Research

Waze is the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app. The main idea behind Waze is crowdsourcing traffic data. Driver sourced mapping, community based inputs, and citizens reporting traffic allows for a unique driving experience. While traditional navigation systems provide for turn-by-turn navigation, Waze incorporates and entire user experience. Till 2013, Waze was a small application based out of Israel, soon it caught up to Silicon Valley startups with a $67 Million funding and just a little later it was acquired by Google. Facebook and Apple did try to buy the application but Google swooped in and took the deal.

Once Google acquired Waze, it didn't just merge it with its own Maps, it let it run as a separate entity. The entire functionality of Waze is based on tones of data. Data being the important word. Google, the hub for consumer data now had unlimited opportunities. While Waze earlier incorporated local Gas stations and restaurants just like Google Maps, it now allowed food chain restaurants to claim their locations. This became a form of paid revenue. The incoming data allowed for adverts not in the form of advertising on the app but, inside the app. Enhancing the community aspect it soon tied up with social media companies and built a database with the same. Allowing one to login and coordinate pickups with friends so that the community stays in sync, literally. Advertisements were based on the data passed from one app to the other. Imagine your friend sharing a local food joint using Waze on Facebook, it'll popup as a advertisement or a suggestion.

Waze due to is accusation by Google has more opportunities coming its way. In 2014, a Waze employee was navigating to an airport, as soon as he entered a tunnel with multiple exits he was confused as their is no GPS signal under ground. He felt this was a major problem as it lead to confusion, last minute lane changes and accidents. As a solution, Waze users needed a method to connect to the Waze servers wherever they maybe. Waze, now with funding and Google behind it introduced the Waze Beacon, a small bluetooth device. It was placed along tunnels and underground roads throughout the world to allow a users phone to connect via bluetooth and hence connect to the server via a bluetooth tether. Such design interventions show us just a few possibilities of the many that exist due to it's community data and it's acquisition by Google.

Waze, has always been about user-experience. Outsmarting Traffic, Together. Their brilliant tag line focuses on the aspect of community building and sharing.
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While the idea of community gathered data is creating a social experience for its users, many users fear that it will soon have all the possibilities of a social network, hence making it to complicated, crowded and its focus will divert from its main task — to help users navigate and outsmart traffic, together.

Waze, has quite a few upsides to it for it to fail. The possibilities expand everyday, and widen. It allows users to report accidents, re-route instantly, warn users in advance, coordinate with other users and even see pop-up advertisements when crossing by certain places, like food chains, or show timings when crossing a movie theatre.