

## Re: What's important to you?

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- *From:* Jack Erbes <[jackerbes@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:jackerbes@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
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Meanie wrote:

I'm still in the hunt for a GPS unit to use in my car, on my motorcycle, the bicycle and wherever else I can. I am used to using my laptop in my car with MS Streets and Trips and was satisfied with the limited features since I mostly cared just to see where I am going and other potential routes. But this doesn't mean I wouldn't use other features if they present themselves on other systems. Therefore, I wonder what I may be missing with other units. Would anyone be willing to share what useful features are important to you and why? What unit are you using which contains the feature(s) and a suggestion for a handheld unit with a nice screen size which is capable of loading the entire US and more is possible.

If you're riding a more European style bike with a tank bag or tank mounted map case, then a PDA with an external GPS receiver and running a nav software like Tom Tom 5 Navigator might work for you. The PDA and GPS receiver would be powered off of the bike's 12V system (using 2A or so at max draw). I'm using a system like that now in a map case on my Buell M2 (more sport bike than cruiser). On these 2 or 3 1Gb SD cards will typically store the mapping data for North American or the U.S.

If you're on a "couch" or a big road cruiser then the handle bar/dash mounted standalone navigation units might make more sense. A well proven product there is the Garmin 2610 StreetPilot. Again it will draw its power from the bike's 12V system. As you look at these types of systems, you want to avoid units with hard drives or microdrives (the vibration can kill those drives). Again you want a model that will store the map data on CF or SD cards and you'll need about the same number as mentioned above.

There are some good prices now on the recently discontinued Garmin 2610 on closeouts and refurbishments (which should come with a full, as new, 3 year warranty). And that will come with all the mapping needed, you may have to buy some extra flash memory cards for storage and to travel with.

And there are many different and newer models. One model that is

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supposed to be optimized for motorcycles is the Tom Tom Rider. And more bells and whistles come with some of the newer ones, built in XM radios, audio outputs for voice prompts, etc.

The basic features I would want are:

1 – Can do all my pre trip planning off the bike. That could be using a PC application or by taking the GPS unit in the house and doing it there. Full function trip planning may need to be done with the GPS receiver connected and on in some cases.

2 – All the basic features on saving and editing routes, saving and editing places (called POI, favorites, destinations, etc.) so they can be called up as destinations and/or via points on a route.

3 – All the basic route type choices (fastest, shortest, limited speed, walking, bicycle, etc.). As an absolute minimum you want fastest and shortest.

4 – Lighting. Must be bright enough to be seen in full daylight, must also be able to dim down or change color schemes so that it can be on at night without killing your night vision.

5 – Automatic routing and rerouting. You tell it point A and point B and it gives you a route. If you get off the route it recalculates a new route from wherever you are that gets you to the same place.

6 – A Must Have!! – It must have multiple destination routing. That is the only thing that will allow you to add any number points (may be called waypoints, vias, stops, etc.) to the automatically generated A to B route to force it to give you a new route that goes the way you want to go. If you buy one without the a multiple destination capability, turn off your brain and follow the instructions. You are no longer in charge of your journey.

Some of the typical handheld, ruggedized, waterproof GPS receivers can give you autorouting on street level maps (usually requires an accessory mapping software package). The routing capabilities on these are adequate but you will give up some of the bells and whistles and features mentioned above. You will gain a very handy, pocketable, easily powered (AA batteries generally) that is better than no GPS at all. Some examples are the Garmin 60 and 76 in the new "x" series models and the Magellan Meridian and eXplorist series. Buy carefully, make sure it has the accessory mapping you want and that the mapping can be stored and carried with you in some form. When using these, plan on their requiring more attention in use and more frequent pull overs and stops for doing that. You generally need fuel every 2–3 hours so it is not a major problem for the most part.

This scratches the surface basically, you really need to spend some time around them to figure out if they will do what you want or need to do.

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Don't be surprised if any one of them does not meet all your wants and needs. Be skeptical of anyone that tells you the one they have is the perfect one for you.

Jack

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