

Title:

Finding The Way With GPS Navigation

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345

Summary:

For any of us who have been lost while driving, the road map has been our guiding light, identifying roadways and landmarks to help us find our way. But gone are the days of tri-folded paper maps that require the use of illumination and attention taken from the road. The modern Global Positioning System - or GPS - has transformed the process by which we find our way. But, contrary to popular belief, GPS navigation is not a new invention designed for strictly consumer use.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

For any of us who have been lost while driving, the road map has been our guiding light, identifying roadways and landmarks to help us find our way. But gone are the days of tri-folded paper maps that require the use of illumination and attention taken from the road. The modern Global Positioning System - or GPS - has transformed the process by which we find our way. But, contrary to popular belief, GPS navigation is not a new invention designed for strictly consumer use.

The Global Positioning System marked its beginnings in the 1970s but seeds of its existence were sown prior to that. We first saw the possibilities of satellite navigation with the launching of Sputnik in 1957. Russian scientists who were monitoring the progress of Sputnik found that they could track its movement based on radio waves; this set the foundation for GPS. The U.S. Navy used an elementary form of GPS in the 1960s when they used six satellites to help their submarines pinpoint their location. But GPS as we know it was designed and implemented by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1978 when they launched the first operational satellite.

Today, 24 satellites circle the earth and provide an enormous amount of information in terms of plotting location. A derivative of this technology in

modern times has been GPS navigation - a system that allows drivers to map their routes. GPS navigation comes in a portable unit that can be removed and transferred from vehicle to vehicle when needed. But because of the growing popularity associated with this system, GPS navigation units are now mounted as standard equipment in newer cars. Of course, GPS navigation is also essential to water navigation as used by boats and ships.

But GPS navigation is not solely for the use of vehicles. Outdoor enthusiasts - with an eye towards safety - will often carry a hand-held GPS navigation device; the modern equivalent of a compass.

GPS navigation has allowed us to explore new terrain as we venture forth with confidence, knowing that, no matter what, we will find our way.