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Sony NV-U92T GPS receiver - FIRST LOOK

Can Sony's latest GPS offering topple TomTom and Navman?

by Stuart Miles published on 28 March 2007

Sony has announced a new satnav, unit at its Media Experience Event in Rhodes, Greece. We managed to get our hands on the new player, so should TomTom be worried?

Best described as the iPhone for the GPS world, the new NV-U92T is a basically a large widescreen 16:9 4.8-inch LCD screen. There are no buttons on the GPS receiver apart from one that releases the clip for the docking cradle and everything is controlled via on-screen movements and touches.

That screen is big, bigger by half an inch on TomTom's Go 910 model and it was clear talking to the Sony spokesperson that ran us through the demo that this third generation player is there attempt at clawing back some of the 60% market share TomTom has carved for itself.

The software, which now features full UK postcode support is very simple to use, the buttons, thanks to the large screen, are large, and we had no problems selecting the right boxes to get an address in or using the menu system. The unit also offers gesture control that allows you to just sketch a simple line or shape on screen with a fingertip and the NV-U92T will guide you safely and surely to frequent destinations - like "home" or the "nearest filling station".

That menu system has been kept to a minimum. You might think with Sony being the multi-media giant that it is there would be an MP3 player, picture view, movie watcher, mobile phone, digital camera and games machine built-in for good measure but you would be wrong. The NV-U92T has none of these. "We wanted to stay focused on the task at hand", we were told. "Our research suggests people want a satnav to tell them how to



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get somewhere not play their favourite movies."

In fact the only non-core product inclusion has been Bluetooth for handsfree calling.

Although we weren't able to test the model in action on the road - there is no mapping data for Rhodes, the unit seemed nippy in responding to our commands and address lookups.

As with other models, there are plenty of POI preloaded and the model also comes with the whole of Europe on its 2GB of Flash memory built-in. Failing that, users will also be able to update POI and maps via the Memory Stick slot at the bottom of the unit.

As you would expect from a top of the line machine, The NV-U92T automatically monitors real-time broadcasts of Traffic Message Channel (TMC) and will update your route accordingly if you so wish.

Finally, and again we were able to verify with a test, Sony has included something it is calling Position Plus. Through a built-in sensor rather than software emulation, the technology promises to ensure accurate, uninterrupted routing even when GPS signals are temporarily compromised, like when you go through a long tunnel.

VERDICT

With an estimated street price of around £350 and a really easy to use interface that will also take gestures as commands in navigating you to the right place the new Sony offering is certainly going to give the top of the range TomTom a run for its money. The bigger screen and quick processor are only likely to help even more.

Expected out in June in the UK, this is definitely one to watch.

At a glance

What is it?

GPS receiver from Sony

Good

That screen, easy to use software, full postcode support

Bad

Just satnav rather than all singing all dancing media hub

Verdict

Expected out in June in the UK, this is definitely one to watch

Price £350

Your score

?/10