



Mobile Magazine > Navigation

A GPS System for the Blind

[Dig this story!](#) | [Comment](#) | [Print](#) | [Rate](#)

Wednesday March 21, 2007 6:29 AM PDT - By Dale White



As novel navigation concepts go, this is rather a good one. It's called Easy Walk, and it's been developed for Symbian mobile phones by an Italian company.

Currently being tested by 30 members of the Italian Blind Union, Easy Walk incorporates a [Bluetooth GPS receiver](#), that aforementioned Symbian phone, new-age text-to-speech software with the unassuming name Talks, and good old-fashioned human directions.



To use it, you press a designated button on the phone and within seconds, you'll hear your phone give you real-time [GPS](#) data telling you exactly where you are, including the number of the building you're standing in front of.

Press another button and you'll get a call from a call center, where a live person will stay on the line with you while giving you step-by-step directions from your location to your destination. Those two buttons are the only additions to an otherwise standard phone.

Those directions are also given in a way that is more helpful to blind people. For example, they are not given directions that incorporate distances, as normal GPS systems do, because that kind of information wouldn't necessarily help. Rather, the directions are of the simpler yet more effective variety: Take the second right after crossing the busy street and enter the door on the left.

Easy Walk has been tested in France and Switzerland already, with 95 percent accuracy. The goal is 100 percent, of course.