

Re: Help me pick which is best

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- *From:* Jack Erbes <jackerbes@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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merlin wrote:

Thanks for your replies, I have been reading a lot. From what I have read people's complaints have been the memory size. Ideally I would like to have the ability do a cross country road trip without a reload. That's why the expandable memory seemed so attractive but then the battery is rechargeable, which I guess may not be a huge problem, but who knows. I am warming to the 76cs, seems like a nice unit.

But I still wonder, anyone have extensive experience with the magellan explorist 500

I'm looking at this from the intended uses in your original post. I think a waterproof handheld like the 76CS is a good choice but one that can access external memory may be a better choice.

The 76CS has a generous amount of internal memory at 115mb but it does not have any external memory (a SD card slot for example). If you wanted to change from street and highway mapping to topo mapping on the fly, you might need to have access to a computer to upload the new mapping.

I have two Magellan Meridians (a Color and a Marine). I don't have any experience with the 76CS or Explorist 500 but the latter is advertised as having "unlimited" external storage by SD cards. I don't care for the Explorist 500 having a built in Li-Ion battery pack. I would prefer a model using AA batteries (like the 76CS and Meridians) for reliable and sustained use away from power sources.

My Magellan Meridian Color only has 16mb of internal memory but can access another 1GB (and maybe even 2GB or 4GB?) of external mapping on SD cards. It also has a slightly larger display than the Explorist 500 and uses AA batteries instead of a built in Li-Ion battery.

For the Meridian (and the Explorist 500 I think) it takes about 1.2GB to

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store road maps of the entire U.S. and 1.5GB to store the topo maps for every state. With three 1 Gb cards, I could travel with both street/highway (MapSend DirectRoute NA) and topo mapping (MapSend Topo 3D) for the entire U.S. in hand.

I would have to make the regional maps as files on a PC and store them on the SD cards. In use I would have to change from one regional map to the next as I traveled, it takes about 15 regional map files to cover the entire U.S. with DirectRoute or Topo 3D.

The process of making the regional map files is a little bit technical or arcane because, while Magellan says that map files can only be 16mb, there many, many, Meridian users that are making and using 64mb map files. It requires is a simple editing change to an win.ini file and seems to work faultlessly.

An example of using a handheld like the Meridian for the purposes you mentioned would be if you drove to a region or place using it for street level navigation, then changed to topo mapping to get to a kayaking location on unpaved roads and trails. Once on the water, depending on the size of the lake or river, and the detail and complexity of the waterways, you can enter waypoints and create tracks to find your way around and back to the launch point if desired.

There is not a lot of waterway detail on topo maps but, to me, just knowing where I was on the otherwise undetailed blue area of a lake and having a track to follow would be helpful and reassuring.

To get back to one of the earlier uses, I find the street/highway detail on the Meridians, with the extra detail that comes with DirectRoute NA, to be useful. I can locate down to street addresses anywhere in the U.S. And with DirectRoute I also have a autorouting capability via road. But, if you have ever used dedicated automotive nav units (Garmin Street Pilot, Magellan RoadMate, etc.), the autorouting and road navigation capabilities of the Meridian pales a little (maybe a lot?) in comparison. Not sure if that applies to the similarly priced and sized Garmin 60 or 76 series products, but I suspect that it does.

I have used the Meridian for road navigation, it works okay, but it would not be my first choice for making a longer road trips. It is very good at providing to and from the water, on the water, and topo navigation with a single held held, waterproof, easily powered, unit.

Jack

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