

Microsoft, NORAD track Santa and Google watches him too

December 3 2014, by Nancy Owano



Father Christmas, aka Saint Nick, aka Santa Claus: enough children in the world are aware of this gift-giving holiday character to motivate vendors and manufacturers to think up ways to leverage happy anticipation, as the children keep asking how many more days and as they count down to Christmas. Microsoft is partnering with NORAD while Google, separately, have stepped up to the occasion too, the result being two respective Santa-tracking tools to help youths track the man's schedule as he crosses over from Helsinki to Honolulu. The tracking

sites give Microsoft and Google opportunities to strengthen their own brand names, whether it's via such mainstays as Windows Phone or, on Google's side, Google Maps.

Google's Santa Tracker presents the children [days](#), hours, minutes, seconds. Meanwhile, in addition to counting down, children are invited to play games, with a new game or scene unlocked every day until December 24. Then the children can track Santa as he travels across the world. "On Christmas Eve we'll be proudly showcasing a Santa's dashboard, the technology that powers his sleigh during his around-the-world journey," Google said. The dashboard has the latest in Google Maps technology and "sleigh engineering." Andrew Griffin on Tuesday reported for The Independent that "As the days [pass](#), challenges, puzzles and games will be unlocked, with some of them involving small coding projects to teach basic Javascript."

North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), has its "NORAD tracks Santa" [site](#) for the young and young at heart. This is a visually impressive site. It is richly layered with click-here games and educational comments (about Santa, traditions around the world; and movies about Santa-tracking by NORAD). Mariella Moon of Engadget reported that "the agency has partnered up with Microsoft again this year, so expect to see a lot of Bing maps integration. In addition to the website itself, the duo has also released iOS, Android and Windows Phone [apps](#), so you can monitor Santa's movements on the go."

Steve Lake, Microsoft's product marketing manager, Internet Explorer, said earlier this week that with the NORAD site one can track Santa with the help of Bing Maps. "The experience is optimized for touch, from the rotatable globe to the parallax-style navigation to the brand new games. On December 24th, when Santa's journey begins, you will be able to track him on an interactive, 3D globe – featuring a Bing Maps overlay. Additionally, at every [stop](#) along the way, users will be able to click off

to a specially-curated Bing results page – to get fun facts and beautiful imagery for each location."

The NORAD site also brings in Cortana. "For the first time, users on Windows Phone will be able to track Santa with Cortana. Cortana will be getting her information straight from NORAD's advanced systems, to ensure to the most accurate, up-to-date data. Want to see for yourself – try asking Cortana 'Where is Santa now?,'" said Lake.

More information: — www.noradsanta.org/

— [play.google.com/store/apps/det ... box.NoradTracksSanta](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.NoradTracksSanta)

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Citation: Microsoft, NORAD track Santa and Google watches him too (2014, December 3) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

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