

# Re: Google Earth vs Garmin 2610

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- *From:* "David Lee" <[davidlee\\_malvern@xx](mailto:davidlee_malvern@xx)>
  - *Date:* Wed, 18 Oct 2006 12:14:36 -0000
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Seagull wrote...

Maybe it's beyond you to understand that there are some people that wish to find their way to places ON ROADS that are not waypointed on the rather dubious maps included with these devices and are nowhere near a convenient MacDonalds to give you something to aim for.

In which case, a street navigator like the 2610 is not for you. Instead of expecting every product to mold to your ideal, why not evaluate the products that are actually designed to meet your requirements? You're applying an apple test to an orange.

Why you consider that the expectation of the most basic of all GPS receiver functionality that is included in even the most primitive of Garmin handhelds to be an unreasonable ideal is unfathomable – It's a feature that Garmin had to REMOVE from the specifications when upgrading from their original rock-bottom models to produce sophisticated in-car navigation solutions! Why on earth do you consider that the identification of a destination from the national maps used by even the most technically inexperienced of British public to be too specialised to include in a "Street Navigator"? This is a feature so trivial in implementation and fundamental to navigation that it should be assumed that only an idiot would design a navigational GPS receiver without it! But then we are talking about Garmin designers here of course!

Have you actually tried to evaluate the detailed capabilities of a Garmin product based on the available information? It's almost impossible. For example the 2720 does apparently allow you to enter geodesic coordinates – although only WGS84 Lat/Lon – but it's unlikely that you would realise this from the manual unless you were very lucky, as it's only mentioned in a side-box to a graphic in a very cryptic sentence. The only reason that I realised that the functionality existed was by reading the entire update history on the firmware download page, where it said for ver 2.30: "Lat, Lon position entry using the product's keyboard didn't work correctly". Knowing that the functionality existed, I was eventually able to identify a cryptic line in the manual but many important features are added to Garmin products

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in firmware upgrades that never make it into a manual!

And, yes, the 2610 can tell you where you are. Just in the WGS84 datum.

And what bloody use is that I ask you? Unless of course Lat/Lon is the most common US map coordinate format, in which case this would be a simple case of Garmin putting up two fingers to the rest of the world – and not for the first time.

Saying it's "rubbish" just because it doesn't meet your narrow definition is hardly a fair assessment. Or maybe it's beyond /your/ ability to understand that the vast majority of users who buy a StreetPilot series GPS just want to navigate on roads from A to B using the provided map data, and it's quite good at that. For this usage model, customizing the map datum is a non-sequitor.

It's your definition of a unit with severely restricted input functionality that is seriously narrow. I would rather suggest that the vast majority of your hypothetical users only know how to navigate in this manner because that's what the user guide has told them – is that really a good reason to dumb the product down in this way. Anyway your comment is wrong – the vast majority of users want to be able to navigate between A and B using any information that has been provided for the purpose – this can be address, postcode or map reference. For rural sites it's only the map reference that can be guaranteed to be of any use and this is frequently supplied for all manner of reasons. For example, one of the most popular family weekend pastimes in Britain is visiting country houses, castles, parks etc and both the National Trust and English Heritage Visitor's Handbooks provide the Ordnance Survey Grid Reference of every single attraction. The same is true of almost all nature reserves, bird sanctuaries etc etc etc. You may be happy with a unit that is only designed to work properly in towns and cities but I would want something very much less restricted in its capabilities. I certainly don't want to navigate to the nearest town using a Garmin Automotive Receiver and then have to negotiate the last few miles with the help of my yellow etrex!

However Garmin now seem to have realised that they were wrong, since in later Street Navigation receivers (eg 2820) they have re-introduced the functionality of selection of coordinate system and datum and the ability to enter a destination in this format. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to determine which other models may or may not contain this functionality – short of downloading all the user manuals and update histories and studying them in very fine detail.

David

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