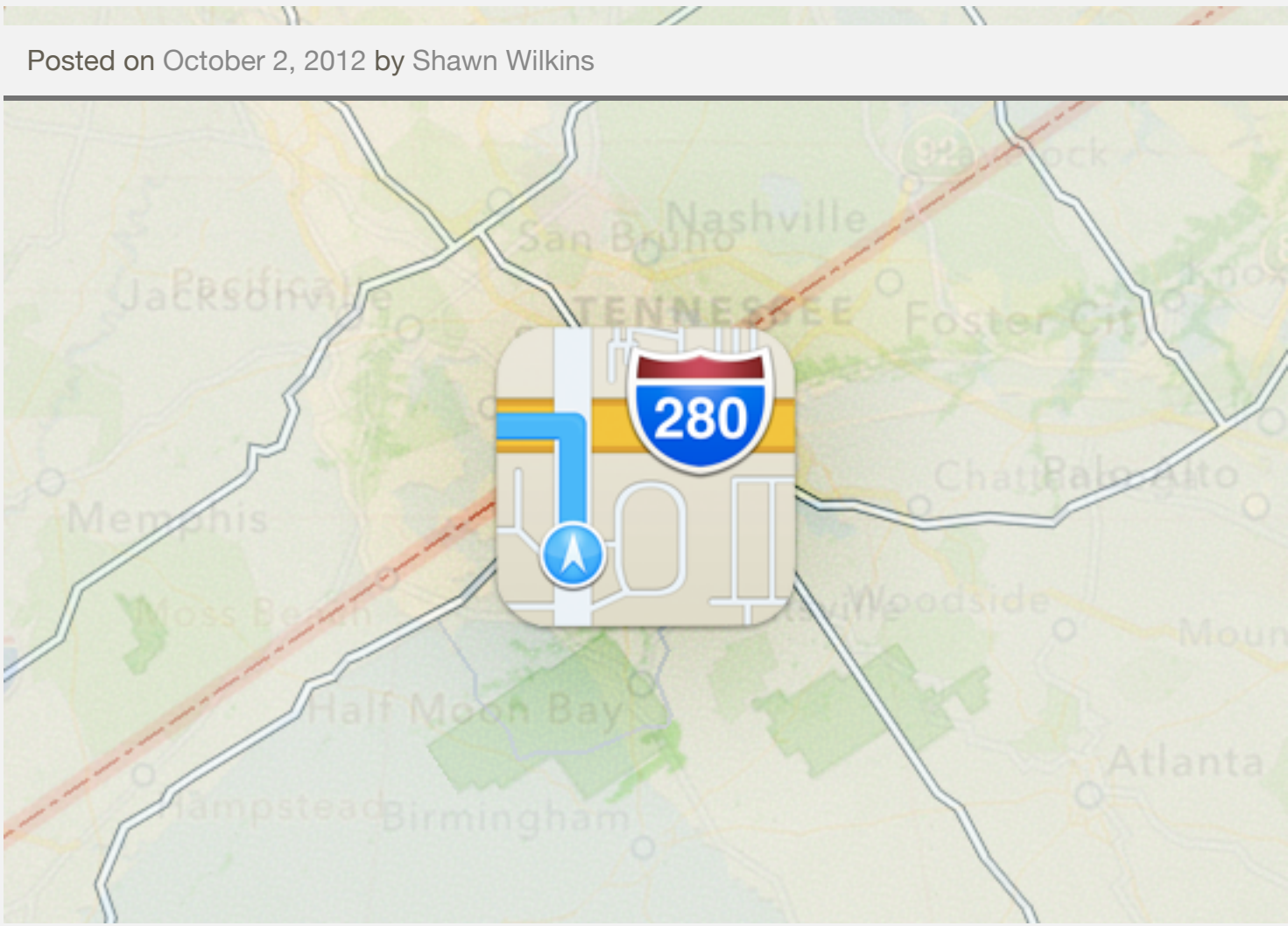


Maps: Now or Never



Many people are upset that the new iOS Maps app even exists. Many are upset that it's not the classic Google Maps API put into an app anymore. The frustration is justified, but you have to know one thing: it has to be bad before it can get better.

Apple is known as a company that has depended on other companies before declaring independence. OS 9, before Safari was made, came shipped with Internet Explorer. Relations with Microsoft started to dwindle and fade (from a business standpoint, not a personal Mac vs. PC one) and Apple had decided to abandon their browser for their own. They had built WebKit and decided that, from then on out, they would deploy Safari.

We saw a similar situation unfold with Code Warrior, yet more of an Apple dominance. Apple had to tell their own developers to rely on a foreign app if they wanted to build apps for their platform. Apple clearly saw an issue in approaching this tactic and changed it swiftly. They released Xcode; made by them, made for them.

Apple has a history of gravitating towards independence as opposed to having very basic things from their OS rely on other services or companies. Just last year, Apple announced iMessages: a true separation from carrier and supplier. Apple makes the phones and the carriers are expecting to make money off of the monthly plans and fees you have tied to your account. It's the way all phones work from within networks. Phones are released, whichever company makes the phone releases it for certain carriers, and the carriers make money of usage of the phone. Apple decided to build an entire infrastructure that supported IMs that act and are received as text messages when on an iPhone, and when between iPhone users. Apple decided that instead of leaving it all in the hands of the carrier, they rather increase the experience and make it free and not worrisome. When WiFi was added to phones, carriers couldn't expect to charge mass amounts of money from customers because connecting to their EDGE network was no longer the only option. Apple has now decided that going from Google having complete control over their YouTube and Maps apps to not having them be a part of the OS at all (aside from Safari search functions and integrated Mail services) was for the better. Apple is willing to make and create something great and we have to get through these rough patches before we realize that something wondrous is being made.

As far as Maps goes, Apple is taking it on from a completely new standpoint. Vector maps, flyover, and even turn-by-turn, which is fairly old, are showing that this app has a promising future. You don't show off your best and greatest and refuse to fix the problems within the simplest of features. Google Maps has things that users want and frankly, some that users need. Transit directions, being one, are a major thing that people living in cities sometimes relied on and had stripped from them within iOS 6. It would be absolutely foolish for Apple to not include this sometime in the near future. It's a needed feature, Apple wants to have the best, and they'll make that happen. Yes, they've shipped iOS 6 with a lackluster Maps application, but Apple has never constantly sat around while a competitor releases something better. iTunes, for example, is a one-of-its-kind app that had no real competition as it progressed. Seeing as it was the only app to work with iPods and is still the only app that does so in perfect harmony. The app itself may be "laggy" or bad, but if a competitor shot up out of the water with something 10 times as great, Apple wouldn't sit back and watch their product crumble. Maps in iOS 6 has honest and true competition with Google's Maps app and is striving to be something great. It may be bad now, but it will, surely, grow from bad, to better, to good, to great.

Tim Cook even went as far as offering an apology for releasing a product that didn't live up to his own personal standards and resulted in anger of iOS 6's users:

To our customers,

At Apple, we strive to make world-class products that deliver the best experience possible to our customers. With the launch of our new Maps last week, we fell short on this commitment. We are extremely sorry for the frustration this has caused our customers and we are doing everything we can to make Maps better.

We launched Maps initially with the first version of iOS. As time progressed, we wanted to provide our customers with even better Maps including features such as turn-by-turn directions, voice integration, Flyover and vector-based maps. In order to do this, we had to create a new version of Maps from the ground up.

There are already more than 100 million iOS devices using the new Apple Maps, with more and more joining us every day. In just over a week, iOS users with the new Maps have already searched for nearly half a billion locations. The more our customers use our Maps the better it will get and we greatly appreciate all of the feedback we have received from you.

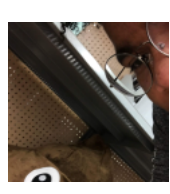
While we're improving Maps, you can try alternatives by downloading map apps from the App Store like Bing, MapQuest and Waze, or use Google or Nokia maps by going to their websites and creating an icon on your home screen to their web app.

Everything we do at Apple is aimed at making our products the best in the world. We know that you expect that from us, and we will keep working non-stop until Maps lives up to the same incredibly high standard.

Tim Cook
Apple's CEO

Apple has been working on this app for a little more than a year. Google has not only 7+ years of work going into their Maps application, but they have years of support and years of complaints. Google strives to create a better application and improve upon itself the same way Apple does. However, Apple needs time to declare independence as well as time for improvement. You can't learn to run before you learn to walk. Aside from Apple wanting to control themselves, Google put pressure on Apple and made it near difficult to strike a deal with. They were planning to disallow the use of turn-by-turn unless Apple included longitude support. Thus, Google could gather location data from every iOS user and sell it to various advertisers. Apple would never go under their own users for the sake of a relationship with an existing company. Let alone, one of their major competitors.

You can only expect enemies to pretend to be friends for so long. It's better to get out of a sour position than to wait until it becomes toxic. Google clearly has built, and possibly perfected, their Maps application. On the other hand, that's not what Apple wants to associate with. They want to build something that is theirs. They want to build something that they have complete control over. They want to repeat the past and strive for excellence like they always have. If it ends up being a huge mistake, they'll gladly start over, just as they have with MobileMe and iCloud. If they have to work tirelessly to create that perfect blend between beauty and usability, Apple is the one company that will definitely do it. It just needs time. It has to be bad before it can get better.



About Shawn Wilkins

An enthusiastic writer who values quality over quantity. The abundance of posts shouldn't make the site, but rather, the quality of them. Aiming for perfection is the goal and anything less isn't acceptable. Long walks on the beach are accepted, however.

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