

## Handout 13: Geocaching with Columbus

# Geocaching with Columbus

## 1. Using the Android App with opencaching.de – Preparations

The technical basis for geocaching is provided by **gpx files** containing all the information a mobile device needs to lead the user to a cache. These files are usually stored on special web pages, and from there they can be downloaded for immediate use.

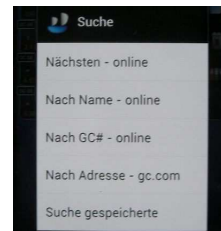
When Columbus is opened, it displays a list of the geocaching files that may already be saved on the device. New files can be added in two ways:



The files can be **loaded manually from a PC**. To take full advantage of the import function, the app's file manager should already be installed on your device. This method does not require an active internet connection or GPS contact.



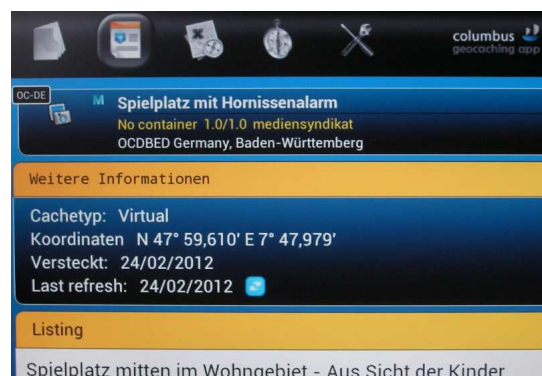
Alternatively, one can use the menu function on the Columbus opening screen to **search online**. Under the menu item “nearest online” and the selection option for a geocaching platform, you can view a list of caches near your current location, specifying a maximum distance in kilometres. This requires having an online and GPS connection.



When using an open platform, such as opencaching.eu, you can download the gpx files immediately; on commercial pages (such as geocaching.com), you must have an existing account that you have already listed in your Columbus settings.

The cache file you have downloaded now appears in the list on the opening page and can be viewed. Often, these downloaded files contain important tips for finding the cache.

Occasionally, there are also external links embedded in the file. In these cases, additional texts, images, sounds, and even videos can be accessed.



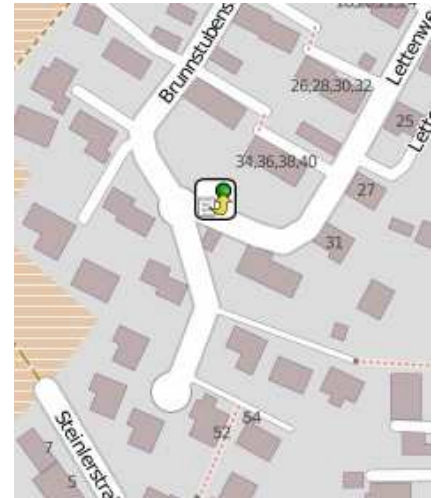
## 2. Using the Android App with opencaching.de – On Location



Once the cache file has been downloaded, the search can begin. In **map mode**, the current position of the user is indicated. Possibly, this function may need to be activated via the menu button “My position”. The location of the cache is also visible. As a matter of course, the cache search is subject to the GPS standard deviation of a few metres. This means that the actual treasure has to be searched for and found analogously, for real!

The map material you use depends on your personal preference. But particularly when the location is farther away from centres or large cities, it is recommended to have a look at the OpenStreetMap (OSM) material, which is very true to detail. You make your selection by using the menu button in map mode.

While out-of-doors, it is not absolutely necessary to have internet access: if you have downloaded the map segment in advance using your home WLAN, it will later be accessible (offline) during your search.



Alternatively, a search can be conducted via the **compass and direction function**. In addition to the geocoordinates of the cache, for navigation it uses an arrow and the distance from the cache in metres.

In both methods, it is possible at any time to switch back into the list or the detailed information to get additional support and tips.

To do this, it is not necessary to be online.

