

# Drive buys

New car gadgets that can save you money, keep you safe, and more

If you love that your GPS can bark turn-by-turn directions and point you to the nearest Mexican restaurant, just you wait! The newest car electronics can make sense of check-engine lights, help you save money on fuel, keep the kids busy in the backseat, enable you to communicate without taking your hands off the wheel, and even help you keep track of teen drivers. We haven't tested the products below in

our labs (except for CarMD), but we'll be buying many of them and putting them through their paces in the coming months. So stay tuned to see what our testers find. In the meantime, here's a rundown of some of the hot new electronics that are hitting store shelves this year. If you just want a basic GPS device, a good value is the Garmin Nuvi 265T. It has a nice color 3.5-inch screen, and you can find it for less than \$150 online.



## tv for the road

**CIO MOBILE DIGITAL TV SYSTEM** \$600

**Why it's cool** If the kids have been complaining about the same old DVDs in the car, maybe what you need is a car TV instead of yet another batch of discs. This TV system, which should be available this spring, will let passengers watch local broadcasts on the go. It has a 10.2-inch LCD touch screen and includes a headrest mount, wireless headphones, and a remote control. It can be powered by your car's 12-volt system or an included AC adapter and battery pack. The company says that the device can pull in stations up to 40 miles away and that it also has DVD and gaming inputs.

**For more info** [www.ciomobiletv.com](http://www.ciomobiletv.com)



## teen checker

**LEMUR SAFEDRIVER** \$69.95

**Why it's cool** Think of this device as an electronic watchdog that keeps track of what's happening to your car. You can use it to monitor young drivers and help train them, even when you're not there biting your nails in the passenger seat. The Lemur SafeDriver records the distance traveled, any sudden braking, and how fast your car goes every time it leaves the driveway. It includes a small module that plugs into your vehicle's diagnostic port and transmits the data to a key-fob display. It's compact, and the tamper-resistant fob keeps tabs if a sneaky driver tries to erase the data.

**For more info** [www.lemurmonitors.com](http://www.lemurmonitors.com)



## pocket car doc

**CarMD** \$99

**Why it's cool** This gadget can tell you why your "check engine" light is on and how much repairs should cost, so that you can avoid surprises at the local garage. Plug CarMD into your car's diagnostic port, and one of three LEDs lights up. Green means all is good, yellow means there could be a problem, and red means you need a mechanic right away. Then connect CarMD to your home computer and print a report with the probable cause, most likely fix, and cost estimate for repairs. You can get up to four reports per month. You can also get live support from ASE-trained technicians.

**For more info** [www.carmd.com](http://www.carmd.com)



## voice box

**GARMIN VOICE STUDIO** Free

**Why it's cool** If you have a Garmin GPS navigation system and you're tired of the same old droning voice, this is the product for you. Voice Studio is a downloadable app (shown above) available on the Garmin Web site that lets you customize your Nuvi device with your own voice—so you can be a backseat driver even when you're not in the car! Best of all, it's free.

**For more info** [www.garmin.com/voicestudio](http://www.garmin.com/voicestudio)



## iPod to go

**DUAL XGPS300 IPOD CRADLE** \$180

**Why it's cool** This device turns an iPod Touch into a GPS navigator and mounts it to your car's windshield. The cradle includes a GPS receiver and an app with maps of the U.S. and Canada. Enter an address, and a map with turn-by-turn directions appears on the iPod's screen. The cradle includes a speaker, mini USB port, and windshield mount. The device can be used out of the car for hiking or other activities, too.

**For more info** [www.dualav.com](http://www.dualav.com)



## money-saving GPS

**GARMIN ECOROUTE HD** \$150

**Why it's cool** Garmin, which makes some of the top-scoring GPS devices in our tests, is now offering an accessory that can help you get better fuel economy and even tell you what's wrong with your car. EcoRoute HD can give you trouble codes for a check-engine light, real-time gas mileage, and directions using fuel-saving routes. EcoRoute is available on newer Nuvi devices and as a free download.

**For more info** [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)



## kid locator

**ZOOMBAK** \$100 plus \$15/month

**Why it's cool** Ever wanted to know the location of your teenager, your car, or maybe both? The Zoombak Car & Family Locator tracks your car and sends you text messages or e-mail. You can also set safety zones and get an alert when the car goes out of bounds. The key-fob-sized device fits into a backpack or glove compartment. It includes a car mounting kit and charger for permanent installation.

**For more info** [www.zoombak.com](http://www.zoombak.com)



## sound & advice

**CYCLE T43H PORTABLE GPS NAVIGATOR** \$250

**Why it's cool** Cycle claims its new portable GPS device is the first to include an HD Radio receiver. HD Radio offers better sound quality than AM or FM and allows stations to provide more content. It also provides free traffic info, transmitted over the speedy digital HD signal. Other pluses: a 4.3-inch screen, spoken street names, and MP3 and video players.

**For more info** [www.cycle.com](http://www.cycle.com)



## talk to text

**GOT2B VOICE BLUETOOTH CAR KITS** \$120

**Why it's cool** This line of Bluetooth car kits goes beyond letting you make hands-free calls. When paired with a Bluetooth-enabled phone, it reads your e-mail to you and lets you make calls from your contact list and compose text messages using your voice. Calls are announced through the car's audio system, and music is muted when the phone is in use.

**For more info** [www.got2bwireless.com](http://www.got2bwireless.com)