



Mapping & Routing For Everyman

TECHNOLOGY IS BECOMING AFFORDABLE
FOR SMALL FLEETS AND INDIVIDUALS ALIKE.

Advanced mapping and routing technology is moving quickly down the transportation food chain. Technology-enhanced routing options once available only to big companies with deep pockets are now — or soon will be — affordable for smaller fleets and individual drivers.

For example, innovations are in the works at ALK Technologies of Princeton, N.J. (www.alk.com), the people who provide PC*MILER.

ALK's director of marketing, Craig Fiander, said the company recently released CoPilot 2001, which provides mapping and automated routing on a PC or mobile laptop. ALK is developing a product that will marry CoPilot with the company's truck-specific PC*MILER routing and provide truck-sensitive routing in the cab as well as on a desktop, he said.

ALK also markets Pocket CoPilot, a non-trucking-specific routing product that combines routing software, a GPS device and a handheld Pocket PC running Microsoft's Windows CE.

According to ALK, the Pocket CoPilot's artificial voice verbally guides you to any address in the U.S. while you keep your hands on the wheel. If you miss a turn, make a wrong turn or otherwise get off track, the program automatically re-plots its route, again offering turn-by-turn instructions to the same destination. The Pocket CoPilot is available for \$299 at retail, not including the Pocket PC.

RACO Industries of Cincinnati, Ohio, offers a similar, non-trucking-specific product called the Destinator for \$329. A package that includes a Compaq iPaq Pocket PC goes for \$1,095. You'll find an interesting Destinator demonstration on the web at www.trackmyvehicle.com.

DeLorme of Yarmouth, Maine, (www.delorme.com), offers a suite of non-trucking-specific mobile packages, most under the Earthmate trade name. Earthmate comes in various versions for laptop PCs, Macintosh notebooks and handheld computers running the Palm operating system.

Rand McNally, the mapping giant of Skokie, Ill. (www.randmcnally.com), is working on a product that will finally bring truck-sensitive



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routing to a Pocket PC.

"We're going to have mapping and routing functions, which are initially going to be text-based so that people can have the miles and routing right in their hand," said Williams. "Pocket PCs can have 32 or 64 megabytes of data, so we're eventually going to take this from text-based to full graphic."

Text-based routing provides a readout of turn-by-turn directions and mileage. Graphic routing provides actual maps. Even in the text-based version, said Williams, users will look up items such as truckstop amenities and routing by city, zip code and highway junction.

But that truck-routing Pocket PC product is still in the works. Meanwhile, a suite of products aimed at professional drivers, owner-operators and small fleets will begin appearing in September, according to Rand McNally's Shel Greenberg, general manager of transportation data management, and Regina Williams, manager of product development.

According to Williams, one line of new products will be aimed specifically at individual drivers and another at small fleets.

The initial driver-oriented product will consist of a single compact disk intended to run in Microsoft Windows on a laptop or desktop computer. The CD will provide truck-sensitive, city-to-city routing. Among other criteria the software will route for trailer length, bridge and construction projects.

Construction projects, of course, require data updates.

"You buy the product one time," said Greenberg. "Then you have the option of buying support on an annual basis." Support will enable users to download updated files over the Internet.

Greenberg said the owner-operator/individual driver product will probably be available with an introductory price of \$199. While distribution has not been finalized, he said, the initial CDs will likely be available at major truckstops.

A similar small fleet version of the driver product will include enhancements such as routing for hazardous materials.

According to Greenberg, the company has not decided whether to offer a package that includes a PDA or to sell the software only.

Greenberg said Rand McNally is working on Web-based services for the driver community. The company will also be introducing upgrades, enhancements and redesigns for many of its current routing and mapping products.

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Routing Over The Internet

Sophisticated, high-priced routing applications are now available to use on the Internet. Vendors provide the software as ASPs (Application Service Providers); users pay per use. That can be as little as 50 cents for each route, which can include a host of options.

A number of such services have appeared in the last year. All offer truck-specific routing including HHG mileage by state and turn-by-turn, point-to-point directions. Users get to select the most advantageous route factoring in toll roads, National Network highways and secondary routes.

Internet mapping and routing ASPs include:

Rand McNally's Intelliroute Online
www.intelliroute.com

Rand McNally's MileMaker software underlies this online product. Users get HHG (Household Goods) rating miles. You can route for truck type and hazardous materials, among other criteria. Reports can include state mileage breakdowns and road construction information. A free trial is available.

ProMiles' ProMilesOnline
www.promilesonline.com

ProMilesOnline will allow routes of as many as 40 individual stops and the same number of fuel purchases per trip. Users can configure and generate detailed reports. Optional itineraries include dates, times, stops and DOT-mandated rest periods.

ALK Technologies eMILER
www.emiler.com

ALK's PC*MILER software powers eMILER.com. The latest version, PC*MILER 15 includes Comdata's GeoFUEL truckstop network, which allows PC*MILER users to incorporate more than 4,000 truckstops nationwide into routing choices. A free try out is available.

You'll also find mapping and routing resources on the Web for free.

- At Mapquest (www.mapquest.com), you can get general maps and turn-by-turn driving directions.
- At the web site of Prophecy Transportation Solutions, Inc. (www.mile.com), you can get directions tailored for commercial vehicles.
- At Newport's web site (www.truckinginfo.com), you'll find truck-specific routes and maps from ProMiles.