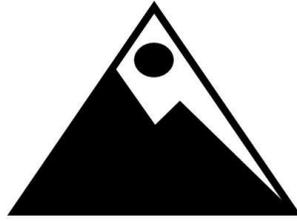# Outdoor ▲ Loyalty

GPS and Geocaching: OutdoorLoyalty and You

It's almost in our DNA that we utilize GPS (Global Positioning System) to let everyone (friends and public) know where we are on this Giant Globe we live on. It wasn't that long ago when, if you "wanted" someone to know your Lat and Long, you called them or wrote them a letter (snail mail). Today we live in a period of time called "The Information Age". What percentage of that flood of information evolves into Knowledge? That maybe a question yet to be determined by Psychologists and Sociologists.

Let's wind the clock back to the late 90's and see what happened when information turned to knowledge and made us all hold our breath as we counted the minutes leading up to the midnight hour and we were partying like it was 1999. Around the World, people were being informed that research pointed to a "glitch" in the time clock that may bring a major man-made disaster to all computers attempting to transition in to the 21st Century. When the clocks struck midnight, we all waited for what was going to happen (Armageddon?). NOTHING HAPPENED!!! We all breathed a sigh of relief and the Computer Age surged forward.

Fast forward to May 2, 2000 at approximately Midnight EST where a person, unknown to most of us, flipped the "switch" controlling "selective availability" and 24 satellites around the globe instantly improved the accuracy of GPS technology tenfold. Many thousands of GPS receivers around the world were upgraded to the level of our Secret Service and Military Systems. Thus, anyone could pinpoint their location with accuracy. Immediately, Internet Think Tanks went on high alert and collaboratively generated ideas about how this newly available technology could be used on the internet. On May 3rd Dave Ulmer, a computer consultant decided to test merging this technology with the Internet. He hid a navigational target in the woods nearby. He then posted the GPS coordinates on to a internet GPS users group. He called the search/game "The Great American GPS Stash Hunt". The finder would use his or her GPS Receiver to locate the stash. As a follow up to that, Dave placed a black bucket in the woods near Beavercreek Oregon outside Portland. The contents in the stash box included Logbook and pencil, Videos, Books, Software and a slingshot. He posted the GPS Coordinates and established the rules- "Take Some Stuff, Leave some Stuff" on the site sci.geo.satellite-nav with the coordinated N 45 degrees 17.460" W 122 degrees 24.800". Within 2 days, two different readers found the stash and shared their experiences online. This was the early development of the GPS stash hunt.

Geocaching, first coined by Matt Stum who merged two familiar words, "Geo" for Earth and "Caching" the origins of which came from the French word cache meaning A Hiding Place.

Geocaching.com was developed by Jeremy Irish in Sept 25, 2000. In 2005, Jermey, Elias Allord and Bryan Roth opened their business called Groundspeak Inc. and continue to operate this website today.

Today, Geocaching is a worldwide phenomena. Treasure hunting merged with the Internet. The GPS technological services have become an essential Outdoor Gear necessity for Outdoorists when they venture "Into The Wild". It has saved many Adverturers lost or injured on their trek to "parts unknown". Most Outdoor Retailers carry products for Go-Gamers and Trekers seeking secret hideouts, mountain tops, rivers and "Roads Less Travelled. When cell phones drop their connection and communications is lost, one still has service to the GPS Satellites and, with a map with GPS coordinates, can find their way back to camp or their starting point.

Who is driving all this technology and gaming in the next decade and beyond? Why Millennials of course. They have coined a new activity called "Extreme Caching". Below is a great article published by OIA (Outdoor Industries Association about Geocaching and Millennials.

http://oia.outdoorindustry.org/shared/webmail/51282/43800832/d77c4949f7f9ff53bc10c49daaa2bf0b

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