

Re: Map preference: Navteq or TeleAtlas?

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- *From:* Dale DePriest <Dale@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 28 Jan 2008 21:57:20 -0800
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jeffcarp wrote:

Navteq has long been known as the "premium brand" in the US when it came to maps. TeleAtlas didn't have the same reputation for quality and depth and they were also cheaper for the GPS manufacturers as I understand it. Garmin uses Navteq and most everyone else uses TeleAtlas. Through a variety of acquisitions and, I would guess, a lot of hard work, TeleAtlas has changed in the US market in my opinion. I think a big part of this is the classic market leader vs. underdog scenario that plays out in countless industries. Navteq, as the clear market leader, I believe, got a little arrogant while TeleAtlas, as the underdog, I would guess, worked their butts off to get better. I base those opinions on my interaction with them over the years, mainly through the submission of mapping issues. I've owned a GPS since the Garmin StreetPilot III. Back then, Navteq's data was only in major cities and you had to supplement your unit's maps with another product (Metroguide?) to get full coverage. Since the SPIII, I've owned the 2610, the 2730 and now a Nuvi 760. I've been through City Navigator 5, 6, 7, 8 and this years. In those many years, I have submitted nearly every mapping problem I've seen to Navteq.

Various responses to my submissions over those years has caused me to form my rather unscientific opinion of the two companies. Many submissions of errors were straight forward with straight forward answers. But others that weren't so cut and dry were typically answered with an arrogance that they were the experts and please don't question the experts.

The latest example: There is an exit on I-80 in Iowa that contains (claimed) the US's largest truck stop. It is huge and contains 5 or 6 fast food restaurants inside it. The development around the area includes probably 12 additional fast food joints and at least 6 gas stations. The Navteq database is sparse and remains incomplete. I submitted an error correction citing a lack of POI's at that location. Their response was that the database already included the POI's at that location and they proceeded to name the 5 or 6 of them

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that are in the database. To that reply, I responded that I can see those 5 or 6 on my GPS but that they are missing at least 12–18 more, and have been for over 5 years. I then get a response that they are unable to deal with the issue further because I failed to provide a list of missing POI's and they go on to say to provide them with a list of all missing POI's at that location so that they can further research it. Excuse me? If I am not mistaken, they are the company producing the maps, I am the customer, and I pay for their product. If they want to make the product better, they'd take the submission that the customer took the time to submit and do their own research to determine the deficiencies in their product.

POI's were not the pervue of either mapping company when they started and when the reputations were made. POI's were purchased from another company entirely. However, in the last couple of years NavTeq has decided that there is more money to be made if they also sell POI's so they dropped the 3rd party source. This is why the database is sparse and incomplete.

I think this was a mistake but time will tell. I expect TeleAtlas to try and move the same direction but I do not believe they have yet. TeleAtlas has purchased several US companies to obtain good US maps. Read more in my article on mapmakers in the US.

Dale

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__ Dale DePriest

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