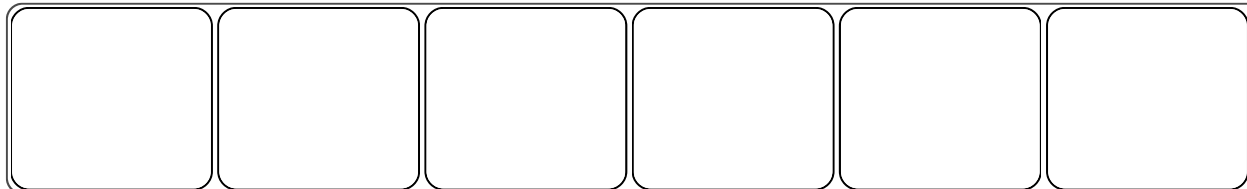


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TECHNOLOGY

Drones: delivering Swiss post and four other interesting uses

Jul 8, 2015

Unmanned drones are becoming commonplace in a variety of industries across the globe





Getty

The Swiss postal service has begun trial deliveries by **unmanned drones**, although it will be up to five years before they become a regular sight in the alpine skies.

Swiss Post said its drones fly autonomously, following "clearly defined, secure flight paths", drawn up by cloud software developed by Matternet, the drones' US manufacturer.

The company was quick to address fears about safety. "Until the time of their realistic commercial use in around five years, there are various requirements which need to be clarified," it said.

Swiss Post isn't the first company to try drone delivery. In 2013 Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos **declared** that by 2015 "all customers within a ten-mile radius of a company warehouse will have the option to choose drone delivery". His prediction is yet to come to fruition, with the company claiming that the US government's rules on civilian drones prohibit it from fulfilling its plans.

Here are some other interesting uses of drones from across the globe:

Policing

The UK government recently announced that drones will be used for surveillance at four UK airports. After a successful trial at Gatwick, the drones will now be used by police guarding Heathrow, Luton, Stansted and City airports as well. In India, police have gone one step further, **equipping their drones** with pepper spray to assist them in dispersing unruly mobs.

Photography

Celebrities may never be safe again, as paparazzi photographers have started to enlist the help of drones to get snaps otherwise out of their reach. In early 2013 a drone was used to take pictures of Tina Turner's wedding to Erwin Bach in Switzerland. Drone photography isn't just for celeb-watching, either. A number of extreme sports have also used high-flying cameras to document their tricks and flicks from previously unseen angles. Drones have also been used for **coaching purposes** in a variety of sports in the US.

Protest

Dutch campaigners in June flew unmanned drones carrying abortion pills from the German border into Poland, to highlight the restrictive laws against the termination of pregnancies in the Catholic country. The campaigners, called **Women on Waves**, said German police had pressed charges but it was "totally unclear on what grounds". Women on Waves have **said** their next plan is to fly the pills into Ireland, where the termination of pregnancies is similarly restricted.

Saving the planet

Drones are really making a difference when it comes to watching the environment. The US government has been testing air quality for years using unmanned drones, while Nasa has started to patrol the ozone layer "to better understand how water vapour and ozone interact", reports **livescience**. In Italy, drones have been used to combat the illegal dumping

of waste, while in Texas one drone owner forced a meat-packing plant to shut down after footage showed the factory polluting a nearby river with animal blood.

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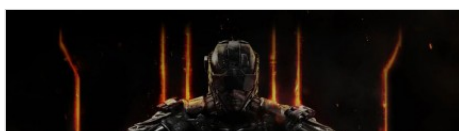
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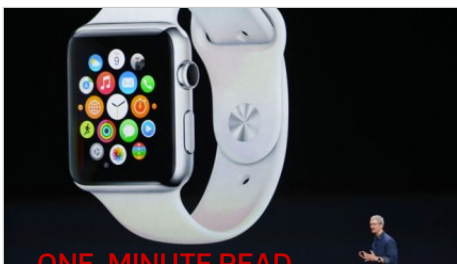
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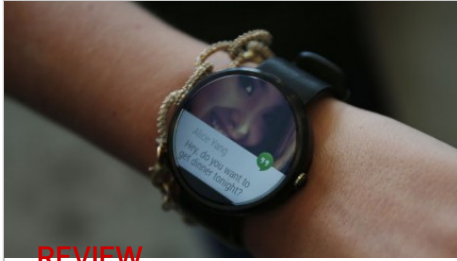
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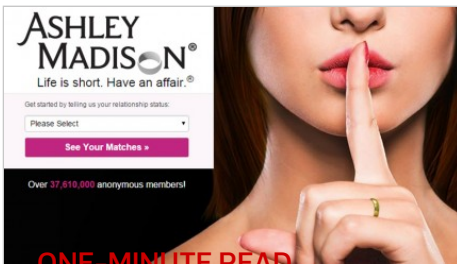
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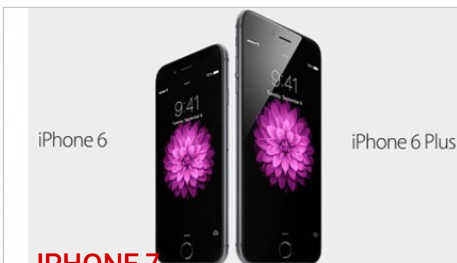
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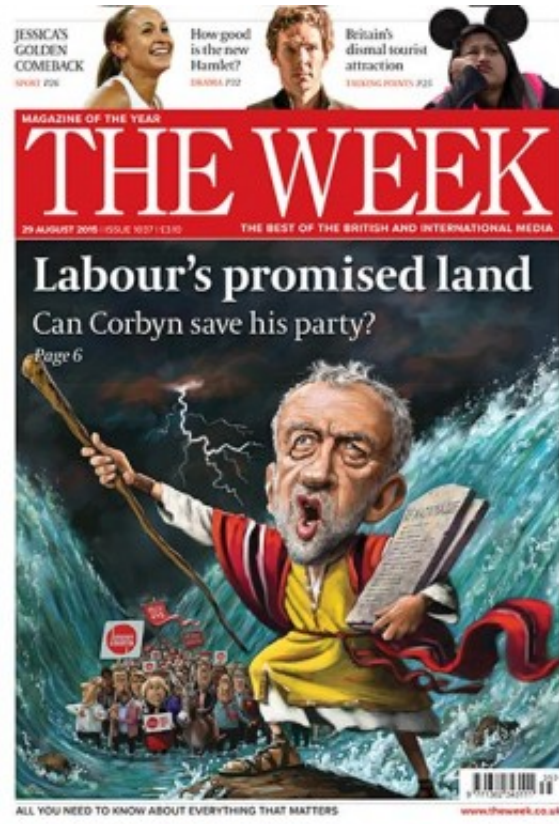
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