

## How To Decide Which Type Of GPS System You Need

I think by now just about everyone knows about GPS devices. Lots of people are using the technology today that once relegated to pocket protector geeks with black frame glasses. I know those of us who fish offshore would never leave home without it now, I don't know how we ever did without it. If you are still lacking a little in the knowledge of GPS and how the system works here are a few hints to get you started. If you haven't ever used a GPS, a simple explanation is that it is like a live animation map that moves as you move. If you are looking for a specific location the GPS can take you there, if you don't know where you are the GPS can tell you. It is a super cool tool to have. The GPS tracking technology has come a long way with GPS devices available today that actually speak to you. These gadgets will now tell you when to turn, how far ahead your destination is, and even how far to the nearest gas station. So how do you decide which specific device you need out of all the GPS systems on the market? First, you can break all of the devices into four main categories which are: automobile navigation, marine navigation, outdoors, and the newer PDA-GPS hybrids like those available from Palm now. The automotive systems are primarily used by people who travel for a living or use their vehicles in outside sales. There are many manufacturers now offering the option of having the units built into the vehicle and it has become a very popular option. These devices like their aftermarket counterparts are normally mounted to the dashboard in easy view for the driver. Some of the more desirable features to have are the detailed built in maps, voice guided directions and the points of interest database which will call attention to things like restaurants and service stations. The handheld portable units are a great choice if you want flexibility and the option of using the unit outside of the car. For people who like hiking or hunting these are great. You should look for one that is waterproof with a color screen and a batter that will last for a long duration. Also look for programmable mapping features. You will want to be able to upload maps of rural areas you may be going to, or if using it near shore, you will want marine maps. As I alluded to earlier, I am an avid offshore fisherman and wouldn't even consider fishing offshore now without a GPS. If you are fishing in tournaments you can't even begin to compete without one. These systems are very durable and since they are designed for marine conditions, they are waterproof. They will offer such features as chart plotting in full color, sonar, programmable maps, and even fishing hot spots. The newer hybrid system now available offers a blend of the GPS technology with a PDA. These are relatively new and only a handful of companies are offering them. The one that I am most familiar with is the Palm Treo.

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