

GPS shoes for Alzheimer's patients

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An Alzheimers patient at a psychiatric hospital. A shoe-maker and GTX corp are teaming up to develop footwear with a built-in GPS device that could help track down "wandering" seniors suffering from Alzheimer's Disease.

A shoe-maker and a technology company are teaming up to develop footwear with a built-in GPS device that could help track down "wandering" seniors suffering from Alzheimer's Disease.

"The technology will provide the location of the individual wearing the shoes within 30 feet, anywhere on the planet," said Andrew Carle, an assistant professor at George Mason University who served as an advisor on the project.

"Sixty percent of individuals afflicted with [Alzheimer's Disease](#) will be involved in a 'critical wandering incident' at least once during the progression of the disease -- many more than once," he said Friday.

The shoes are being developed by GTX Corp., which makes miniaturized [Global Positioning Satellite](#) tracking and location-transmitting technology, and Aetrex Worldwide, a footwear manufacturer.

Carle said embedding a GPS device in a shoe was important because Alzheimer's victims tend to remove unfamiliar objects placed on them but getting dressed is one of the last types of memory they retain.

He said a "geo-fence" could be placed around a person's home and a "Google Map" alert sent to a cell phone, home or office computer when a programmed boundary is crossed.

"The shoe we intend on developing with Aetrex should help authorized family members, friends, or caretakers reduce their stress and anguish by enabling them to locate their loved ones instantly with the click of a mouse," said Chris Walsh, chief operating officer of GTX Corp.

The companies said they plan to begin testing the product by the fourth quarter of the year.

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