

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3277/Alpine-eX-10-ipod-controller-review>

Alpine eX-10 iPod controller with Bluetooth

Want to iPod-up your car?

by Paul Lester published on 7 July 2008

Alpine has really jumped on board the iPod and MP3 player bandwagon when it comes to in-car entertainment, and offers a range of head units that'll allow you to connect your player to make your music collection accessible on the move.

The eX-10 is a little different in that it aims to offer access to both your iPod and mobile phone through any existing car stereo using an FM transmitter.

It comes with a terminal designed to be mounted to the dash that offers a 2.2in colour display to help you browse your collection, manage phone calls and adjust settings. This needs to be wired directly to a power hub that plugs into a cigarette lighter charger and in turn connects to your iPod.

There is a remote control supplied that controls the main display to help you browse via artist/album/genre views as seen on your iPod, and you'll find album art displayed here, though no provision for photo or video playback.

Getting everything connected up is pretty easy, but doing it in a tidy way that won't leave wires strewn around the place is not. Though you can experiment with tucking cables behind the dash you'll still need to have the rather bulky hub protruding from your cigarette lighter, which is far from ideal.

In terms of performance we were impressed by the quality of the display and FM transmitter, which is easy to configure and among the best we've heard in terms of clarity. Usability isn't up to scratch though, with menus often sluggish and unresponsive to browse using the supplied remote.

To use the Bluetooth handsfree calling with your



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mobile you'll need to connect yet another lengthy wire to the device from the supplied microphone, which can be fitted to a part of your dashboard using the sticky pads supplied. As is the case with so many of these products call quality wasn't great with a distinct pause making it awkward to hold long conversations.

Elsewhere there are some basic features that offer a bit more control like a graphic equaliser for your tunes and the ability to browse contacts and view caller ID for your phone, but there are far too many basic problems with the device for these to hold much water.

At the end of the day there are far better ways to access your iPod's collection in your car, some of which are provided by Alpine itself, and the problems we had with setup, usability and performance of the eX-10 means that you're better off looking elsewhere.

VERDICT

The main appeal of this device is the fact that you can use it with any car stereo, but you can achieve many of the same advantages by buying a dedicated FM transmitter. The eX-10 is a nice idea but has been quite poorly executed and considering the price, you'd be better off doing this instead and accessing your iPod directly, or buying a head unit that offers similar support.

At a glance

What is it?

In-car iPod control with Bluetooth

Good

Nice display, impressive FM transmitter

Bad

Untidy setup, usability issues, Bluetooth performance not great, expensive for what it is

Verdict

Nice idea in principal, but there are too many issues with setup, usability and performance for the eX-10 to replace a dedicated head unit or other makeshift solutions

Price £149.99

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10