

Indian satellite navigation market poised for growth

– Canalys Navigation Forum in Bangalore to uncover demand and key challenges

Bangalore, India – Wednesday, 2 April 2008

For immediate release

For technology vendors, India presents huge challenges and opportunities in equal measure. Although shipments of mobile navigation solutions in the country are still small – Canalys estimates just under 40,000 shipped there last year – there are signs that the market is poised for tremendous growth.

“India is now the third largest smart phone market in the Asia Pacific region, after Japan and China, with quarterly shipments exceeding 1 million units for the first time in Q4 2007,” said Rachel Lashford, manager of Canalys APAC. “With an expected 19 million more smart phones shipping there over the next three years, this will provide a great foundation for navigation applications and location-based services.”

The main inhibiting factor so far in the growth of India’s navigation market is that although most of the country has been digitally mapped by local players, leading navigation brands have not yet taken the plunge and entered the Indian market with complete navigation products and solutions. As a result, consumers have not yet been exposed fully to the benefits of GPS and navigation. But once this is overcome the market will swell with PNDs (Portable Navigation Devices) and GPS-enabled smart phones, the prices of which are coming down fast, bringing them within reach of a large number of consumers.

“There are huge advances taking place in mapping the country. The Indian satellite navigation market is primed for rapid growth,” said Chris Jones, Canalys VP and principal analyst, and one of the industry’s most respected market commentators. “But the market will likely develop in a quite different way to Western Europe and the US. By 2010, almost 40% of India’s projected 1.2 billion population will be aged between 20 and 44. This large, young population is both tech savvy and tech hungry. In addition, salaries in India are rising quickly and there is an increasingly significant middle class. It already represents nearly 20% of India’s population, and they have increasing disposable income. Combine this with the fact that India is largely insulated from any global economic slowdown, and that the Rupee is strong, and you have a recipe for significant market development.”

The Canalys Navigation Forum, which is being held in Bangalore on May 13, will be important for those who wish to succeed in selling mobile devices and navigation and location solutions into this potentially vast market. Sponsors of the event include Nokia India, Wayfinder and MapmyIndia. It will bring technology business leaders and innovators together to share insights and discuss Indian market development.

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Page 1 of 3

Presentations will include topics such as the advances in mapping the country, the opportunity for low-cost off-board solutions, and understanding Indian consumer preferences – drawing upon the results of a special consumer survey Canalys is conducting in the run up to the event. Chris Jones will be joined on stage by Canalys CEO Steve Brazier, leading Asian market analysts, and other industry figures.

Vineet Taneja, Head – Go To Market, Nokia India, said, “We are glad that Canalys this year has added an India leg to its global Navigation Forum event series. It provides a good opportunity for all the stakeholders in this emerging and exciting industry to get together, exchange opinions and discuss opportunities. We look forward to sharing Nokia's vision in this space at the event.”

Magnus Nilsson, CEO of Wayfinder, said, “India is the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world and our partnerships with MapmyIndia and Airtel are our first steps in focusing on local content for it. The Canalys Navigation Forum is the perfect platform for industry players to discuss the opportunities for locally relevant services and as well as navigation and map services.”

Rakesh Verma, Managing Director of MapmyIndia, said, “It is a myth that digital navigation maps for India are not available. MapmyIndia has built the most comprehensive navigation map of India, tailored specifically to local conditions, which has been proven and accepted in the field by our consumer and enterprise user base. Having already made our maps available to many leading hardware and software players, we are inviting others to launch their products in the Indian market immediately. The Canalys Navigation Forum should be the perfect opportunity for decision makers to understand the on-ground realities and opportunities of the Indian market.”

Chris Jones added, “GPS devices are about to spread far beyond their established markets in Japan, Korea, Europe and the US to reach consumers globally. GPS integration in mobile phones and other devices will bring far greater volumes than we are seeing now, while driving costs down even further. Software companies, hardware vendors and mobile operators need to understand how big this market will be; they also need to ensure they're working with the right business partners and are building affordable devices that meet the particular needs of Indian consumers. The Canalys Navigation Forum in Bangalore is an essential event for those who wish to maximise their chances of success in this market over the next few years.”

For information about the Canalys Navigation Forum, to register or to find out about sponsorship opportunities please visit <http://bangalore.canalysnavigationforum.com> or contact Canalys directly at its Singapore or European offices. Details are provided below.

About Canalys

Founded in 1998, Canalys is one of the fastest growing technology market analyst firms in the world. It specialises in delivering high quality market data, analysis and advice to the world's leading technology vendors. It is recognised as a key provider of continuous advisory services and confidential custom projects for marketing managers and strategists within blue-chip IT, telecoms, navigation and consumer electronics companies. It has unrivalled expertise in routes to market for all kinds of high technology products and services in the consumer, SMB and large enterprise segments, and provides worldwide market data and trends analysis.

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Canalys APAC
Republic Plaza 2
#18 – 27
9 Raffles Place
Singapore 048619

T: +65 6823 6828

W: www.canalys.com

W: www.canalysnavigationforum.com

Canalys EMEA
Diddenham Court
Lambwood Hill
Grazeley, Reading, UK
RG7 1JS

T: +44 118 984 0520