

Find yourself with Galileo

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By Daniel Clery

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Galileo satelliteCar satellite-navigation kits have become the must-have gift for anyone who gets in a tangle with maps behind the wheel. As more of us come to rely on the reassuring voice that tells us when to turn, it is worth bearing in mind the warning on the box: satellite navigation relies on a constellation of US military satellites that was not designed for civilians and there is no guarantee that it will not fail one day, or be turned off.

While the US Air Force, which operates the Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites, shows no signs of leaving drivers in the lurch, soon there will be an alternative. The European Union and the European Space Agency have teamed up to create Galileo, a satellite system that will work along the same lines as GPS but was designed as a commercial service.

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