

PRESS RELEASE

W.A. DRIVERS MAP OUT A DIGITAL FUTURE
November 2004

A web site created by a Perth company is rapidly gaining popularity among WA drivers because the digital mapping services it offers to enhance the driving experience. And, it's easy to understand why Chris Pye describes his website www.DriveWA.com as 'an exciting journey we may never finish'.

First, there is the number of people using cars for self-drive holidays. Tourism Research Australia data says despite a 7 percent increase in domestic air travel, 76 percent of Australian travelers still go by road.

Then, there's power of digital mapping software says Mr Pye.

"Our software can provide businesses and their clients with a map from anywhere in Australia to any given destination or to a series of locations. This service can be used by businesses to direct clients to their business location, to an event and to other points along the way."

The software provides a route map and comprehensive driving directions which show which way to go at every intersection and approximately how long it will take to drive each section and the time it should take to drive the whole trip. The digital mapping routing engine estimates the time taken quite accurately from the speed limits in each section.

Mr Pye has a diverse range of interests in the tourism and hospitality industry in West Australia. His discovery of the power of digital mapping has led to an ongoing partnership with MapData Sciences Pty Ltd, which has built the digital mapping routing engine and a comprehensive range of other mapping applications.

"Our 'find it' and 'find us' applications are unique," Mr Pye says.

"Enter GPS coordinates and our software can provide a map for a given radius around any given point in Australia. Using GPS coordinates we can also enable businesses to show clients and prospects the way to their nearest stores or outlets."

'Find it' allows DriveWA to program a business location into the website so that anyone wanting to find it need only type a start point and the system will provide a detailed route map and comprehensive driving directions to the location. The system dramatically simplifies finding a difficult location or an event which may only be staged once a year.

"Visitors to the site click on a little car icon, insert the address of their start point – their front door - and the system will provide them with a route map and driving directions to the businesses front door of the business. It is truly a door to door service," Mr Pye said.

Among the self-drive tourist community DriveWA itineraries and the digital itinerary are very popular says Mr Pye. Tourists can use preplanned itineraries or use DriveWA software to plan their own and receive route maps and driving directions to the places they wish to visit. They also receive details of interesting places and things to do along the way.

"About 40 percent of holidays are now being planned and booked using the Internet," Mr Pye said.

Mr Pye is excited at the prospect of digital mapping and plans to launch a similar site soon to cater for Victorian drivers.

“It will not be long before people are planning their trips with digital mapping on their mobile phones. They will be able to download itineraries they have planned with us to mobile phones or computers in their cars and enjoy anything from a self drive holiday to a trip to a rock concert,” says the tourism entrepreneur.

“We are soon to offer a service to real estate companies in which a link from their websites to DriveWA will allow potential customers to create and download route maps and driving directions to properties they want to inspect.

About MapData Sciences

MapData Sciences Pty Limited is a company specialising in the provision of digital mapping services and software. With offices in Sydney, Australia and Wellington, New Zealand, MDS has a dedicated team of GIS and software professionals who build and maintain digital mapping data products and applications. Specialising in demographics, Where’s the Nearest, Routing, General GIS consulting services and data development projects, MDS has an extensive list of clients involved in the banking, travel, oil, retail and automotive sectors. For more information visit www.mapds.com.au

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