

Website charts Santa's journey around the globe

December 24 2016



A man wearing a Santa Claus costume walks atop Jerusalem's Old City walls on December 23, 2016

An online Santa tracker run by a Canadian and American defense agency mapped the jolly old gift-giver's path around the globe Saturday, in what has become a Yuletide tradition.

Every Christmas Eve since 1955, the North American Aerospace

Defense Command (NORAD) has been tracking Saint Nicholas's annual voyage to deliver presents to good little boys and girls around the world.

A 3-D, interactive website at www.noradsanta.org shows places Santa has passed through, allowing site users to click to learn more about different locations.

The website is available in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Chinese.

It shows Santa, wearing his traditional red cap and suit trimmed with white fur, steering a red sleigh over the Earth below, which has been labeled to show what country he is flying over at any given time.

A counter keeps a running tally of gifts delivered by Saint Nick so far—nearly 1.4 billion by 1530 GMT as Santa approached Geraldton, Australia, the NORAD website showed.

Santa's progress—as well as the activities of NORAD volunteers—could also be charted at the Twitter handle @NoradSanta.

"Our volunteers are having a great time and staying busy with as many as 140,000 phone calls today!" read one tweet, accompanied by a photo of dozens of people, some wearing red Santa hats, taking calls.

After leaving the North Pole early Saturday, Santa had early stops in Russia, China and Japan before heading at mind-boggling speed south toward the Philippines, Guam, Australia and then heading east toward Asia and Europe before stops later Saturday in North America.

NORAD's Santa tracking tradition dates back to 1955, when a Colorado newspaper advertisement printed a phone number to connect children with the cheerful Christmas icon that mistakenly directed them to

NORAD's hotline.

To avoid disappointing the little ones, NORAD's director of operations at the time, Colonel Harry Shoup, ordered his staff to check the radar to see where Santa might be and update the children on his location.

When not spreading holiday cheer, the North American Aerospace Defense Command conducts aerospace and maritime control and warning operations.

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