

## Pros and Cons of Auto Navigation Systems and GPS Devices

Auto navigation systems and GPS devices are everywhere you turn in this day and age. You can find them in your car, boat, plane, even in your purse (if you have a PDA or cell phone with GPS capabilities combined with the right software and/or subscriptions). If that isn't enough for you, you also have the option and capability of turning your laptop computer into a GPS device if that is your desire. The thing that most people forget to check out or ask about when looking at all the nifty features of unit A over unit B is how easy is the unit you are considering to use?

Handheld GPS and auto navigation systems offer sensible solutions to common travel related problems. They will not have all the answers all the time but are a great help most of the time. There are many styles and types of GPS and auto navigation systems that are available in today's market. Some people may not fully understand all of the neat tricks you can do with your GPS system. Here are a few things you may not have realized you can do with your GPS device.

- 1) You can always find the spot where you parked your car by marking it. Talk about a treasure hunt where "X" marks the spot!
- 2) You can track your route while hiking, biking, or horseback riding so that you can retrace your steps in order to find your way back where you started.
- 3) Some GPS devices can even allow you to 'go it alone' by offering the option of a digital compass rather than telling you step by step where to go (if this interests you, check the package details to see if this is available on the unit you are considering).

Keep in mind however that GPS and auto navigation systems aren't fail safe. There are a few problems that the brochures, boxes, and salesmen might neglect to mention.

- 1) You still need to carry around an Atlas or road maps for backups as there are occasions when the data for GPS units may not be current or accurate. Remember that roads are built, close, and in need of repair and maintenance all the time. It's nearly impossible to have one that is always correct up the minute.
- 2) These devices do not typically work well inside buildings or under dense forest cover.
- 3) Batteries, batteries, batteries. These are worse than digital cameras when it comes to burning through batteries. This is one reason that people tend to leave them charging at all times if you're leaving your car with your unit be sure you have extra batteries for backup as it is quite likely that you will need them at

the worst possible moment.

4) GPS units do not recognize the existence of mountains, rivers, and other obstructions in your path so the directions and coordinates they give can occasionally be misleading.

There are many pros and cons when it comes to not only auto navigation devices but also for handheld GPS devices as well. Be sure that you try out the model you are considering before you buy it if at all possible. This will make your decision much easier and allow you to see whether or not you will be able to easily use and understand the auto navigation system you choose.

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