Beat: Technology

Joint acquisition of HERE digital mapping business

AUDI AG, BMW, Daimler AG & Nokia

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USPA NEWS - Acquisition will secure and strengthen HERE as an independent company serving customers from all industries. Real-time maps and location based services will be the basis for the mobility of tomorrow. Transaction expected to close in first quarter 2016.

AUDI AG, the BMW Group and Daimler AG have agreed with Nokia Corporation that they will acquire its mapping and location services business HERE. The acquisition is intended to secure the long term availability of HERE´s products and services as an open, independent and value creating platform for cloud-based maps and other mobility services accessible to all customers from the automotive industry and other sectors. The three partners will each hold an equal stake in HERE; none of them seeks to acquire a majority interest. Subject to the approval of the relevant antitrust authorities, the transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2016.

HERE is laying the foundations for the next generation of mobility and location based services. For the automotive industry this is the basis for new assistance systems and ultimately fully autonomous driving. Extremely precise digital maps will be used in combination with real-time vehicle data in order to increase road safety and to facilitate innovative new products and services. On the basis of the shared raw data, all automobile manufacturers can offer their customers differentiated and brand-specific services.

“Our environment is constantly changing. That´s why the information in digital maps has to be continually updated so that maximum utility can be offered,“ stated Rupert Stadler, Chairman of the Board of Management of AUDI AG. The high-precision cameras and sensors installed in modern cars are the digital eyes for updating mobility data and maps; in this way, information such as speed limits or critical driving situations are already recognized today. All data gained will be processed in compliance with strict data-protection rules.

“HERE will play a key role in the digital revolution of mobility, combining high definition maps and data from vehicles to make travel safer and easier for everyone,“ explained Harald Krüger, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG.
This knowledge will be to the benefit of all carmakers and their customers. “High-precision digital maps are a crucial component of the mobility of the future. With the joint acquisition of HERE, we want to secure the independence of this central service for all vehicle manufacturers, suppliers and customers in other industries,“ stated Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG.

Swarm intelligence will create new information density for road maps
“HERE will be able to offer users a continuously improving product, bringing highly automated driving, location based services a step further. As the volume of anonymized data from the vehicles increases, services will become more convenient, more connected and further tailored to the users´ individual requirements,“ said Ulrich Hackenberg, Member of the Board of Management of AUDI AG for Technical Development, Klaus Fröhlich, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG for Development, and Thomas Weber, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG for Group Research. It is the explicit intention that all HERE customers are to benefit from this continuous optimization.

Social benefits of swarm intelligence are enormous: They facilitate warnings of hazards in real time, of icy roads for example, based on calculations of individual data such as ABS activations and outside temperature. Upcoming traffic jams will be identified more precisely in the future, significantly reducing the risk of accidents. The vision of accident-free driving is gradually becoming reality. In a further stage, the data could be used to learn about critical bends on the road, in order to warn drivers in good time or to activate assistance systems. Anticipation of green phases of stoplights could navigate vehicles through an urban area on a “green wave“ with the appropriate engine performance and minimized fuel consumption.

High-precision maps are important for autonomous driving and many other forms of assistance systems, as these technologies require an up-to-date plan of a vehicle´s surroundings exact to the nearest centimeter, in order to react in real time. While HERE already produces extremely precise static maps, they can be verified more exactly and continually updated with a constant flow of data from

vehicles´ surroundings.

HERE will continue to offer its services and products across industries
HERE provides mapping and location intelligence for nearly 200 countries in more than 50 languages and is one of the main providers of mapping and location services. The company will continue to develop its position as a strong and independent provider of maps and location-based services, will expand its product offering and continue to make it available to all customers across industries.
The management of HERE will continue to be independent “” with the goal of moving the HERE business case forward as a platform, open to all customers. The consortium will not interfere into operational business.

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