

# Amazon drone patent has tracking, talking details

9 May 2015, by Nancy Owano

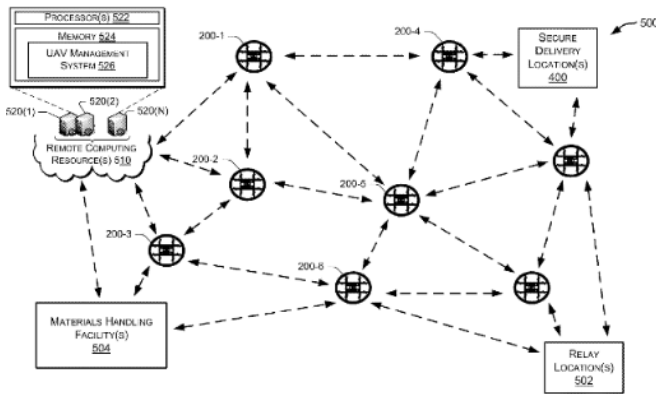


FIG. 5

According to the patent, "the user may place an order for an item while at home, select to have the item delivered to their current location (delivery within 30 minutes of the order) and then leave to go to their friend's house, which is three blocks away from their home. As the ordered item is retrieved from inventory, the current location of the user's mobile device may be determined and the delivery location correspondingly updated. As such, the ordered item will be delivered to the user while the user is at their friend's house, or any other location."

How might those proposed delivery drones from Amazon operate? Details have been published by the US Patent Office. By pulling data from people's smartphones, the drones may track the location of the delivery target. The patent, titled "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Delivery System," discussed a scenario where a user could choose a "Bring It To Me" option, where the user's location is determined and the UAV delivers the item. "The current location of the user may be based on, for example, a determined location of a portable device (e.g., mobile phone) associated with the user, the location of the network utilized by the user when placing the order, etc. For example, the user may identify their current location by allowing Global Positioning System ('GPS') data to be provided by their mobile device. Alternatively, if the user is connected through a wireless network (e.g., cellular, Wi-Fi, satellite), the location of the network may be determined and used as the current location of the user."

In some implementations, said the [patent](#), the location of the user may be maintained and updated until the item is delivered to the user.

Nate Swanner of *SlashGear* picked up on the patent discussion about how the drone may not only focus on delivering to a desired location but also communicate with one another, "sharing info on weather or landing zones. Those delivery drones may also share [info](#) on flight paths; for instance, they'd know a particular highway was gusty from big trucks based on their flight data, and fly a bit higher to avoid trouble or at an angle to ease its entry/exit from the airspace above the road next time, and share that info with other drones."

The patent wording includes talk of a wireless mesh network which may be used to provide communication between UAVs (e.g., to share weather information, [location information](#), routing information, landing areas), UAV management system, materials handling facilities, secure delivery locations and/or relay locations.

Overall, BBC News commented that "the details it provides in its patent application suggest that the firm is taking the idea seriously." The BBC also noted that "Winning patent approval does not mean that the final product will be exactly as described or that it will become [reality](#)."

The BBC added that "Amazon is leading the effort to convince the US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) to approve widespread commercial use of drones."

**More information:** Patent: [Unmanned aerial vehicle delivery system](#)

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