Apple’s New Maps App Was Steve Jobs’ Idea

[1]If you’re looking for someone to blame for Apple ditching Google Maps [2]on the iPhone, try Steve Jobs.

The former Apple CEO and co-founder was the one who initiated the effort to replace Google Maps on the iPhone with Apple’s own mapping application, according to a new report from Bloomberg BusinessWeek *[3]*.

“Apple insiders say Jobs himself initiated the mapping project, putting mobile software chief Forstall in charge, and he installed a secret team on the third floor of Building 2 on Apple’s campus to replace Google Maps on the iPhone,” *BusinessWeek* reports. “At the time of his death, Jobs had come to loathe Google, which he felt was copying features of the iPhone while withholding a key feature of Google Maps that allows smartphones to dictate turn-by-turn directions aloud.”

In fact, Jobs was reportedly so frustrated with Google — a company he vowed to wage “thermonuclear war [4]” against — that he even considered nixing Google search from the iPhone. But, as two former Apple execs told *BusinessWeek*, he backed away from this idea realizing that customers would “reject the move.” Perhaps he didn’t realize how much people love Google Maps, too.

While we can’t know for sure how involved Jobs was with the maps initiative, Apple did begin acquiring companies [5] to improve its mapping software as early as 2009, suggesting that Jobs was at least aware of the effort, if not directly overseeing it.

That doesn’t mean Tim Cook and Apple’s current leadership team are completely off the hook, though. Even if Jobs was the one who green-lit the initial effort to replace Google Maps, the question still remains: Would Jobs have approved releasing the app with all its flaws when it did if he were still in charge?

Apple reportedly had more than a year left [6] on its contract to license Google Maps, suggesting the company could have taken more time to release the app,

which might have been the preference of Jobs the perfectionist. On the other hand, Maps — like Siri — requires a certain amount of actual use in order to improve, which is why it’s necessarily flawed at the start. Each year Apple delayed releasing its own mapping application only puts it further behind the competition, which might have pushed Jobs the competitor to put out the product even with its flaws.

Do you think Jobs would have approved the Apple Maps app as it stands now?

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