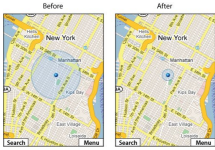


22 October 2008

By: Sorin Trusca, Communications News Editor



A smaller circle denotes a more accurate position. Google

[Google Maps' My Location Feature Now Uses Wi-Fi](#)

Even more accurate location information

About one month after Google announced the improvement of the My Location feature of its Google Maps product, the time has come for yet another enhancement. This time users can get even more accurate location information by using mobile phones with Wi-Fi capabilities.

For those who don't know, the My Location feature - added to [Google Maps](#) in November last year - is a technology that uses cell tower identification to provide users with info on their approximate location, without requiring the use of a GPS receiver. The handset owner's position is denoted by a blue circle on the map, a smaller circle indicating an increased accuracy and vice-versa. Even users with GPS-enabled handsets can benefit from My Location - first, because the feature usually obtains a location fix faster than a GPS, second, because, unlike a Global Positioning System, it works reliably indoors, and third, because it does not drain the phone battery at the rate a [GPS](#) does.

The new enhancement brought by Google involves the use of a Wi-Fi enabled handset that should increase the accuracy of the predicted location. The principle remains the same as before, only this time instead of processing the information transmitted by nearby cell towers, data from Wi-Fi access points is used. The advantage comes from the fact that the range of a Wi-Fi access point is smaller than that of a cell tower, which can often result in a much more accurate position. As Wi-Fi coverage has greatly increased in many cities lately, more users should be able to benefit from the new optimization brought by Google.

The My Location improvement is currently available for Wi-Fi-enabled BlackBerry handsets, so owners of [BlackBerry](#) Bold 9000, Pearl 8120, Curve 8320 and 8820 smartphones can test it right away by downloading the corresponding version of Google Maps. Users of phones based on other operating systems (including Android) will get Wi-Fi location in the near future.