

Geology-smart space suit developed

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MADRID, June 16 (UPI) -- European researchers have developed a device that analyzes geological features for astronauts as they move around on extraterrestrial bodies.

The computer-enhanced astrobiological scanner was developed by German and Spanish researchers at the Center for Astrobiology in Madrid, led by Patrick McGuire.

He said the prototype consists of a hand-held video camera connected to a wearable computer, but later versions may link the camera to a head-up display within an astronaut's visor, New Scientist reported.

U.S. astronauts who visited the moon were trained in geology, enabling them to identify ancient rocks that might reveal signs of water or life. The prototype flags anything a geologist might find interesting, based on its unusual or distinctive appearance, McGuire said.

Results of tests done in Spain where the system agreed with human geologists 68 percent of the time will appear in a forthcoming report in the International Journal of Astrobiology.

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