Developer spots Indoor Survey for enabling indoor positioning

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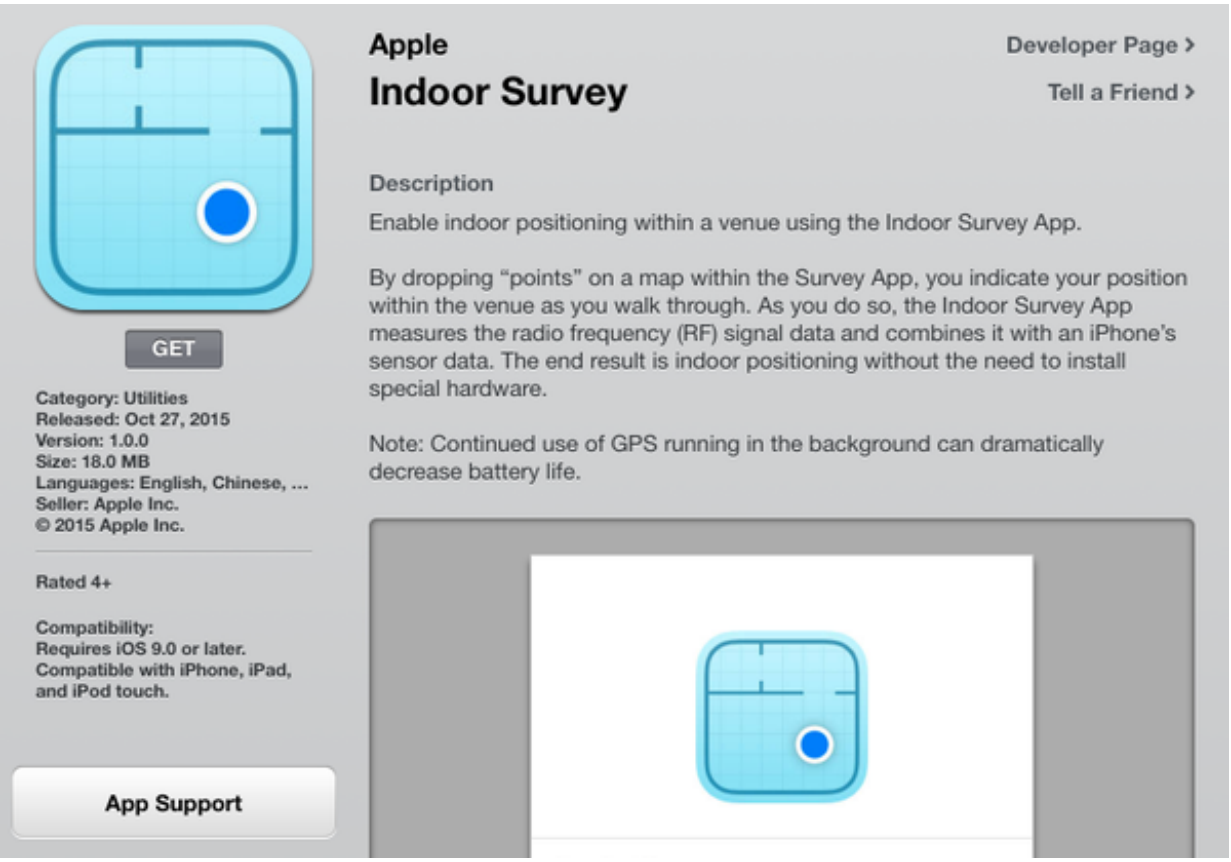

By now you have been quite schooled in what GPS is all about; a next wave will be talk about apps that focus on IPS, or indoor positioning systems. *PCMag* defined it as a system for navigation that can be used

inside airports, museums, malls and hospitals.

Back in February, Andy Greff blogged in Phunware, noting there was a lot of noise around mobile indoor positioning these days. "It seems like everyone is rolling out a mechanism to identify a device's position indoors, whether it's Wi-Fi, GPS or even the Earth's magnetic forces."

"In the past," said *PCMag*, "a variety of communications methods have been used, including optical and acoustic; however, now that so many people have smartphones with Wi-Fi, the mobile app has become the viable approach."

It's not just about technology to deliver directions in getting around but also informational-retrieval, said *PCMag*. "For example, passing by a store in a mall can trigger the day's specials on a smartphone app. In a museum, more facts can be displayed as the visitor approaches an exhibit."

Apple is working quietly on an app, say reports, that could support this technology. Apple might possibly be preparing to unleash its first dedicated indoor positioning app for the iPhone. *Apple Insider* reported on Sunday that a "first party app called 'Indoor Survey' was spotted in the iOS App Store on Sunday." The app, though, was nonoperational, said Mikey Campbell.

AppleInsider said developer Steve Troughton-Smith spotted the iOS App Store page of Indoor Survey. "Well this is an Apple app I've not seen before! " he tweeted.

Indoor Survey allows users to pinpoint their position within a building using their iPhone's sensor data. Campbell said Indoor Survey was only accessible by direct link and did not appear in the App Store's search tool. Now at version 1.0, the title was last updated on Oct. 27, is

compatible with iPhone, iPad and iPod touch devices running iOS 9 or later, and comes with English, Chinese and Japanese language support.

Tech watchers reporting on the sighting also indicated, however, that the accent was on "nonoperational." Several described how they were unable to do much of anything beyond the sign-in screen as login attempts failed.

You need to register in Apple Maps Connect to download it, said *9to5Mac*. This is a dedicated indoor positioning app on iOS, which could let business owners map out their venues using just their iPhones, said *The Verge*. *Ubergizmo* called it an indoor mapping app.

Campbell reported on the app description in *AppleInsider*: "By dropping 'points' on a map within the Survey App, you indicate your position within the venue as you walk through," according to the app description. "As you do so, the indoor Survey App measures the radio frequency (RF) signal data and combines it with an iPhone's sensor data. The end result is indoor positioning without the need to install special hardware."

Tyler Lee said that "This could result in a separate app entirely, or it could be used to enhance its [Apple's] own native Maps app."

Actually, Ben Lovejoy of *9to5Mac*, wrote regarding suggestions that the app is intended for use by businesses using the Apple Maps Connect service, which allows them to add and edit entries appearing in Apple Maps.

"Update: This has been confirmed by a banner in the Apple Maps Connect service inviting businesses to register for the app. Apple Maps entries cover everything from gas stations to stores, restaurants and hotels, and Apple began soliciting indoor mapping partners for the service a year ago," wrote Lovejoy.