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3D online map keeps pace with Macau maze

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With new buildings increasingly dotting the **Macau** skyline, it is increasingly hard to find a map that reflects the city's breakneck expansion.

Even Google's satellite maps lag behind the pace of development in the fast-growing gambling centre, with images still featuring an unfinished Wynn Macau hotel and no trace of the Venetian Macao.

But now a three-dimensional map of Macau is online with constantly updated streetscapes and travel tips in a system developed by P&K Technology, an information technology firm based in Macau.

"Google only takes a satellite photo, but we draw every building with 3D-Max technology," the firm's general manager, Patrick Wong, said. "We have a data-collecting team to photograph buildings one by one and develop their 3D images."

Mr Wong and a group of computer enthusiasts have spent a year and more than HK\$1 million developing the "3D Macau" map - an investment he calls a gamble. His team is now busy updating images of the MGM Grand Macau, which opened nine days ago, and of the Ponte 16, a gaming complex due to launch soon.

The map includes simulated images of more than 20,000 buildings. Travellers can click on any two spots on the map to find ways of commuting between them.

Joyce Pina, a freelance journalist based in the city, said she had been failing to locate places using printed maps. "The maps tend only to highlight big places. I imagine it may be difficult to make a detailed and accurate map of Macau, a city with so many little corners," she said.

Andy Wu Keng-kuong, president of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, said digital maps had become increasingly important for visitors.

"In the future, with 3G being put to wider use, travellers should be able to use maps on mobile phones," he said.

P&K gets technical support from **Guangzhou** Yidong Internet Technology, which has developed 3D internet maps of 13 mainland cities.

Mr Wong said his map had attracted about 10,000 daily visits since its launch in September and the company planned to launch Japanese and English versions soon.

"There are risks but we are banking on the growing market of casino advertisements and over 20 million visitors to Macau each year."

Google did not respond to an inquiry about its satellite maps.



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