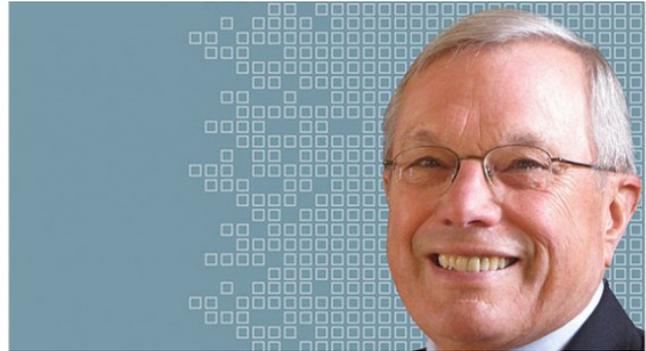


GPS Pioneer Dr. Bradford Parkinson Points to the “Brilliant Autos” of the Future

GPS technology plays vital role in semi- or fully-driverless cars

In a March 21, 2013 Smithsonian-sponsored lecture at the National Air and Space Museum, famed GPS pioneer Dr. Bradford Parkinson told audience members that he believes the next big development in the use of GPS technology will be what he called “brilliant autos” – cars which operate either semi- or fully-driverless.

Parkinson, who traced the rapid-fire development of GPS since the 1970s in his days in the U.S. Air Force as the chief architect and original program director for GPS, noted that in the last 10 years 387,000 people were killed in U.S. auto accidents in the U.S., declaring that “the most dangerous thing in a car is you, the driver.”



He said the car of the future will drastically reduce traffic deaths with features such as electronic stability control capable of detecting a slide or potential roll and applying brakes to regain control; either laser- or radar-based collision warning systems that will automatically apply brakes to help prevent rear-end crashes; and camera-based, lane-keeping systems to watch road lines and take over steering to gently regain the proper lane. He pointed out that Google has already designed an experimental driverless car, and predicted many important innovations in the automotive field.

Parkinson, now a professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics Emeritus at Stanford University, entitled his lecture “GPS for Humanity — The Stealth Utility,” and stressed throughout his hour-plus presentation the tremendous beneficial impact GPS has had on the lives of millions.

He cited what he called the “GPS for Humanity” applications, breaking them into the categories of aviation, emergency services, timing, agriculture, rescue, recreation/automotive, tracking, science, military and robotics/machine control.

Parkinson, introduced as the person who is “often referred to as the father of GPS,” repeatedly cited by name the many men and women who helped develop GPS and maintain and enhance it today. He said the greatest threat to GPS is interference with its radio signals – either illegally through the use of signal jammers or legally through approval of uses that interfere with GPS.

He said he was pleased by the recent formation of the “GPS Innovation Alliance. . .and I think they are going to be quite active, and try to educate people. This is called the stealth utility. . .it is indeed a stealth utility. It snuck up on us all.”

The lecture was sponsored by the Smithsonian in connection with the April 12, 2013 opening of its exhibit [Time and Navigation: The Untold Story of Getting from Here to There](#). Parkinson said he’d had a sneak preview of the exhibit and gave it high praise. Parkinson’s lecture, which included a lively Q&A session, can be viewed at this [Smithsonian link](#).