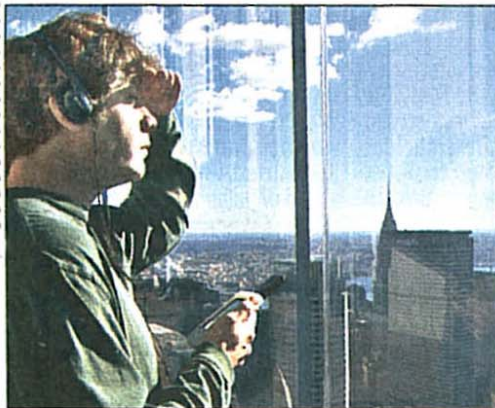




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From the Top of the Rock: CityShow gives visitors a customized tour of the New York skyline.

Travel

Take an interactive tour while you take in the view

The Top of the Rock is linking up with the bottom of a satellite to show Big Apple tourists another side of the city.

Visitors to the year-old Top of the Rock Observation Deck at New York's Rockefeller Center can now rent a cellphone-size, interactive tour-guide device that incorporates a Global Positioning System. Versions of the audio/visual aid, called CityShow, have been used for walking tours in New York and other cities, but Top of the Rock marketing director Keith

Dispatches

Douglas says this is the first time the device has been customized for a particular attraction.

CityShow consists of a computer, a GPS receiver and a pair of headphones, and it provides listeners with historical facts, photos, music and descriptions of various features on the tour. When users ascend to the upper deck on the 70th floor for a 360-degree view of the skyline, the GPS detects which direction they are facing and points out various landmarks and buildings. The user then taps on a menu and receives a brief narration. The audio blurbs cover 100 sites, including the Empire State Building, the Hudson River and Central Park.

"We wanted something with state-of-the-art technology, and this allows you to personalize your experience," says Douglas, who notes that Top of the Rock drew 1 million visitors in its first year. "If you're more interested in the history of the building, you can enjoy that feature as much as you like while you're on the inside part of the tour. Or, if you simply want to enjoy the architectural feature, you can bypass the history, go right to the deck and start looking at the buildings."

CityShow costs \$10 for a 90-minute rental in addition to the \$11.25-\$17.50 admission fee.

— Jerry Shriver