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TripAdvisor Buys Citymaps to Deepen Location-Based Activities Marketing

Dennis Schaal, Skift - Aug 24, 2016 10:50 am

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TripAdvisor acquired New York-based Citymaps to bolster its attractions' offerings and location-based marketing. Citymaps

TripAdvisor wants to be the go-to place for consumers to find in-destination activities on their smartphones. Citymaps will not only help consumers with map-based attractions' searches but will bolster TripAdvisor's abilities to perform location-based marketing. Expect more of those TripAdvisor notifications when you amble by an interesting tourist spot.

— **Dennis Schaal**

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In a quiet year on the acquisition front for TripAdvisor and many of its online peers, TripAdvisor bought New York-based [Citymaps](#), which provides users with map-based guides of things to do.

Founded in 2010, Citymaps had raised \$12 million in funding from investors including Nokia Growth Partners, Coatue Management and actor Ashton Kutcher, among others, according to Crunchbase. TripAdvisor declined to disclose the terms of the deal.

After acquiring Viator in 2014 and fielding city guides for popular tourism spots around the world, TripAdvisor's acquisition of Citymaps is consistent with TripAdvisor's goal of building up its non-hotel business as its hotel offerings accounted for 81 percent of revenue in the second quarter. TripAdvisor's goal is to provide travelers with the "perfect trip" through trip-planning research, hotel and vacation rental stays, and in-destination things to do.

Citymaps will help TripAdvisor on the latter front.

If you use TripAdvisor, you'll notice that it has ramped up its sending of notifications when users pass near a restaurant, for example. The acquisition of Citymaps will help TripAdvisor build out such location-based marketing for tours and activities. Citymaps also has the means to help TripAdvisor better-personalize such marketing efforts.

TripAdvisor notes that mapping technology is becoming increasingly important for travelers and that, according to its "TripBarometer Connected Traveler" report of June 2015, 81 percent of U.S. travelers use maps on their smartphones when traveling.

Lots of tourists from other countries love using maps on mobile devices, as well. TripAdvisor clearly acquired Citymaps for its technology — not for its user base. Citymaps had a small user base, with low rankings in both Android and iOS app stores. According to analytics company [Similarweb](#), more than 60 percent of Citymaps' website traffic came from paid referrals and advertising networks.

Citymaps, which TripAdvisor says will remain a standalone business, was only TripAdvisor's second acquisition of 2016. In April, TripAdvisor acquired London-based [vacation rental site Housetrrip](#), and likewise didn't reveal the terms of the deal.

In a Securities and Exchange Commission filing for the second quarter of 2016, TripAdvisor revealed that during the first six months of 2016 the amount of money it paid for acquisitions, net of cash acquired, was \$1 million, and that

was \$30 million less than it paid, net of cash acquired, in the first six months of 2016.

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The acquisition of Citymaps and Housetrip both bolster TripAdvisor's "non-hotel" segment, which also includes restaurants.

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