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Full speech control for new n_uvi 860 from Garmin

Satnav company claiming world first

by Katie Scott published on 23 July 2008

Garmin has unveiled the n_uvi 860, which it claims is the first portable navigation device with full menu speech recognition.

Clive Taylor, Garmin's director of product explains: "Garmin's n_uvi 860 uses full menu speech control to make driving safer and easier".

"It's now possible to keep both hands on the wheel and tell the n_uvi 860 what to do and where to go. Simple shortcut phrases like 'go home' will automatically take you straight to the map screen and route you to your home in a matter of seconds."

To get the speech recognition tool working, users just have to mount a push-to-talk wireless remote to their steering wheel, which is used to activate voice commands.

Garmin has made the points of interest searches easier - so if you are driving in an unfamiliar area and hungry for some spaghetti, you can say, "find nearest Italian restaurant" and you're offered a menu of nearby Italian restaurants.

And the 860 also features Garmin's "Where am I?" tool to help if you breakdown so the device will display its exact latitude and longitude coordinates, the nearest address and intersection, and the closest hospitals, police stations, fuel and contact details of the breakdown recovery services.

Also worth a mention is the n_uvi 860's traffic receiver and a new custom application allows a user to select areas and individual sections of roads to avoid, even to the point of storing avoidance routes such school runs during term times and temporary roadworks on minor roads.



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Along with the traffic avoidance, the n,vi 860 includes Cyclops safety camera alerts covering mobile and fixed camera locations with on a 30-day trial period.

The n,vi 860 has Bluetooth wireless technology for handsfree calling when paired with compatible phones.

It also has a built-in FM transmitter, allowing users to wirelessly transmit turn-by-turn directions and street names, MP3s and audio books through their vehicle's stereo.

It has a 4.3-inch colour touchscreen display (480 x 272 pixels), and is loaded with European maps.

Users can save 10 routes, specify via points and preview simulated turns, and the unit automatically sorts multiple destinations to provide an efficient route for errands, deliveries or sales calls.

It also displays speed limits for motorways and autobahns, and a trip log provides an electronic bread crumb trail of up to 10,000 points, which can be downloaded and viewed on Google Earth.

The n,vi 860 also includes many entertainment and travel tools including a music player with 40 free downloadable tracks from emusic.com, audio book player (subscription to Audible.com required), alarm clock, picture viewer, currency converters and games pre-loaded.

The N,vi 860T is priced £449.99.