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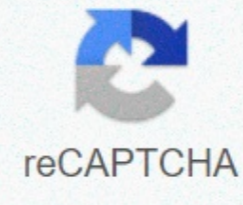**Continue**

Map of krynn

From 15,000 feet, a $2.5 million house at 123 Highland Drive in the Queen Anne district of Seattle doesn't look like much. The roof is a nondescript gray square; yard, a tiny patch of fuzzy space. That doesn't bother Matt Bell, a 33-year-old sales executive on the market for a new home. He focuses on numbers flashing at the bottom of the Web browser two feet in front of him with constantly updated statistics such as average property value, county tax records, local schools, and pre-sale prices. Eh, he sighs. It's $538 per square foot, while the neighborhood average is only $420. Choosing not to leave a comment on the website's open blog, Bell refuses to 123 Highland and zooms back through the city, neighborhood numbers blur to keep up with him. Forget point A point B: Internet powered maps are moving from simple driving directions to richly layered landscapes of life, breathing information. Over 1,000 new map-based websites have launched last year, with 3 to 4 more debuts every 24 hours. VCs are throwing money at any of them, promising to transform industries such as real estate and local shopping. And people are card hungry. In a Pew Institute survey last April, mobile phone users named the cards as their most desired feature. (Instant messaging was second.) We're not just talking about better maps: Digital cards are the internet equivalent of Dairy Queen Blizzard. They allow users to blend a huge amount of above different data and display them however they please and even add their own images, videos, comments or other content. Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft

all see it as overwhelming; they spend millions to add both high-res satellite photography and street-level images to maps. But all the frantic action leaves one nagging question: Do these developers and corporations chart the path to profit? If you want to understand what an internet-powered world could be like, look at Europe, where there is a higher level of adoption of mapping technologies. In the United States, for example, commuters receive traffic updates from frenzied helicopter pilots who shout over the clutter on AM radio; it is literally a top-down pattern. Many European drivers enjoy a more elegant solution. TomTom, Europe's leading car navigation company, dynamically updates traffic conditions on users' GPS device maps, including which roads are congested due to an accident or roads, and even the location of speed traps using its subscribers. In fact, travelers form instant communities to make cooperatives learn about their environment. Traditionally, in real estate, you should go to the county records office or police station, and pore through dusty file cabinets to get information a web site like Redfin.com be displayed in a few clicks. We want to organize information geospatially, says Redfin CEO Glenn Kelman, so people looking for homes can capture the gestalt of the neighborhood. For example, a home finder asks why a house is more expensive than others in the rest of the neighborhood, and the seller can respond by adding information to the map about recent renovations, even posting before and after pictures. Such features keep the average user in Redfin for an impressive 72 minutes a week. The map is essentially centerfold-it's pornographic, Kelman says. People who hang out for a long time, promoting their knowledge to the local community, are also developers and advertisers excited about new opportunities for online search. Maps allow for an immersive search, says Stephen Lawler, general manager of Microsoft's MapPoint division. You can actually see the real world as you understand it. Microsoft recently debuted a map of a technology called Virtual Earth, featuring a bird's eye, a 3-D photograph. Groups of like-minded users can add ratings and reviews, share custom maps with other users. In addition, it is testing an even more ambitious application built from thousands of street-level photos that allow visitors to maneuver through downtown Seattle and San Francisco. Both map-based search tools will offer businesses an unprecedented type of targeted advertising. Imagine the retailer will be wooing all customers panning over their location. Advertising is just one of the options being discussed in the emerging industry desperate for a revenue model. Google, Yahoo and Microsoft are currently subsidizing mapping growth. It costs Google money to hoist the map, says John Musser, blogger and software developer. It's all free now, but it can't go on forever. Targeted advertising may be the answer, but will developers and users accept it? Meanwhile, subscriptions have worked in Europe, but are not usually embraced by online consumers in the United States. I don't think any of us predicted how ubiquitous the maps would become, admits Bret Taylor, Google Maps product manager. We started GeoAds, a map advertising program, in April this year as the first effort to offset the costs that serve so many of them. The map is essentially centerfold-it's pornographic, says Glenn Kelman, CEO of real estate startup Redfin.com.Along with questions about money comes questions about control. Throughout history, the guy who controlled the card was the boss, says John Metcalf, a former TKO at mapmaker Tele Atlas, who is currently a consultant for Silicon Valley VCs. Opening the door to all these user investment reviews, ratings, and comments puts customers in charge. But it creates the prospect of unhappy sponsors and other users, as neither can what is said about them. However, the industry currently prefers closer cooperation with its customers. After all, companies can't predict everything people want, and user-generated content gives them more to sell. We strongly encourage users to customize their content and share their experiences, says Jocelyn Vigreux, President of TomTom USA. It is a sign of a healthy society. We don't have to control everything. Whether user-generated or not, map applications are booming from novel to necessity. You don't just want to find 7-Eleven, says Metcalf, you'll want to find one that carries your brand of toothpaste and it's open right now. The future is for our mapping. Lucas Conley (lconley@fastcompany.com) is a Fast Company staff writer.

Although everyone likes to beat on Apple Maps – and not without justification – none of the existing map apps are good enough yet. Whether it's data quality or user experience, they're all still too often mistaken to be acceptable, and that needs to be changed. Apple, for all their data collection, cleaning and sitting issues, gets a couple of things right. The interface, both before and after iOS 7 is not only good looking, but provides a good amount of information about not only your next turn, but round after. Voice directions also do a good job of keeping you informed over the long stretches of travel, and advise you to stay left or bear right so you're in the right place to turn faster rather than too late. Unfortunately, although Apple Maps can often get to the block you're going to, it tends to break down when it comes to the exact location and entrance to it. Google Maps nail data, but almost the fault. That's less people. This will tell you you need to turn right without warning you get right, or you go left if there are three left options, and just get to the development well after the proper one is in the past. (And so you think their data is perfect, today they told me to pull a u-turn on the dead end when I was actually in the middle of a 4-lane highway. It only appeared after I passed the virtual dead end. On the way to Mountain View. -yes. Nokia Here maps, TomTom, and everyone who licenses the data from them all have to do a better job not only with this data, but with submitting it in a more human way. A well-tested, consistently presented location that not only tells you where to turn and how to get someone where, but makes sure you're in the right place to turn on, and help you there. Like too many things, if I could somehow mash Apple and Google Maps back together, I'd get something coming to what I want – great data and a great interface – but it's no longer exists. Now it's a race to see what can become more like others, better, faster. Cards are hard, no doubt about it. But getting lost sucks. What is a reasonable level of accuracy? What is a reasonable level of experience? If you miss a round, or get sent the wrong way, how often is it too common? We can earn commission on purchases using our links. To learn more. You have to plan ahead a lot of pictures, you do not want to paint over an octopus with water and then have to find the octopus again. Too many color ruins effects burn umber paleking through wrinkles. But now you paint. I like the classic old map colors, blue water, green land, purple mountains - but really it's up to you. Experiment. Just keep in mind, you want the blue water to look different from the blue you're using for something else. Start with beaches and deserts. They are everywhere really, and if you last them you may have to paint over the green too much and it may not look so good. Find your sand color/s and keep it watery. Earth!: It's green because it's pirate days and the earth wasn't so overly industrialized. Darker green blots will be farmland, people need to eat. Mountains: Purple and white, go to the classic. Boats: Brown with white sails. Beasties: A green sea monster that is different from green earth, and a pink octopus. Castles and cities/houses/lighthouses: Grey castles, red roofs, brown houses. Beacons are white with a brightly colored diagonal stripe. Anchors and Treasure: The caves are black as anchors. Water: I get it last so I don't overlap any colors. Nice and blue. Other: I'm watching Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade so I added part of it to the map. Also, I did an X treasure, but later turned it into palm trees. I want to have a child on my own X. You also need some whirlpools because who is a pirate without a little risk right? After it all goes over your heavy black lines again, it makes it look better and gives you a chance to see all the areas and think about what else you want to do. And again with a fine pointed marker. Add details, brick castle walls, doors to houses, etc. etc.