Aldi Go Cruise 4300 Hack

By sparky | March 21, 2010

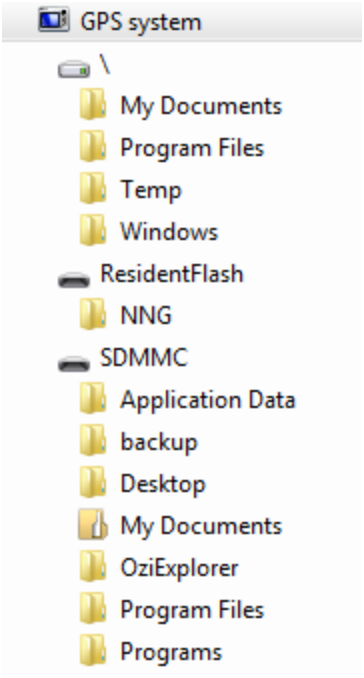
Ozi Explorer is a handy little utility which allows 4WD enthusiasts to load maps onto a GPS device, and to track their locations on various 4WD tracks.

One catch is the need to have a Windows OS enabled device.
The creators have nicely created a couple of different versions – ranging from PDA / phones with Windows Mobile, as well as the ability to have it on any GPS device with a Windows CE Core.

Having purchased a Windows CE based GPS unit from Aldi, I found a few guides which would allow me to modify it so as to bypass the default 'interface' and to interact with the core OS.
Here's a concise guide how to do it – and should only take you about 20 minutes.
Credit: I discovered the specific chipset used on the device from here.
There was another guide dealing with a similar device that outlines how to do this 'hack' here.
Warning: I provide this guide 'as is' with no warranties or guarantees. This worked for me – but there can be things that change in models, or other glitches that can happen along the way. If you happen to kill your device in the process, that is your fault – and have only yourself to blame.

You'll need:

- 1x Aldi GPS (Go Cruise 4300)
- 1x MicroSD Card (1 GB would suffice, I used a 4 GB Micro SDHC)
- Computer with Active Sync (XP or older) / Mobile Device Centre (Vista / Windows 7)
- CE Reg Editor [Free Download]
- Ozi Explorer for PND/PDA – ARM Chipset

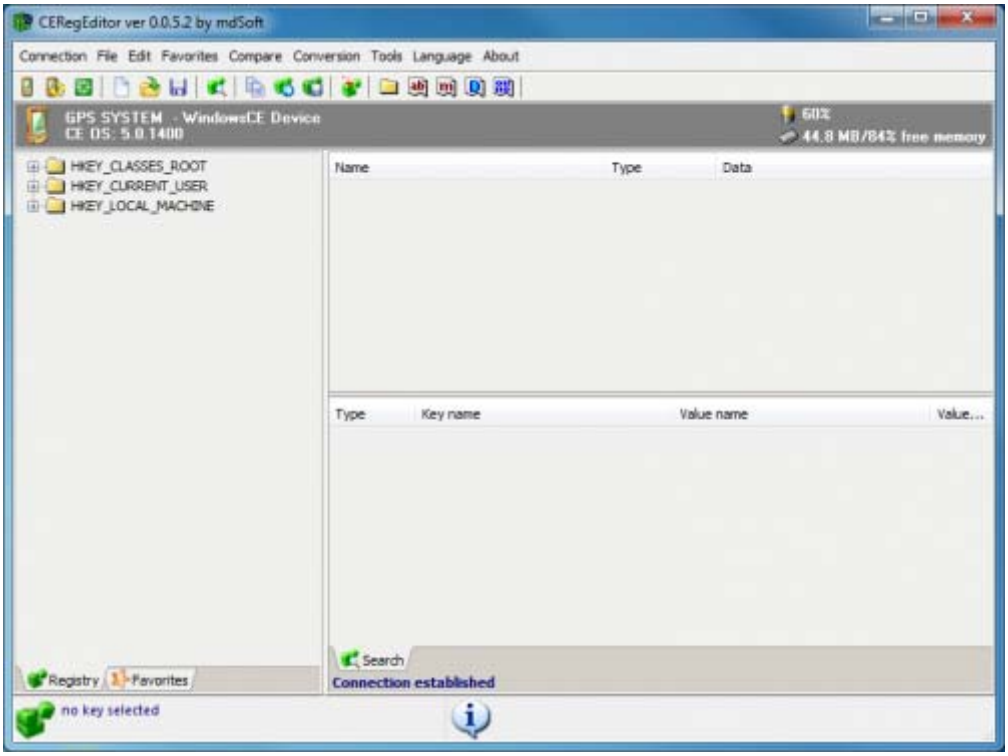


Step One
Having installed ActiveSync / Mobile Device Center, connect the PDA/GPS to the computer
Next, browse to the files / folders on it.

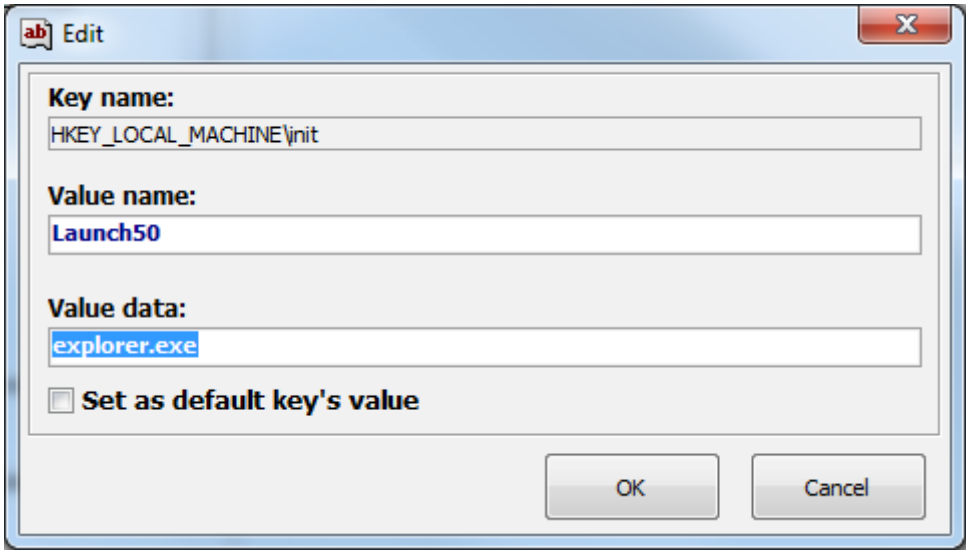
The manual actually tells you to backup the GPS software (Found under *ResidentFlash\NNG*). Do this if you want, but it's not necessary for this hack.

Step Two
Fire up CE Reg Editor. Connect to your device, and you should be able to see the registry of it, just like you would on your own PC.

Note: *For Windows 7, I had to put it into 'compatability mode: XP SP 3', and "Run as Administrator".*



Expand the HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE folder. You'll have to do a few modifications.
Note: The guide tells us to remap the My Documents, Application Data, Desktop & Programs. I'm fairly confident this isn't important – but remap to the SD card if you'd like (means you have more space to work with).
The real key is the first change. IF you're going to change the others as well, might as well do it all now.
To Change the value of the registry key, simply select the key on the right hand panel (eg. Launch50), and then change the text in the "Value name" field:



List of values to change:

1- HKEY_Local_Machine\init\Launch50
Old value: launch.exe
New value: explorer.exe

2- HKey_Local_Machine\System\Explorer\ShellFolders\Desktop
Old value: \Windows\Desktop
New value: \SDMMC\Desktop

3- Hkey_Local_Machine\System\Explorer\Shell Folders\Programs
Old value: \windows\programs
New value: \SDMMC\Programs

4- Hkey_Local_Machine\System\Explorer\Shell\My Documents
Old value: \My Documents
New value: \SDMMC\My Documents

5- Hkey_Local_Machine\System\Explorer\Shell\Application Data
Old value: \Application Data
New value: \SDMMC\Application Data
Note: There doesn't seem to be an "Application Data" folder created in the \ root directory (where as there is the "My Documents" / "Desktop" / Programs"). I created one on the SDMMC just for good measure (in case "Application Data" is a hidden directory).

Once you've modified the registry, copy the folders from where they were originally (\ root directory) to your SD Card.

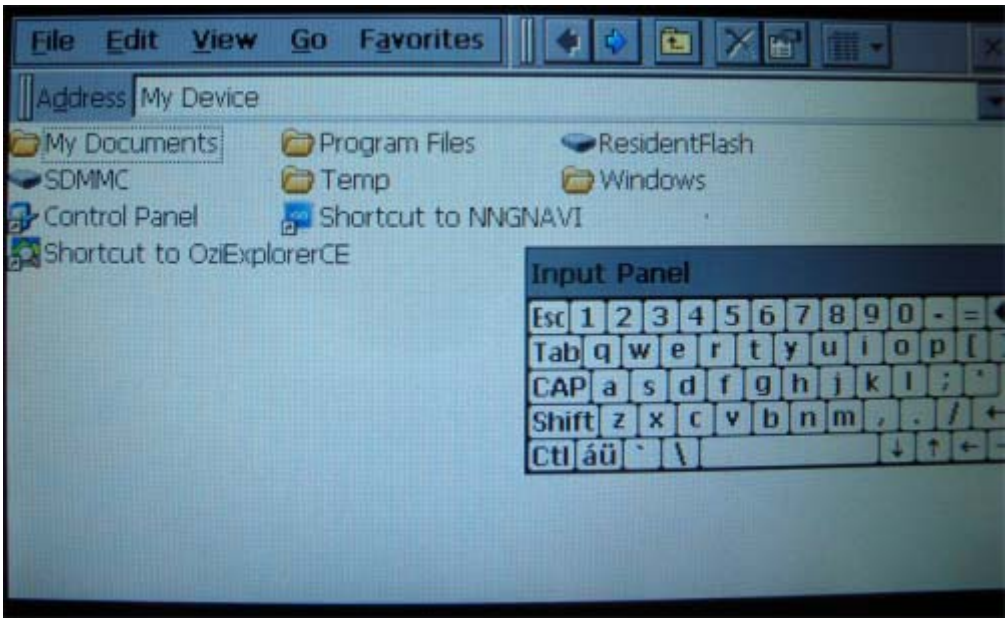
At this point, we've updated the registry, and copied over the the Ozi Explorer program. Next, restart the system. You can either goto "Tools | Reset Device" within CeReg Editor, or you can just turn the device off and on again.

If all has gone well, you'll be greeted with the warm, familiar Windows Explorer Interface:

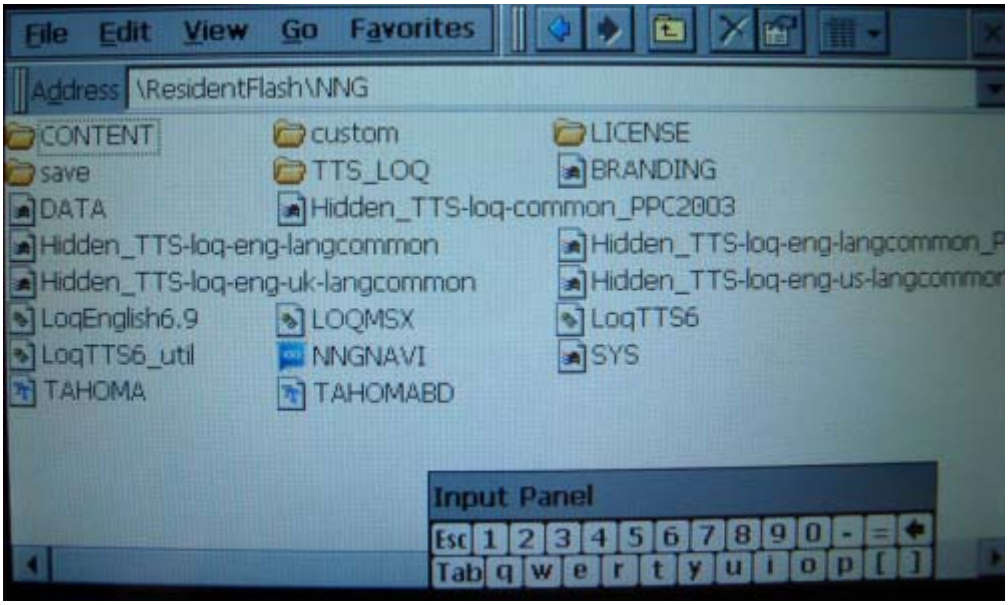
From now on, every time you start up the device, it'll boot into Windows CE.
This only presents a small problem with accessing the navigation programs: So, we'll create some shortcuts to these programs on the desktop.
Remembering, we have no mouse or keyboard, so we have to improvise with a touch screen. There's an 'onscreen keyboard' we will be using – accessed via the little keyboard icon in the bottom right of the screen.

On the top left corner is an icon called "My Device" – this is basically the equivalent of "My Computer", the file explorer for Windows.

Double tapping that opens up the main screen:



Browse to the ResidentFlash drive – which is the system reserved partition for the GPS software.
Open NNG, and you'll see the files pertaining to the GPS software:



Select NNGNAVI (with the blue 'iGo' icon).
Go to EDIT – COPY. Then EDIT – PASTE AS SHORTCUT.
Select the "Shortcut to NNGNAVI" file and go EDIT – CUT.
Close that Window, and when on the desktop, go to the onscreen keyboard, tapping first CTL and then V (Ctrl-V, universal shortcut for 'paste'):

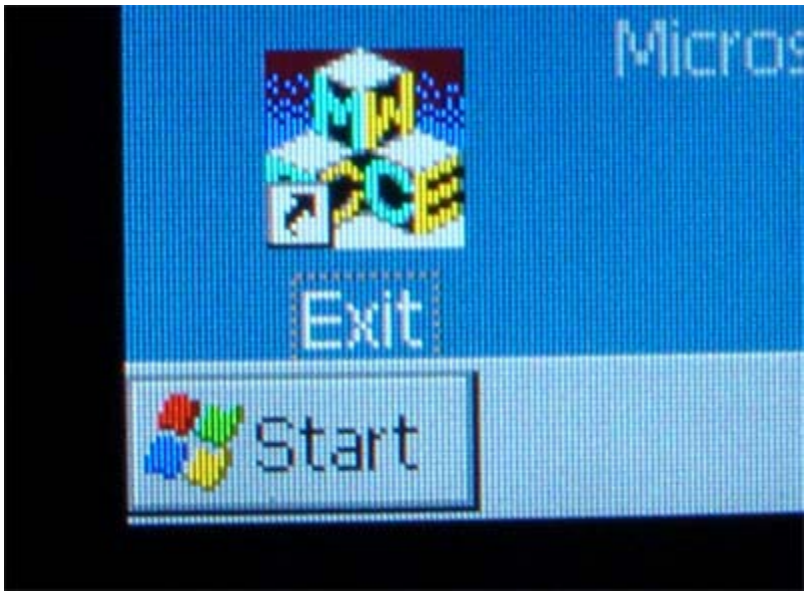
Similarly for Ozi Explorer; Go to My Device, Browse to the SDMMC drive.

Open up the ‘Ozi Explorer’ directory you created, and copied the files into. Select “OziExplorerCE”, EDIT – COPY, EDIT – PASTE AS SHORTCUT.
Select “Shortcut to OziExplorerCE” and EDIT – CUT; Go to the desktop, and paste (CTL then V).

You can do this with any program that you install onto the SDMMC card.

Note on installation of files
This particular Windows CE installation wipes any changes you make to the system – ignoring shortcuts on the desktop (remember how we moved the links to the desktop, etc. at the very beginning to the SD card? That's so that the system wouldn't wipe our hard work every time we shut the system down). This is because Windows CE is the same OS used on 'Kiosk' Terminal machines: Any changes attempted to be made to the system will be wiped / undone as soon as the system reboots (all the core OS files are stored on a ROM – Read Only Memory). Unless you're logged in as 'administrator mode' which normally requiring a combination of key strokes to be pressed on boot – you can't modify the core system settings or save it back to the ROM.
So make sure you install additional software to your SD card.

When you press the power button, the system will only go into hibernation mode; luckily, the system designers added a shutdown command on the desktop:



Double tape the icon marked "EXIT" and you'll get a prompt saying "Shutdown?" with a big YES and NO to choose from.

There you have it – a more functional GPS unit, for only AU$129. 🙂