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Mapcode

In 1997, DENSO devised and introduced Mapcode, a new location code that assigns 10-digit numbers at the maximum to every location in Japan for easier navigation. An entire area in Japan is divided into square regions with a side of about thirty meters, and Mapcode pinpoints one of the regions, realizing easy and accurate pinpoint retrieval of every location in Japan.

In March 2002, DENSO introduced a new Mapcode system that subdivides the region into square sub-regions having a three-meter side, by adding two digits to the original 10-digit Mapcode at the maximum. The new Mapcode system can specify smaller square areas with a 30-centimeter side by further adding digits if it is required.

Car navigation systems conventionally set destinations by using various codes such as addresses, latitudes/longitudes, zip codes, and telephone numbers. However, using addresses or latitudes/longitudes requires complicated manipulation of input retrieval data. The zip code method is difficult to pinpoint a specific region, and the telephone number method requires telephone number updates because they frequently change.

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Mapcode solves these problems and allows for pinpointing a specific region easily and accurately by indicating locations that are difficult to set by the conventional methods. Such locations include huge sightseeing areas, airports, and address-indefinite areas (for example, mountainous area, rivers, and valleys) where neither building nor telephone numbers exist.

Mapcode has been adopted by major car navigation system makers such as Kenwood, Clarion, Xanavi, and Pioneer, and car manufacturers such as Toyota, Honda, Nissan, and BMW Japan. Mapcode also has seen heavy use from publications such as drive guides and information magazines, portable information terminals and wireless phones as well as the car navigation systems.

In October 2002, DENSO started a service for issuing Mapcode through the internet (<http://www.e-mapcode.com>). Through the website, you are able to get Mapcode for addresses, telephone numbers, or map areas. DENSO aims for sales of 1 billion yen in Mapcode business by 2005.

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