

GPS In The Public Interest

We've all heard the commercials where GPS technology is used to help stranded motorists in difficult situations from a heart attack to locking the keys in the car. Just hearing the term GPS may cause rejoicing or confusion depending on your familiarity with the device.

The applications for GPS units run from simple personal use to complex wartime data. These devices may seem intimidating, but they are opening a whole new world that is being explored in many new and awesome ways. The good news is this portable technology is routinely used to save lives, time and money.

Imagine a woman has been critically injured in a remote location a dozen miles from the nearest town. Park Rangers find her, but they're going to need some help. They call for an air ambulance; however they bypass the need to give detailed instructions on how to find them. Instead, they simply provide GPS coordinates and the helicopter arrives in time to save the life of the injured woman.

A bus operator takes a nasty spill and will not be able to drive for awhile. This might present a problem if someone else does not know the route. However, route training time could be eliminated in public transit with the use of GPS technology. Policies could be adopted that would map each route using a GPS. While the bus driver would be missed, the route would not suffer a delay in service.

We've all had moments when we sat with a stubborn vehicle on the side of the road. If you own a GPS unit it can be used to pinpoint your location for a tow truck.

Imagine a time when missed directions in critical situations become a thing of the past. Many police and ambulance personnel are now dispatched using GPS technology. Lives may be saved, hostile incidents curtailed and even pizza may have a better on time delivery record.

Firefighters are now using GPS units to help guide helicopters providing support to multiple water drop points. By using these small handheld devices, fire crews can maximize the effectiveness of fire control efforts that can save both lives and personal property.

Wilderness excursions can be less problematic when a GPS unit is linked to compatible walkie talkies. This technology will allow people to keep in contact and help them find each other if you get separated.

Should rescue workers be required to find a location in the dark it is good to know that GPS units have no problem pinpointing a location - even on a moonless night.

Outdoor enthusiasts use GPS units to assist them in keeping track of how far they have gone and can help track a route to either avoid or try again.

Admittedly, sophisticated GPS devices have been used by governments during wartime and peace, but savvy consumers have found many ways to utilize this technology to help provide peace of mind in uncertain circumstances.

More uses for GPS technology will be discovered in the days to come and the implementation of that technology will assist the public in ways they may never realize. Then again, when something is this good, bragging isn't required.

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About the Author

Hunter Crowell is a researcher, marketer, and a geocacher. He is also the creator of GPS Navigation Systems, a web site setup to help people find useful and accurate information related to global positioning systems. Visit his site at <http://www.GPS-explained.info>