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WRI 01-54

12 October 2019

Google Maps is another advancement for humanity

Have you ever got lost looking for a place to buy cheese burgers? I know I have. These days if I wanted to find a cheese burger, all I have to do is whip out my handy dandy smart phone and open Google Maps. It provides step by step direction to your destination with an estimated time, using sound and visuals to provide real time updates, being user friendly all with the convenient of being on your smartphone. We don’t have to worry about getting lost anymore. It has improved the way we travel and how we get around being more efficient and less frustrating then other alternatives.

FUNCTIONALITIES

Google Maps offers a top down view of your surroundings, letting you see all the places you can get a cheeseburger. If for some weird reason you weren’t looking for cheese burgers, it can find nearby restaurant, hotels, parks, and gas stations. If you’re looking for restaurants you can filter them in order from low-end to high-end restaurants. If you how an interest for a restaurant Google Maps can show you other people’s ratings, reviews, and photos.

Google Maps rating and reviews system helps us determine where to eat or where we go for entrainment. We can determine where we wanted to eat, being in the comfort of our homes. But I found it kind of weird that I have already subconsciously placed judgment on a place without even being there. For example, …

“Let’s eat at this restaurant instead of that one because it has a better rating.” or

“Let’s not go there because one of the reviews on Google Maps said they found hair in their food.”

Which is just something I thought we should consider when using Google Maps.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Way before Google Maps, if you were lost the person that got you un-lost was the cartographer, mapmakers. They made skillful hand drawn maps for the world. If people wanted to travel anywhere, people had to use these printed maps, ask for directions or a GPS system. Printed maps were less convenient, first having to buy a map, then you had to locate where you were on the map maybe using landmark. Then you would have to know which direction you were facing using a compass, North, East, South, or West. Google Maps have made it easier doing this automatically for you. Anything remotely close to Google Maps was the GPS but it was expensive, costing thousands, non-user friendly, making hard to input your destination, outdated or inaccurate. Google Maps has become more accessible because smartphones are becoming cheaper. When I travel to unknown places without using Google Maps it can be daunting and contingent of getting lost but Google Maps makes it more reinsuring.

How does this app do such a thing? Google Maps uses Global Positioning System (GPS) which is made up of many satellites, ground stations and receivers. In simple terms the receivers figure out how far away they are from the other receivers then calculates your device’s position exactly.

GOOGLE MAPS CHANGED THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD

With Google Maps it has changed the way humans see the world, literally being able to visually see the world with Google’s street view. Like the invention of the camera, in “Ways Of Seeing”, John Berger, a English art critic and novelist said, “The invention of the camera changed the way men saw” (Berger 18). I agree with him and I interpreted it as if technology is changing the way we see and experience the world. I feel like you don’t have to travel to Paris anymore to see the Eiffel Tower. You can use Google’s Maps street view to “walk” around the Eiffel Tower in the comforts of your home. Similarly, the invention of the camera did something similar making it so anyone could now see a photo of a painting without having to leave their homes. What I’m trying to get across is that Google Maps is something not to take for granted.

Google Maps is changing the lives of others. A film called “Lion” which is based on a true story is about a boy that got separated from his family when he was five. Then 25 years later with a few memories of his childhood and Google Maps function to view a top down view of Earth he was able to find his hometown and reunite with his family. This story and many others show the importance of this app. It helps guides us home to our love ones, even if it’s just a few miles away or across the country.

Google Maps improved our lives even if it doesn’t seem like it has. It has provided a different perceptive of the world. We can see the world with any device as long as it is connected to the internet. That’s powerful. I can find the nearest place that sells cheese burger in the comfort of my home within a few seconds.

I know I have repetitively said Google Maps has changed this and that and for my reasoning; It’s because I wanted to emphasize that Google Maps is another advancement for humanity. We don’t have to use printed maps or expensive GPS anymore. We don’t have to travel far away anymore just to see a painting. For me and many others, Google Maps will continue to get me where I need to go reliably and for free, and I might stop to think… how did we get to this point?