

China to launch Beidou GPS by 2015

China will send ten navigation satellites into space over the next two years, with the aim of having an independent global positioning system comprising of more than 30 satellites in place by 2015. The government is eager to shake off its dependence on foreign positioning systems, such as the US's GPS, *Xinhua* has reported.

China's first satellite, the Beidou Navigation System, was launched into orbit in 2000. China has since sent five positioning orbiters into space. But the current system only provides a regional navigation service within China's territory.

Since April 2007, the government has been upgrading the system to a second generation, which has been codenamed Compass.

The US, the EU and Russia each operate global positioning systems. The EU system is known as the Galileo Positioning System, while Russia operates the Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS).

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