

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2934/Pure-digital-highway-dab-radio>

Pure Highway in-car DAB digital radio with FM transmitter

Do you need DAB in the car?

by Stuart Miles published on 18 February 2008

If you are a fan of DAB radio, then chances are, every time you get in the car you are annoyed by the fact that you can't listen to your favourite DAB digital radio station.

Pure thinks it has the answer with the Highway, an in-car DAB digital radio with FM transmitter, but has it? We hit the road to find out.

The Highway is basically a glorified digital radio with the ability to transmit to your radio. The largish box sits on a cradle similar to satnav devices and plugs into your cigarette lighter for power.

Completing the "I want to cover my dashboard in wires" effect, you'll also get an aerial that you can stick to your widescreen with a bag of clips with which you can attempt to make it tidy.

With DAB not completely ubiquitous around the UK it is a necessary evil and one that is frustrating as its not really a pretty option. It would have been nice to have the aerial built into the cradle, but presume it wouldn't have been powerful enough to guarantee a decent signal 95% of the time.

Not as well built as traditional DAB radios from Pure the unit offers a Tune dial to quickly tune into your desired station, 20 DAB preset buttons, four of which have been preset to Virgin, the now defunct Planet Rock, Talk Sport and the Jazz. Luckily you can change these and peel off the logo'ed sticker without damaging or marking the radio. Phew.

Other controls include a menu button and the ability to pause and rewind live radio, something that stands it out from your regular car radio.



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Realising that you might want to FM transmit other sources the Highway also features a line-in port so you can connect other devices like a MP3 player to the unit, while for those not looking to share the tunes there is a headphone socket as well.

There are two power options, one the cigarette lighter approach and the second two regular AA batteries meaning you can take it away from the car giving you up to 6 hours of listening on foot. However unlike a standard satnav device the Highway doesn't feature a internal built-in battery.

Transmitting an FM frequency is done as standard and after a quick 30 seconds to scan for available radio stations it will tell you what FM frequency to tune your car radio into.

The Tuner worked well although did struggle in built-up areas to keep hold of a free signal as it fought with lots of other stations.

In-use and the aerial does a good job of keeping the DAB digital signal. If you are listening to a national channel, i.e., Radio 1, you'll have little problem staying tuned-in, although on a journey from Pocket-lint HQ in Ascot to north Yorkshire we did have reception problems from time-to-time as we hit blackspots of zero coverage.

However when we were in coverage the radio performs perfectly offering you all the benefits of DAB digital radio, i.e., crystal clear reception and a range of stations that aren't available on FM.

VERDICT

In principle the Highway is a fantastic product that promises and delivers DAB digital radio to you in your car.

We especially like the Sky+-like features of being able to pause or rewind the radio if you want to listen to something again, or need to pause it to hear someone speak.

At a glance

What is it?

DAB in car radio

Good

Easy to install, ability to pause and rewind radio, 20 presets

Bad

No internal battery, large, lots of wires across your dashboard

Verdict

In principle the Highway is a fantastic product that promises and delivers DAB digital radio to you in your car

Price £69.99

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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However, at the same time we feel that tricks have been missed.

The main reason I want to pause a radio show is because I am getting out of the car for petrol or to pop into a shop quickly. However without that internal battery turning the engine off turns the Highway off. An internal battery could have stopped this from happening.

The other main gripe is that so many of us have satnav devices on our windscreen already that sticking yet another device up there is likely to make your dashboard even more crowded. You'll also have to fight for that cigarette lighter spot as well.

So should you invest?

If you really like DAB radio then it's probably worth a punt, however for us we will wait until these issues have been addressed in version 2.