

# Uber Acquires Microsoft Mapping Assets

As it seeks to sharpen its focus, Microsoft confirmed that it will no longer be collecting its own mapping data. As part of that transition, it is selling a number of assets to Uber, including a data centre, cameras, intellectual property, and roughly 100 engineers.

News of this transaction, [first reported by TechCrunch](#), highlights Uber's increasing efforts to build its own mapping service. The company recently [poached Brian McClendon](#), a long-time Google executive and key figure in the creation of Google Maps. It is also reportedly [bidding on Nokia's "Here" mapping service](#). Taken together, these data points make it clear that Uber wants to take more control of its business and rely less on its sometimes partner and investor, Google.

Microsoft had done some of the [street level image collection](#) needed for a robust mapping service, although nothing on the scale of Google. But that data set could be quickly improved, given that Uber has the organic advantage of running a business with hundreds of thousands of cars in operation around the world every day. It already tracks the location of drivers and passengers and uses algorithms to predict the supply and demand for travel, as well as the time from point A to point B. The cameras it's acquiring from Microsoft might soon find their way onto the roof of Uber-owned vehicles.

Google is an investor in Uber through Google Ventures and integrated Uber directly into Google Maps. But the companies are also on a collision course. Both are currently offering same-day package delivery and developing driverless cars, aiming for a future in which autonomous, robotic vehicles rule the streets, picking up passengers and parcels with maximum efficiency. And [Google is reportedly developing](#) its own ride-hailing app.

Even setting aside this still largely hypothetical competition, good maps are a rare and precious commodity. Beyond wanting to avoid being beholden to Google, Uber is likely hoping to start building, and then potentially selling, its own mapping and traffic data. No word yet on whether [God View](#) will be opt-in or opt-out on Uber Maps.