

New moves in satnavs

Our verdict on the latest traffic dodging software plus a round-up of top value satnavs from £127

Most modern satnavs will direct you to your destination with little trouble, which means manufacturers have to work harder to get you to buy their model. Among the ideas they've come up with are systems to help you avoid traffic delays, width restrictions or low bridges.

Avoiding traffic hold-ups

Many modern satnavs offer a traffic avoidance feature designed to help you avoid getting stuck in jams. Usually, they use information gathered at fixed points on the UK's trunk routes to warn you of areas where traffic is building up. Such a feature comes free with some satnavs,

while with others you have to pay a subscription or a fixed fee.

A new system from TomTom uses information from moving vehicles rather than fixed points, with the aim of being more up to date and covering all routes.

The TomTom GO Live system uses (anonymous) information recording the live traffic flow speeds of Vodafone users on the road. This data is sent to Sim cards in satnavs to use in planning routes. There needs to be a sufficient spread of Vodafone users on the road to make the information reliable.

GO Live will cost £7.99 a month, and so it may appeal mainly to high-mileage drivers, wishing to avoid daily jams.

 **ONLINE**
Thinking of buying a satnav? See our how to buy guide

www.which.co.uk/reviews/best-sat-nav

Satnavs with GO Live were launched too late to be fully tested for this article. However, we lent Mike Baldwin, a high-mileage driver and regular satnav user, a TomTom GO 540 Live for a test drive.

Mike does about 40,000 miles a year in his job as a field engineer. He drove about 1,500 miles using the system.

Test drive

He found the system predicted delays where you might expect and sometimes came up with alternative routes.

But on a trip to Manchester, the system reported that there were delays of four to five minutes on the M6 around Birmingham and other hold-ups on the route which amounted to a 14-minute delay overall. But it offered no alternate route and Mike queued in traffic for about 25 minutes.

Mike said that the satnav worked well as a navigation unit and, although it had many features, he particularly liked how quickly it got a signal and the Bluetooth feature.

But he said: 'The traffic service was disappointing and although I only encountered minor delays I don't think it justifies the subscription cost. As it's at the premium end of the market, this service should be included in the purchase price.'

CAN A SATNAV REALLY HELP YOU AVOID LOW BRIDGES?

We test a system that claims to help you avoid low bridges and narrow roads

Newspapers regularly carry tales of van or lorry drivers that find their satnav has directed them down a road that's too narrow, or under a bridge that's too low. The Snooper Sirius Proline with Truckmate aims to help you avoid these, but our first look found that its success varied.

How we test

The idea is that you type key vehicle dimensions and weight into the Snooper. We used typical stats for an articulated lorry, a small truck, a large van and a double-decker bus and got the Snooper to direct us to places where

we knew there were restrictions on the most obvious route.

Low bridges

The Proline mostly avoided taking us under bridges that were too low. It did this either by refusing to calculate a route

(not that helpful) or suggesting another route. Some bridges weren't marked on the satnav mapping, and at other times it needlessly directed our smaller vehicles to avoid bridges they would easily have been able to get under. For one bridge in Scotland, it avoided the chosen bridge, by rerouting us under a lower one.



Width restrictions

We found more examples of width restrictions not shown on the Truckmate's map. It struggled particularly with a large van – directing us via roads too narrow for safe progress. We found major routes seemed reasonably well accounted for, but minor routes were not so well covered, so you would need to check local restrictions before setting out.



Contacts

Becker
0871 871 9747
www.beckerstore.com
Binatone
0845 345 9677
www.binatoneonline.com
Garmin
0808 238 0000
www.garmin.com
Magellan

www.magellangps.com
Navigon
0871 288 0154
www.navigon.com
Snooper
0870 787 0700
www.snooperuk.com
TomTom
0845 161 0009
www.tomtom.com



which?
BEST BUY

75% Garmin Nüvi 860T £350

This is the best currently available satnav that we've tested. It's easy to install and use, and is the easiest to program, as well.

The voice recognition responds well and you can use it for it all programming, meaning you never need to touch the screen.

It accurately tells you the most direct route, literally door to door. It gives estimated delay times and if you make a wrong turn, it quickly and accurately finds a new route. The reasonably large (109mm) widescreen display provides clear

images and should fit in to larger pockets. It displays a split screen when approaching a turn, one half shows a schematic view of the intersection and a distance countdown to the junction, the other half showing the route map. It's cheapest at Currys.

WE LIKE The Panoramio feature shows photos and information about 'favourites' or points of interest.

Available Comet, Currys, Halfords and online
Maps 35 European countries Traffic avoidance feature Free



which?
BEST BUY

73% TomTom GO 930T £305

The GO 930T will relay its voice commands and traffic alerts through the car stereo, so you don't miss important information if you're listening to the radio.

Multiple instructions are delivered well and complicated junctions made easier to navigate by the advanced lane guidance system. If you miss a turn, it quickly gives you a new route, even in built-up areas. It got the speed limit wrong in one or two places, however. You'll be warned of schools, places of worship, and (for

a year after buying the device), speed cameras. You can then buy camera updates for £19.95 a year. There is basic first-aid information and a warning sounds if you leave it plugged into the car. There is a pedestrian mode, but the maps aren't detailed enough for hiking. It's cheapest at Halfords.

WE LIKE It's easy to install and remove from the mount.

Available Argos, Comet, Currys, Halfords, Maps
European and North American maps and you can buy more on SD cards Traffic avoidance feature £23 a year



which?
BEST BUY

72% Garmin Nüvi 205WT £147

This easy-to-read satnav is clear, accurate and easy to use. It recalculates routes quickly and, at your destination, guides you to the right side of the road. It's packed with functions more common on a basic personal digital assistant. It picks up accurate traffic alerts, gives you an estimated length of delay and asks whether an alternate route should be taken. Emergency features include directions to the nearest hospital, petrol station and police station. Audio prompts are clear, but route

indicators are too small for our liking. Multiple instructions are easy to follow. It's easy to fix to the windscreen or dashboard, but attaching the FM aerial is fiddly.

Speed camera information is preinstalled and is free for a year, after which you can buy updates for £29.99 a year. It's cheapest online.

WE LIKE An anti-theft feature disables it until a Pin is entered or it's taken to a preset location.

Available Halfords, John Lewis, online Maps UK and Ireland and you can buy more on SD cards Traffic avoidance feature Free



which?
BEST BUY

72% TomTom GO 530T £194

Easy installation, accurate routes and prompt voice commands (including street names and traffic updates) are among this model's main strengths. It's Bluetooth compatible, has voice recognition technology and an FM transmitter that can broadcast commands through the car's stereo system. The map is clear and uncluttered. You get advanced lane guidance and a menu system that's easy to understand, although lengthy. The locations of speed cameras are preinstalled. For the first 30 days you own the satnav, you can

go online and get free updates. After that, you have to subscribe for £19.95 a year to get them. Traffic updates are reported fully, you get an estimated length of delay and the option to reroute. It's windscreen mountable and has a widescreen display. It's cheapest online.

WE FOUND Emergency features include directions on foot or by car to the nearest hospital and police station.

Available Online Maps UK and Ireland and you can buy more on SD cards Traffic avoidance feature £23 a year



70% Navigon 8110 £300

The Navigon is easy to program and use, and changing route mid-journey is simple. It gives accurate directions and reroutes quickly if you take a wrong turn. However, it's more difficult to install than other Best Buys. A sculpted mounting bracket positions the satnav away from the windscreen, so it doesn't obstruct the driver's view. The large widescreen (123mm) is easy to read, but its size makes it harder to store when not in use. While the schematics used are accurate, some are

smaller than we'd like. There is also an advanced lane warning system that helps make sure you are in the right lane to exit complicated junctions. It comes with UK speed camera data and traffic avoidance and details of Michelin restaurants and hotels. It's cheapest online.

WE FOUND It gives directions on foot or by car to the nearest hospital and police station.

Available Online **Maps** European – 39 countries, and you can buy more on SD cards
Traffic avoidance feature Free



68% TomTom GO 730T £243

You'll get accurate maps and excellent help with avoiding traffic hold-ups with this model.

When an incident happens, there's a spoken warning and a visual pop-up to describe what has happened and to offer alternative routes. Traffic information is also supplied for the surrounding area. Routes are based on real average speed measured. The advanced lane warning system helps ensure you are in the right lane for exiting a complicated junction. However, the

arrow symbols shown when approaching junctions are too small. The GO 730T is not as easy to use or portable as some and the bulky windscreen mount is difficult to adjust. There's an anti-theft Pin protection system, and a warning sounds if you leave it plugged into the car. It's cheapest at John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING It lists speed cameras but you have to pay for updates after a year.

Available Argos, Comet, Currys, Halfords and online. **Maps** European – 31 countries and you can buy more on SD cards
Traffic avoidance feature £23

MODEL		SPECIFICATION												
		PRICE (£)	SCREEN SIZE DIAGONAL (mm)	WIDESCREEN	VOICE RECOGNITION	EUROPEAN MAPS SUPPLIED	TRAFFIC AVOIDANCE SUB (£/year)	SPEED CAMERA DATA SUB (£/year)	ADVANCED LANE WARNING	SECURITY FEATURES	EASE OF INSTALLATION	PORTABILITY	EASE OF PROGRAMMING	EASE OF CHANGING ROUTES
1	GARMIN Nüvi 860T	350	109	✓	✓	✓	Free	30 ^a		✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
2	TOMTOM GO 930 T	305	109	✓	✓	✓	23	28 ^b	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
3	GARMIN Nüvi 205WT	147	109	✓			Free	30 ^a		✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
4	TOMTOM GO 530T	194	109	✓	✓		23	28 ^b	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
5	NAVIGON 8110	300	123	✓	✓	✓	Free	Free	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
6	TOMTOM Go 730T	243	109	✓	✓	✓	23	28 ^b	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
7	SNOOPER Strabo S360	150	86					Free ^c			★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
8	GARMIN Nüvi 550	255	88			✓	Free	30 ^a		✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
9	NAVIGON 2100 Max	200	109	✓			50 ^d	Free	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
10	MAGELLAN Roadmate 1425	170	109	✓		✓	Free	Free			★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
11	BECKER TRAFFIC Assist 7977	200	109	✓		✓	Free				★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★
12	MAGELLAN Roadmate 1225	150	87			✓	Free	Free			★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★
13	SNOOPER Sapphire Plus ^e	150	69					60 ^c			★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★
14	BINATONE Carrera C350BT	100	87								★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★
15	BINATONE T430	170	109	✓				Free			★	★★★★	★★★★	★★

^a Camera data preloaded, with 30 days free access to updates. After 30 days, annual subscription of £30 ^b Price includes both traffic and camera data subscription. If bought separately, speed camera data costs £19.95 free for first six months using this subscription method ^d Subscription costs £49.95 and can set up using Navigon Fresh software ^e Satnav and camera detector



67% Snooper Strabo S360 £150

Uncluttered maps and large, clear symbols are major strengths of the Strabo. It's very accurate up until the final part of the journey, where it merely directs you to the edge of the postcode. Snooper models have a particular focus on speed camera and hazard warnings. At the time of writing, six months' mapping and speed camera downloads were free, and then an optional £4.95 a month thereafter, or £99.95 for life. It quickly recalculates a route

when a wrong turn is taken and it beeps to tell you what's going on. Spoken commands are premature, and the many voice alerts for cameras quickly become annoying. Multiple instructions are dealt with well, and sound alerts can be male or female. It's cheapest online.

WE FOUND It will comfortably fit in most pockets.

Available Online Maps UK and Ireland and you can buy more on SD cards
Traffic avoidance feature No

which?
EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE

How we test

Making sure that satnavs are accurate and easy to use

Easy to use

We test models you should be able to use from the box. We follow installation instructions, then record how simple it is to install, program and change a route, remove and store.



On the road

We use each on a variety of roads using the same car. A test driver and observer note the ease and accuracy of each model. We also assess how clear and accurate sound and visual prompts are.

is and how close they get before saying that the destination has been reached.

Built-up areas

Most modern satnavs cope well with motorways, country roads and moderately built-up areas. We particularly focus on 'very built-up areas' where tall, closely spaced buildings can cause problems, with intermittent GPS signals, one-way systems and restrictions to road use.

Accurate

We test satnavs with locations, including newly built addresses, looking at whether they can find the target, how logical the route

WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE

WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
OVERALL EASE OF USE	ACCURACY OF ROUTE	AUDIO PROMPTS	VISUAL PROMPTS	SPEED OF RE-ROUTING	ACCURACY OF ROUTE (BUILT-UP AREA)	ABILITY TO GIVE TWO OR MORE DIRECTIONS	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	75
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	73
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	70
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	67
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	66
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	64
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	56
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	55
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★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	51
★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	50
★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	49

c Not pre-installed – requires one-off payment of £99.95 for lifetime speed camera updates or direct debit monthly payments of £4.95, but

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys, we give the cheapest widely available high-street or online price. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect. See www.whichcompare.co.uk for latest prices.

Traffic avoidance sub

The yearly cost of subscribing to the manufacturer's traffic information. **Security features** Some satnav devices have a personal identification number (Pin) or password.

Test performance

Audio prompts The clarity, timeliness and volume of spoken instructions.

Visual prompts Clarity of the display and the ability to keep up with the position of the car.

Speed of rerouting

How soon the satnav senses you are off course and reroutes.

Accuracy of route How well the satnav guides you to your destination.

Accuracy of route (built-up area) How well the system copes with driving among buildings, which can interfere with GPS signals. **Ability to give two or more directions** Guidance through junctions in quick succession.

Score

Ignores price, based on:
Ease of use **50%**
Performance **25%**
Features **20%**
Security **5%**