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# Russia to Create a Rival GPS System.

Red Planet

9/4/2007

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Russia plans on launching a direct competitor to the U.S. GPS satellite navigation system next year.

GPS systems are used by more and more people including drivers, sailors, soldiers, and even Boy Scouts. currently they are using satellite technology developed by the US military but soon they will be able to switch to a Soviet-designed rival - GLONASS. GPS stands for Global Positioning System.

Russia is planning on spending 10 billion roubles (\$US385 million) this year on developing GLONASS and firing more satellites into orbit but will also be looking for private partners. The Soviet Union started work on developing GLONASS, which stands for Global Navigation Satellite System, in the mid-1970s to give its army exact bearings around the world. But the collapse of the Russian economy in the late 1990s drained funds away from GLONASS and the satellite system frayed.

However, this system has become a favorite project of Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose seven years in power have been marked by resurgent Russian national pride alongside burgeoning oil revenues. GLONASS presently covers Russia and some of the surrounding countries but after the launch of more satellites this year it will spread its reach until, by 2009, the world will be fully covered by its 24 Russian satellites.

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