

MOBILE

Mercedes, BMW and Audi acquire Here but will other automakers play along?

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Here application

By **Brielle Jaekel**

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Nokia's GPS technology has been bought by German car manufacturers BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz, which offers the system more of an edge to compete with other mobile map applications.

Nokia's mapping system Here is working to compete with big mapping technology companies such as Google Maps and TomTom. The vehicle partnership will likely give Here the leg up it needs to stay on top, providing GPS and various vehicle features and services for consumers.

"Although a successful secret acquisition by the German Auto consortium, this is an acquisition that makes complete sense and some may was expected," said Lara Mehanna, general manager at [Sonata](#). "Here is already the mapping technology in these three manufacturers' automobiles and it makes sense that they would seek the opportunity to acquire it fully as opposed to running the risk that it fall into the hands of an outside third party such as Uber.

"The technology is best when used at scale so it would not be surprising if these three

invited other automakers into the fold," she said.

Helping Here

The mobile app Here provides users a directions along with businesses near the user's location that she is looking for such as gas and food. The German carmakers purchased the technology to bring customers' high tech features such as autonomous driving and GPS.

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Nokia Here app is available for iOS and Android

While Google continues to develop its self-driving car and TomTom partnering with auto supplier Bosch, it seems as though Here must integrate with car manufacturers to stay relevant. The partnership can further Here's importance in the mapping industry.

The vehicle manufacturers have already had a previous relationship with the mobile app and the acquisition means leveraging the technology for other features on top of the mapping system.

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The deal is part of Nokia's business transformation. Here is developing a cloud-based database comprised of data from mobile devices, vehicles and infrastructure.

Mobile mapping

Mobile mapping apps and vehicle services are becoming more linked together.

For instance, Greyhound boosted convenience for travelers on mobile by including a real-time GPS tracking system on its mobile application, allowing customers to see where their bus is, and when it will arrive at their destination ([see more](#)).

Hertz ramped up its effort to create a more seamless experience for customers by rolling out nationwide its in-vehicle next-generation Hertz NeverLost GPS navigation system that lets travelers personalize their trip plans ([see more](#)).

"The first thing that came to mind when the acquisition was announced was that it helped secure an alternative to Google," Ms. Mehanna said. "For consumers, having a choice is always a good thing.

"Amongst the top online mapping technologies, Google, TomTom, and OpenStreetMap, Here is a well-regarded platform and liked by users particularly because it includes an offline offering at no cost, which is another plus for consumers," she said. "This acquisition is positive for consumers because it is in the auto companies' best interest to invest in and maintain the integrity of the online mapping platform while also expanding its reach."

Final Take

Brielle Jaekel is editorial assistant at Mobile Marketer

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