

## Geocaching... what the?

By Mark & Justine Brindley

**Ever felt like orienteering but there isn't an event on? How about joining a worldwide event where the controls aren't just tricky but are actively hidden? Sounds good but a bit on the hard side?**

**How about we give you the exact co-ordinates, clues about the location, allow (recommend even) you to use a GPS and not worry about how long it takes you to find the controls. Sounds good? I hope so because that's kind of what Geocaching is.**

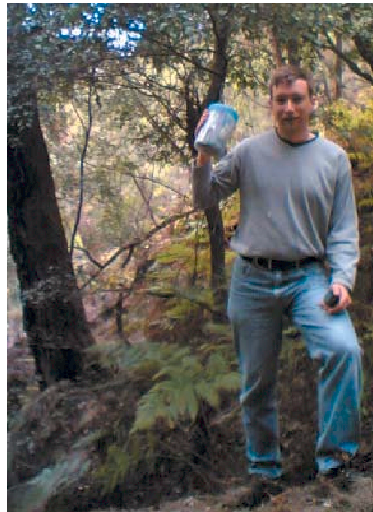
Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt where you track down caches hidden by other players. Caches are containers usually placed in or near areas with something attractive or unusual about it such as waterfalls, lookouts, historic locations or perhaps a cunningly camouflaged inner city park.

Why go looking for a Geocache? Well there is the attractive location that the cache leads you too, also the sense of achievement in finding the cache, as well as the fun of being in on a secret that those around you are oblivious of. For the young or just young at heart there is the joy of "treasure" that a cache contains. Most caches contain small items that you can swap something of your own for. This is often a great incentive for the younger members of a family who are too young to find orienteering as rewarding yet.

Geocaching started in May 2000 when GPS receivers became accurate enough to enable their users to find a location within a few meters. Not long after this Dave Ulmer hid a container and challenged other users to find it and geocaching was born. Today there are over 1800 geocaches in NSW alone and over 300,000 worldwide.

As orienteers we already have the equipment that is needed for wandering along bush tracks and the occasional bit of bush bashing. So the only additional thing you need to be successful is access to a GPS. A

GPS is a techno-gadget that receives satellite signals and displays your current location. By entering a geocaches co-ordinates into a GPS it can display the distance and bearing to the geocache. Although it is possible to geocache without a GPS the pastime has evolved around the usage of GPSs and is vastly easier with a GPS.



Ok, so how do you get started? Easy. Just sign up on [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). Basic membership is free and is all you will need as a beginner. Geocaching.com has hints and instructions for new players as well as the searchable lists of geocaches around the world (hint: your local postcode is a good place to start). Once you have signed up on geocaching.com I would also recommend joining [www.geocaching.com.au](http://www.geocaching.com.au) which

is completely free. Geocaching.com.au has some additional Australian only caches and an excellent community of local geocachers who are very helpful and friendly.

So go and have a look at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). If nothing else you might find out how so many people know about that cool park at the end of your street like we did.

Photograph:  
*Mark (Nilbog\_Aus on geocaching.com) feeling pleased, holding a just found cache.*

Concerning the article on page 12:

The website is [www.orientacnibeh.cz/volny/mpa\\_council/documents/issom2004-annex1.pdf](http://www.orientacnibeh.cz/volny/mpa_council/documents/issom2004-annex1.pdf).

If you wish to read more do a Google search with "issom 2004".

