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Jul. 25, 2008 at 8:50am Eastern by Greg Sterling

## Mobile Mapping Usage Growing, Outrider Debuts Mobile Search Practice

Maps and directions are (so far) the "killer app" for mobile and yesterday [comScore reported](#) that mobile mapping usage is on the increase: "8 percent of American mobile subscribers and 3 percent of European subscribers accessing maps from the mobile phone in the three-month period ending May 2008. This represents a growth rate of 82 percent and 49 percent in the number of users, respectively."

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Map Access via Mobile Device					
Three-month average ending May 2007 and May 2008					
United States and Western Europe					
Source: comScore M:Metrics					
Country	Users (000s)			% of Mobile Subscribers	
	May-07	May-08	Change	May-07	May-08
France	907	1,265	40%	2.0%	2.7%
Germany	663	863	45%	1.4%	2.0%
Italy	1,595	2,142	34%	3.5%	4.6%
Spain	702	1,080	54%	2.2%	3.2%
United Kingdom	1,247	2,147	72%	2.8%	4.5%
Europe*	5,114	7,597	49%	2.4%	3.4%
United States	9,280	16,871	82%	4.4%	7.5%

\*Includes top five countries listed.

Most subscribers in the US and Europe are using mobile mapping for driving directions. And most are apparently doing so via WAP browsers rather than the rich mapping clients from all the major search engines:

*73 percent of mobile subscribers accessing maps are doing so via the browser in the U.S., and in Europe, 57 percent. Less than a third of Americans and Europeans are using a downloaded application, which allows even feature phones, with less computing power and often smaller screens, to better render graphic-rich maps and directions. Despite the ubiquity of SMS usage in Europe, the penetration of consumers accessing maps and directions via SMS is 24 percent; only one percentage point higher than it is in the United States.*

Yet WAP-based mapping is a relatively poor experience vs mapping client applications. But mobile downloads represent a barrier to consumer adoption. Not surprisingly, the iPhone is the leading mobile mapping access device in the US, while Nokia N Series phones are the leading handsets in Europe. Nokia recently completed the acquisition of mapping data provider Navteq.

On the "Local-Mobile Search Landscape" panel yesterday comScore reported that Google Maps was the top mobile mapping service in the US market. And reflecting that mobile has indeed "arrived," search marketing firm Outrider has also [just launched](#) a specialized mobile practice.

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