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Promoting Cultural Heritage without Much Cash in the Cache: A Case for Geocaching

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Abstract:
On May 3rd 2000, one day after the United States Department of Defense disabled Selective Availability Scrambling on its Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites, a container with a logbook was placed outside of Portland, Oregon and its GPS coordinates were posted to an online satellite newsgroup. By May 6th, 2000 the cache had been visited twice and logged once. This was the beginning of Geocaching, a rapidly growing sport/game in which players attempt to find small boxes hidden in public places with the assistance of a GPS device and a few written clues. Geocaching is unique in that it is a combination of the virtual community, physical place, and real world artifact. The experience isn’t about being in virtual space, however, it uses virtual space to launch an experience in the actual physical world (Severi 2003). Geocaching for Cultural Heritage framework is presented and the potential of Geocaching to promote tourism and Cultural Heritage is discussed. Geocaching can provide Cultural Heritage organizations, who often have limited budgets and lack technical staff, with a method to: (1) increase revenue and (2) provide value added services with minimal investment or technical training.