

Another great Edinburgh app!

✘ Academics at Edinburgh College of Art and the University of Edinburgh have developed a free app called *Walking Through Time*, to show the user where they would be standing if they were on the same spot up to 161 years ago. The user can then walk in real time through several ancient maps of Edinburgh and London dating from 1849 to 1960 tracked by their GPS (Global Positioning Systems) coordinates.

This **Walking Through Time** app is free until the end of the Edinburgh Festivals in September for users with **iPhone 3GS** or **4** running *ios4.0* and is available from [iTunes](#)

Tourists, historians and Festival-goers can enjoy the experience of walking through historic Edinburgh and seeing on a selection of maps whether they are standing in the middle of a former cattle market or even walking through a wall. There are also a number of walks and audio tours as you move 'through' the historic map.

Dr Chris Speed, one of the developers and a teacher in digital media at the **Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA)** has secured usage of **London maps** for this limited time, as well as those of Edinburgh.

"People are getting used to seeing up-to-date satellite maps on their phones of where they are standing and moving, but they can only imagine what a place looked like in the past. Our app simply puts old maps under your feet and let's you walk streets that may not exist anymore. Visitors to cities like Edinburgh or London are often very interested in the history of a place, so it seemed a good idea to offer them a satnav for the past as well as for the present."

How it works

Upon launch the app takes you to where you are in the present.

Then select a historical map from the **Maps** menu. The opacity slider allows you to control how much you can see of the base map. The **Walks** menu gives you a list of available guided tours. Pin points will appear to help you locate key points on the tour.

If you click on a point it will give you more information about the area including photo, text and in some instances, an audio clip. For information about the app features, please click [here](#)

Looking to the Future

Since the Government released its Ordnance Survey maps for free in April 2010, the developers are looking to expand the range of the maps to the rest of the UK and beyond. They are the first developers to make use of this type of technology in this way. Currently, the only cities where **Walking Through Time** can be used are in Edinburgh and Central London where users can select from several maps dating from 1849 to 1960. This new technology is fascinating when applied to cities that have been transformed radically, such as the East End of London, heavily bombed during the Second World War.

The application has already caught the eye of academics in Italy, who believe the technology could add a new tourist experience for ancient and well-mapped cities like Rome and Florence.

The developers are interested in the sense of identification that users have expressed as they identify themselves as the 'blue dot' on the screen that is able to 'walk' on a historical map as though it was laid beneath their feet across 'present' space. The realisations that occur as users correlate representations of historical space (maps) with a city's spaces of historical representation (architectures of the past).

Photo courtesy of ECB/Edinburgh Brand