A Girl’s Best Friend

I always thought “Diamonds were a girl’s best friend” but in 2007 most women may consider their GPS-enabled mobile phone their best friend. The majority of women drivers in the US look to a GPS system to give them peace of mind and a sense of security when traveling alone in an unfamiliar area. A recent poll sponsored by Tele Nav Inc., a wireless location-based services (LBS) provider, revealed that 60 percent of women said they would feel safer on the road with a GPS service by their side.

To make GPS readily available to more drivers, many wireless carriers now offer navigation applications on their mobile phones and PDAs. In fact, ABI Research2 predicts 335 million consumers will subscribe to such services within the next five years. This seems like a reasonable statistic to me. To have navigation service on your mobile phone at a fraction of the cost of a stand-alone system brings to the consumer convenience and reassurance that the risk of taking a wrong turn is all but eliminated. An accurate set of directions pretty much guarantees that one will arrive to their destination point hassle free.

Tele Nav Inc. (referenced above) was the first company to launch a GPS navigation system on mobile phones in the US. The company’s Tele Nav GPS Navigator&#153 product is capable of providing turn-by-turn driving directions by voice and onscreen; Tele Nav traffic alerts and intelligent routing; nation-wide maps and a lowest price fuel finder option. Given current gas prices, who could not make good use of that feature?

The market for this application is still in the early stages of development and consumer acceptance is moving slower than carriers would like. However, businesses have been using LBS for field applications and social networks successfully for some time now. Like many preceding ground-breaking wireless applications, consumers will end up driving this one as well. It’s only a matter of time. As consumers learn more about navigation services and their ease of use, they will be hungry for more. The traffic alert services alone will be the hook to pull them in. I know it will be for me as soon as my provider makes this service available to its subscribers.

Like many of you, my commute to work can be long and stressful. A couple of days

a week I drive two hours each way to our corporate headquarters. The drive takes me on several major arteries that are heavily congested and far from incident free. It always amazes me that it only takes a driver off on the shoulder of the road with a flat tire to delay my arrival by 30 minutes. Having access to a traffic alert system that would provide me with the luxury of knowing in advance where accidents have occurred or where traffic has backed up would greatly reduce my frustration level and be well worth the cost.

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