

Google Now Update Hits iOS App

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Google continues to make inroads on iOS today with the launch of an update to its Google Search app. The company today announced it was adding Google Now functionality to its iOS app.

Google Now is a kind of virtual assistant akin to Apple's Siri. Google bills Google Now as aimed at "giving you just the right information at just the right time." The app can show users the day's weather, send alerts of heavy traffic, news, flight times and other information as it's relevant.

Google Now is part of Google's broader strategy for predictive search. Ex-CEO Eric Schmidt, in cooperation with Jared Coehn, recently released a treatise on their view of the future, which depends heavily on computers that offer relevant information and services based on a user's detailed profile. For instance, if a computer knows that a user has lunch everyday at 12:00, the computer might send a notification to the user at that time, with directions to a restaurant that just opened.

Apple's native software has been under fire of late from software made by Over-the-Top (OTT) players. Most notable was Apple's infamous removal of Google Maps from the most recent iteration of iOS.

Apple launched iOS 6 with a new Apple Maps app that was essentially a beta product. Users complained of inaccuracies in the directions, and a lack of public transit directions, a feature Google's product has perfected.

Apple CEO Tim Cook later apologized for the Apple Maps debacle. Cook went so far as to recommend third-party apps that would fill the void left by Google Maps. Apple later approved a dedicated Google Maps app that can now be downloaded from the App Store.

On iOS, the Google Now features are available as a free update to Google's existing Google Search app. The update is for iPad and iPhone.

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