

Mio Digiwalker 269 plus

by Stephen Patrick published on 3 November 2005

If there is one technology that is driving handset sales it is GPS (Global Positioning Systems). While an in-car solution will cost upwards of £2000 as part of a new car installation, the DIY route taken by the DigiWalker and its ilk comes in at a fraction of the cost. Looking more like a Portable Media Player - which is largely due to the landscape styling of the 3.5-inch screen - than a conventional GPS receiver, it's an attractive and easy to use device. The screen surrounded by a navigation wheel and buttons for Home, Navigation, as well as zoom in and out on the right. The screen is touch sensitive, which makes getting around the sub-menus a good deal quicker but for all basic GPS functions, the buttons work surprisingly well. Setting up the GPS is as easy as logging in your location, even drilling down to street name and house number, just so it's sure to get you home in one piece after a good night out. Once this has been input, the device needs to set-up the connection with at least four satellites, so it can track. This usually takes around 20 minutes, so don't go trying to set the Mio up 10 minutes before you need to get going. That said, you only have to do this the first time, so it's no hardship. You'll find everything you need in the box to get the unit up and running, both for walking about with and in the car. So, you'll find a car charger as well as AC adapter, a carry case along with car mount and holder and even a USB cable for linking up with your laptop should you need to synchronise your contacts. Maps are supplied by NavTeq, so you can view them in drop down or 3D mode and the voice that gives you direction isn't too bad. Rather than taking the proprietary OS route, Mio has played safe and used Win CE .NET 4.2 as the back-end, so if you've ever used a Pocket PC you'll quickly get to grips with how it works. One neat feature of being Microsoft based is the software works with Outlook, allowing you to drag contacts details, including their address, onto the handheld. So in a matter of three-clicks you can map out your route to a client or new contact.



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This method is also great when you first get going with the device, as you can simply drop all your contacts into the Contacts Manager. However, the main second feature of the 269 Plus is the MP3 functionality. Having your music, well 500MB of memory that has been set aside for MP3 use, unless you use the SD slot, is a nice touch. Such a pity then you have to choose between music or mapping, as you can't run both at the same time.

VERDICT

When it comes to getting the mapping side sorted, there is little to fault here, as it's quick, reliable and most important of all, accurate. However, the 269 Plus promises so much but doesn't quite live up to expectations.

At a glance

What is it?

GPS/MP3/contacts manager

Good

Quick, accurate

Bad

Separate MP3 and GPS access

Verdict

Promising to deliver so much, the 269 Plus manages to be jack-of-all-trades but master of none

Price £375

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10