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Garmin nuvi 710 GPS receiver

Can Garmin's top of the range series compete against Navman and TomTom?

by Stuart Miles published on 31 December 2007

Garmin's latest satnav range offers a bigger screen, more functionality and a host of new features, but will it help you find your way to your chosen destination? We hit the road to find out.

The Garmin nuvi 710 is the bottom of the four new 700 series models and therefore doesn't come with the same functionality as the other models, however studying the spec sheets of the range, don't think that it means the nuvi 710 isn't work the look. There isn't much missing.

Before we look at won't you don't get, what do you get? Well you get a 4.3-inch screen sitting in a compact 4.8in (W) x 3.0in (H) x 0.8in (D) device. This size means it's easy to see the mapping and auxiliary information whilst still being able to put it in a bag or coat when you leave the car. Weighing 176g it's light too.

Lacking buttons apart from an on/off button, everything is controlled via the WQVGA colour TFT screen. With a resolution of 480 x 272 pixels it's clear, crisp and easy to read and shouldn't give you any problems in all driving conditions. Tested in winter, we haven't been able to test how it fares against bright summer sunlight.

But the nuvi 710 isn't just about that big screen. Other features include Bluetooth connectivity that allow you to connect your mobile phone to the device for handsfree calling while you drive and an FM transmitter.

The latter means that you can use the device's built-in MP3 player to transmit songs to your car stereo. Songs can be stored on a removable SD card rather than the unit's internal memory. You can also use this feature to transmit all audio, so instructions as well.



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Using the FM transmitter is easy and with a built-in auto-tune function you shouldn't have any problems setting up the system as long as you don't live in an area where there are lots of radio stations using up the frequency.

As you might expect with a top of the range GPS receiver, the nuvi 710 also includes an FM TMC traffic function allowing you to avoid trouble spots before you are stuck in them. Unlike other satnav makers like Sony, Navman or TomTom, with this model it means you've got to drape your nice looking car in cables and the power cable that connects to the docking station is large, long and cumbersome. The FM TMC traffic cable is even longer and comes complete with suckers. It's not pretty and we don't like it.

Using the traffic feature is simple and requires no additional effort on your behalf. Basically if the data received suggests you will be hitting traffic on your route, an icon appears telling you how much time Garmin anticipates it adding to your overall journey and then changes the estimated time of arrival.

If you see that the minute number in the icon is too excessive you can opt to avoid the jam. However it doesn't tell you whether or not the new route is longer before recalculating. Something that would have been nice so you can see if you will actually save time.

As for the maps, with the nuvi 710 you'll get UK and Ireland compared to UK and Europe, or UK, Europe and the US with the other models in the range.

The mapping system is very easy to use, with information presented in a clear fashion and we had no problems following the instructions to our test destinations. The software includes speed camera locations, the usual array of points of interest.

We especially like the simple opening screen that

At a glance

What is it?

GPS receiver

Good

FM transmitter, TMC traffic, Bluetooth, 4.3-inch screen

Bad

FM TMC traffic cable annoying

Verdict

Overall this is a good unit with clear mapping and a user interface, however for the price you will be able to get all the above cheaper from other makers

Price £279.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

...cont.

gives you just two options: View map or Where to?

So what don't you get compared to the other models in the range? Not much, and certainly nothing to worry about too much. The biggest difference we can see from the individual spec sheets is the loss of the unit speaking street names (e.g., "Turn right ON ELM STREET in 500 ft.") to you.

VERDICT

The Garmin nuvi 710 is a good satnav solution that offers plenty to its users. The move to a more converging device will appeal to a lot of drivers and the inclusion of Bluetooth and an FM transmitter will mean two less gadgets cluttering up your dashboard.

However the annoying power cable complete with the FM TMC traffic solution will annoy, just as the above two inclusions please.

Overall this is a good unit with clear mapping and a user interface, however for the price you will be able to get all the above cheaper from other makers. It will come down to personal preference.