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1. What's the difference between Navigation and Tracking?

Navman, Garmin GPS portable navigation units sold in retail stores are vastly different from GPS Tracking devices for Automated Vehicle Location applications (as an example). GPS portable navigation units merely obtain location information and uses that information to display to the user for navigation to get from point A to point B, or more expensive models also add support for points of interest and fixed traffic speed camera locations.

GPS Tracking in the commercial world relates to bringing that location information to a third party for use in the monitoring of the vehicle to bring about efficiencies in the vehicle's deployment and management. GPS Tracking has evolved from data loggers which requires manual intervention to retrieve the device from the vehicle and then downloading it for later analysis, through to real time updates, often via the use of a GSM module (or another communication network such as satellite) to transmit the location and additional information back to a central monitoring station immediately. The use of a communications network allowed GPS Tracking to evolve and expand the usefulness of GPS Tracking to a much wider application scope.

To sum up, GPS Navigation answers the question "Where am I" and GPS Tracking addresses "Where are you".

2. How accurate is GPS versus Mobile Location Services?

Commercially available GPS modules are able to obtain accuracy down to 3-10m depending upon many factors, as GPS signals are often very weak and are affected by many environmental factors. However, as compared to Mobile Location Services (MLS), where the GSM provider utilises triangulation techniques to try to pinpoint the location of the device, its accuracy is proven to be much worse than that of GPS. Again, MLS is further affected by factors similar to GPS in the sense of the barriers affecting signal quality and the density of GSM towers to assist in the triangulation effort, with some regional areas having errors of 1-2 kms!

3. Will GPS work inside a building?

It is highly unlikely GPS works inside a building, as GPS signals are weak and are obtained from satellites high above the earth. In the lucky instance that a GPS device is able to obtain a 'GPS location fix', it is often due to the placement of the device near a window or open area within the building.

4. How will GPS Tracking deal with lost locations when the Tracking device loses its location fix?

When using active/regular GPS Tracking, the operator is able to determine the chain of events before the device has lost its GPS location fix and therefore identify WHEN and WHERE the device was just prior to the device being 'lost'. The operator can also identify WHEN and WHERE the device was after the device reports in its location and thus work out that the device was still in the surrounding area.

Further complementary services like Mobile Location Services (triangulation) is also possible to confirm that the device is in the general area.

5. How does A-GPS help?

It is highly unlikely GPS works inside a building, as GPS signals are weak and are obtained from satellites high above the earth. In the lucky instance that a GPS device is able to obtain a 'GPS location fix', it is often due to the placement of the device near a window or open area within the building.

6. Can I use my mobile for GPS tracking instead of a dedicated

GPS Tracking device?

Of course, iTrack even has developed a software plugin for doing just this. However, be aware that utilising a mobile phone to undertake GPS Tracking also has limitations, which extend to the amount of power drain on the mobile device while it is being used as a GPS Tracker and reporting back to the central station. Another area of concern is for the user themselves, where they could find that the mobile device cannot effectively run multiple applications at the same time (or are required to suspend GPS Tracking while taking a call!) Don't forget, an unwilling user may simply disable the application on the mobile phone.

7. Difference in using a Personal GPS Tracker versus Vehicle GPS Tracker to track a vehicle?

A Personal GPS Tracker can be placed in the vehicle and be used as a 'portable GPS Tracker'. The drawback of using the portable GPS Tracker for vehicle tracking is that the device is often placed in plain sight, and needs to be plugged in (usually via the cigarette lighter adapter). The vehicle installed GPS Tracker is usually installed out of sight, and can be integrated to various sensors and alarms/immobilisers. Ultimately it comes down to the flexibility and intent of the type of GPS Tracker being applied in use for each situation.

8. What are the Australian GPRS details to be used on my device?

APN	Username	Password	
Telstra	telstra.internet	[blank]	[blank]
Optus	internet	[blank]	[blank]
Vodafone	vfinternet.au	[blank]	[blank]
3G Hutchison	3netaccess	a	a