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Exploring the Great Indoors With Micello

November 25, 2009

Micello wants to be Google Maps for the indoors world. The company has developed a smartphone application that allows users to explore and navigate a variety of "inside" places of interest.

Micello is building a maps database, including shopping malls, college campuses, convention centers and other indoor places people routinely visit. The digital maps are designed to help users access, navigate and explore sites using their mobile phones. Micello also wants to showcase all of the activities occurring inside the buildings featured in its maps.

"The maps today bring you to the door. We take you inside the place," says Ankit Agarwal, Micello's founder and CEO. Agarwal describes indoor mapping as the last mile, the uncharted territory for digital maps. "We are building the foundation for indoor location based services and creating an ecosystem similar to what's happening in the outdoor space," he says. "Micello is really all about people, places and events at indoor locations. What's happening here and who is here now."

Gartner, a Stamford, Conn.-based market research firm, forecasts that the outdoor location-based services (LBS) market will reach \$2.2 billion this year and will grow to \$8 billion in 2011. Micello thinks the indoor market will grow at least as quickly, perhaps even faster.

Micello claims to have already mapped college campuses, convention centers and shopping malls throughout California. The company states that its goal is to include airports, museums, theme parks, downtown areas, golf courses, fitness centers and many other types of places, worldwide.

The app also has a social networking aspect. Micello users can write stories, provide feedback and see what others are saying about their favorite places. Users can also find their Facebook, Twitter and mobile phonebook friends in real time on the app's maps. Businesses, meanwhile, can "own" a community and provision their content within the application.

"Our data driven architecture enables us to deploy new communities rapidly," says Prakash Narayan, Micello's co-founder and chief technology officer. "We render highly personalized maps and allow our users to quickly access high value data."

Micello says its application will be free for end users and will soon be available in Apple's AppStore. The application will also be offered for Blackberry and Android devices in the coming months, Micello says. The company reports that a Facebook application is in the works.

Micello is based in Sunnyvale, California and has a regional engineering office in Chennai, India. The company says it's looking for an initial round of institutional funding.

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