

Ricoh Camera with Compass-GPS Module

GeoSpatial Experts (CO, USA) have introduced an integrated magnetic compass/GPS receiver module for the Ricoh 500SE digital camera. The new Ricoh Compass-GPS Module is fully compatible with the existing version of GPS-Photo Link software and is available for purchase now on the GeoSpatial Experts website.

The module attachment was originally introduced by Ricoh solely with a built-in GPS receiver, which enables the camera to acquire the location coordinates of each photo and embed them with the photo as an attribute without an external GPS device. The GPS-Photo Link digital mapping software developed by GeoSpatial Experts uses the location coordinates to automatically link each digital photographic image with its location and then accurately map it on a GIS layer.

The addition of the magnetic compass now allows the Ricoh 500SE to record the direction the camera was pointing when each photo was taken. The current version of GPS-Photo Link accesses this direction data and can place an arrow at the photo location on the GIS map to show the correct direction. The photo-mapping software can also use camera metadata to determine the zoom setting of the lens and portray the field of view of each photo as a triangle on the map layer.

GeoSpatial Experts sells the Ricoh 500SE with or without the optional Compass-GPS Module (SE-3) in a bundle with the GPS-Photo Link software. And the module itself is available either with both the GPS and compass or with the GPS only. GeoSpatial Experts and its distributors have already begun shipping cameras with the new module.

Built for GIS mapping, the Ricoh 500SE boasts an all-weather body, 8-megapixel resolution, and add-on lenses. The detachable Compass-GPS module attaches to the top of the camera and provides superior GPS signal reception compared with slide-in GPS cards. The new camera also offers a "GPS lock" function which records the location of the object being photographed instead of where the photographer is standing.

The Ricoh 500SE is an all-in-one GIS data collection device that enables users to directly enter up to five data attributes which will be seamlessly attached to the digital photograph along with the location coordinates. The camera can even snap a picture of a barcode and store it as a photo attribute. These attribute fields remain with the photos as GIS layers when the files are downloaded into the GPS-Photo Link software for georeferenced display in a GIS.

Another function found in the Ricoh 500SE that has proved popular with photo-mapping users is the built-in Bluetooth and optional WiFi wireless capability. This allows users to instantly transfer images and attributes acquired in the camera to other handheld mobile devices, such as PDAs or GIS data collectors. Data can also be transmitted wirelessly from these external devices to the camera. GIS users can also utilize the Bluetooth connection to communicate with an external GPS receiver if they choose not to use the Ricoh GPS module attachment.