Part One

My favorite part of snowboarding is the feel of speeding down the mountain at 35 miles per hour. With the wind whistling in my ears as I carve out tracks into the fresh snow, I feel free. The morning after a storm dumps a foot of snow the snowboard cuts through the soft powder and spraying snow into the air you feel like you are floating. When I think of snowboarding these are my memories that come to mind.

Snowboarding is a winter sport where you ride down a mountain with both feet attached to a board. Riders press the edges of the board turns and to stop the snowboard. Some people prefer snowboarding in a terrain park while I prefer riding down trails and through trees. I began snowboarding eight years ago and I continue to enjoy the sport. When I used to ski, I would always watch the snowboarders zipping by me as they raced down the mountain. It was then I decided that I wanted to start snowboarding. I can clearly remember my first day snowboarding all those years ago. I drove the hour and twenty minutes to Mount Sunapee in New Hampshire with my family. I walked through the parking lot carrying an old snowboard that my cousin gave me. As I climbed the steps into the ski school building, my mind filled with excitement for the day to come. My expectations were met. I spent the day falling and failing, yet I still had a fantastic time. I was hooked.

The snowboard has evolved greatly since its creation about 50 years ago. There have been innovations in bindings, the material, and the shape of the board. In the 1990’s the splitboard was invented (Huffman, 2009). This new technology completely changed the backcountry for snowboarders
and opened new terrain that was previously inaccessible. The splitboard works by combining a snowboard and skis. Normally, a snowboard is one solid piece of laminate, wood, or other materials. On a splitboard, as the name implies, the board is two pieces and can be split the long way. These pieces are then used as touring skis to reach remote areas not serviced by chair lifts. Clips attach the two skis to reform the snowboard when it is time for downhill travel again. The real innovation that makes the splitboard possible is the rotating bindings. The binding is what connects the rider’s boots to the board and on a traditional snowboard they are oriented sideways. This is what gives snowboards their sideways stance. The problem inventors had to overcome was turning the bindings to face forward while in ski mode. The rotating binding, they invented is simple to operate and requires just one pin to lock the binding position.

The splitboard has completely changed the way people snowboard in the backcountry. Previously, people would spend large sums to ride snowmobiles or have helicopters drops them off deep in the woods. Not only was this expensive but it was also impossible in many protected areas where motorized vehicles are prohibited. This left snowboarders with one option, to trudge through waist deep snow on foot. The splitboard allows riders to travel twice the speed of walking. The means they can reach deeper into the backcountry and get more runs in. There has been a trend in snowboarding in recent years to return to the roots of the sport (“Splitboarding, the Hottest New Winter Sport”, 2011). People want to work for their powder and feel that riding an expensive snowmobile up the mountain is cheating in a way. Utah based snowboard Mr. Shearer replaced his own snowmobile with a splitboard says “It brings it back to the basics of snowboarding. It’s almost like your surfboard in the ocean. You’ve got to paddle out to catch a wave” (Shearer, 2009).

Splitboarding is the future and is only expected to grow in the coming years. The shift toward snowboarding off the side of the road rather than paying for access to an expensive resort will open the sport to new people. It also brings back the aspect of adventure and discovery to snowboarding.
Part Two

*Deadliest Catch* is a reality TV show portraying crab fisherman in the Bering Sea. These fishermen based out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska battle freezing temperatures and massive waves to catch the lucrative crab and make a year’s worth of money in only a few weeks. The job is extremely dangerous and the pressure to quickly meet the quota often forces captains to push their crews to the limit. There are frequent injuries resulting from falling off the stacks of pots to the hard beck below, being hit by the falling chunks of ice that accumulate on the vessels, and getting limbs crushed by the force of 200-pound crab pot sliding across the deck. Despite the inherent dangerous, crewmembers return year after year. There are fierce rivalries between some of the captains going back decades. There are also alliances and strong friendships. *Deadliest Catch* is action packed and while some of the boats have changed, many of the captains have been on the show continually since its inception in 2005.

During season 14 episode 9, the fleet battle a massive Arctic storm producing 40 mile an hour winds and 30-foot seas. With end of the fall crabbing season quickly approaching, the captains must meet their quotas and head to port before the canneries close for the season. If they do not make it in time, they will be unable to sell their crab and the trip will have been a waste. The captains are forced to make the difficult decision of whether to continue fishing and risk the safety of their crews or head back to the protection of Dutch Harbor empty handed. Captain Sean Dwyer of the Brenna A decides the waves are too much for the boat to handle and returns to port without meeting his quota. The Cornelia Marie faces mechanical troubles when its generator that supplies power to the deck equipment such as the crane fails. Unable to continue fishing they too return to Dutch Harbor. The Cape Caution gets a rope tangled on its propeller and it too is forced to return to port. The episode showcases just how common failure really is as a crab fisherman. Success on the Bering Sea is not easy to come by.
A technology utilized in the show is Global Positioning System or GPS. Captains use GPS for a multitude of reasons, and it makes fishing much easier today than before the advent of the technology. One use of GPS is to plot the strings of crab pots. Using the GPS to know exactly where the pots are in the massive ocean allows captains to quickly navigate to and recover the pots when they are full of crab (RMT, 2009). Before GPS knowing where you were was not so simple. It required consulting multiple maps and using compasses and clocks. Once they were in the general area that would need search the often-rough surface of the ocean with spotlights. Now the location of the pots appears on a monitor in the bridge.

Today GPS is not only used by all crab fisherman, but also by millions of people in their everyday lives. GPS was invented by the US government for military purposes but has been made public for all to use (Rice, 2014). In this age of smartphones where 81% of Americans own one, access to GPS technologies is not exclusive (“Mobile Fact Sheet”, 2019). GPS helps people every day and navigation would not be the same without it. That being said, GPS has been used unethically by certain people and companies recently. Now that people carry GPS’s inside their pockets, the data they create has become an asset. Some apps track their users unknowingly and sell their data to other companies. This can be used to create targeted advertising. People’s concerns over the lack of privacy that comes with GPS are legitimate. It has been found that on Facebook “there is no combination of settings that users can enable to prevent their location data from being used by advertisers to target them” (Hern, 2018). This behavior by companies such as Facebook is unethical because they are selling people’s personal information without most of them knowing about it. The European Union has enacted regulations that hold companies responsible for making sure people are aware of how their data is being used. We should not be scared to use GPS or other technologies, but we must be aware of potential dangers.
GPS is amazing technology and it is difficult to image our current world operating without it. It helps people in all corners of the globe do everything from catch crab in Alaska to ride a Lime scooter to class at Indiana University.

Works Cited


