

# GPS

## for your K-9

Will technology make "Lost Dog" posters a thing of the past?

By Heather Gordon

**Be it the result of a natural disaster or an inadvertently unlatched gate, losing a dog is a situation we all dread.** While many people microchip or tattoo their dogs, those methods require the dog to be caught, and for the person who catches him to know to check for a tattoo or scan for a chip.

With developments in GPS (global positioning system) and GSM (global system for mobile communications) technology, however, the power to locate a pup who's gone walkabout may soon be back in your hands. Because the portable GPS transmitter is attached to the dog, it goes wherever he goes. Although the systems can't keep your dog out of harm's way, they can emit a signal that will help you find him once again.

Canine GPS is in its infancy, and there are only a few providers across the globe, so pet-centered GPS may initially be pricey. Also, many GPS systems aren't suitable for small dogs. However, for those of us with canine Houdinis, it is a trend to watch.

### GlobalPetFinder (GPS Tracks)

First and foremost, catering to the US canine GPS market. For \$350 plus a \$35 activation fee, you get the GlobalPetFinder, snap guard, batteries and charger. Put the 5 oz. tracker on your dog's collar and

then create a "virtual fence" around any area in which you decide the dog can roam freely.

If she goes out of those boundaries, you receive an alert, and then location updates every minute until she is found. Two monthly "Peace of Mind" service plans are available:

\$18/month for homebodies and \$20/month for escape artists. Works throughout the US and

Canada; however, as with cell phones, coverage can vary by area (i.e., coverage in Alaska, Maine and in many rural areas of the West is spotty). [www.globalpetfinder.com](http://www.globalpetfinder.com).

### Petscell™ (PetsMobility)

Canadian PetsMobility-developed voice-enabled waterproof GPS cell phone with two-way communication capacity. Attach the unit to the dog's collar, then call the dog on her own cell phone number. It automatically connects after the first ring, and allows you to hear the dog

(or anyone else in the vicinity) and her to hear you. Also includes remote programmable geo-fence, temperature sensor, GPS locator and a fiber-optic camera.

Expected to begin retailing for around \$300 with a \$10 to \$15/month service plan in early 2006. [www.petsmobility.com](http://www.petsmobility.com).

Several companies offer, or will soon be releasing, their own canine GPS systems throughout Europe. Switzerland's soon-to-launch

PB100 (Locatis, [www.locatis.ch](http://www.locatis.ch)) will text-message your dog's coordinates to your cell phone. So will Germany's GPS

Pro (Environmental Studies, [www.environmental-studies.de](http://www.environmental-studies.de)), appropriate for medium- to large-sized dogs and functional on GSM networks in Europe, North America and Asia. Starting in January 2006, France's veterinarian-developed Trace Dog ([www.tracedog.fr](http://www.tracedog.fr)) collar will use mobile signal triangulation to find missing dogs throughout Europe. And Finland's Pointer Dog GPS (Benefon and Pointer Dog Solutions, [www.pointersolutions.com](http://www.pointersolutions.com)), which displays the dog's location on a map on a hand-held screen, is popular with Scandinavian hunters. **B**

