

Navigation Master

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They say good things come in twos, and this has proved to be the case for me over the Christmas period. After spending a decade [denigrating SatNavs](#) I've received two in as many weeks.

The first was a TomTom Live gadget, an Christmas present from my wife, bought I suspect to stop me getting lost in every town outside of London, I'll just have to swallow my pride and use it when we're exploring England, no more blaming the wife now, when I get lost, it's TomTom who will get it in the ear now.

Then the next week I received a telephone call and after a short conversation to tell me the news that I had won a Navigation Master SatNav from Stuart Pessok the editor of our trade newspaper (with the imaginative title of TAXI) a package arrived the next day.

[Navigation Master's](#) screen is large measuring about 4½ inches across; much larger than my TomTom, robustly built with its own cradle and basic instructions (a full detailed instruction book is available on their website. With Bluetooth, address book, storage for music, video, photos and even e-books it doesn't lack facilities.



My charger for use in the cab did not work, but after finding a help line number on the downloadable information sheets a simple call to arrange a meeting meant that I had my replacement charger within 30 minutes, that's what I call customer service.

The map section is split into two with the A-Z London mapping giving three maps; A-Z Great Britain, A-Z Greater London and the iconic A-Z Central London which shows one-way streets, places of interest and all manner of information, as I have written about in this blog [A-Z](#) is among the best mapping available for cabbies, and Navigation Master with its search facility has an enormous database of thousands of entries.

When we do the [Knowledge](#) the student has to call all the roads from one point to another and the method we use to see if you've taken the correct route is to string a piece of cotton between two pins. If you have taken the correct route without deviation it's said to be "on the cotton". Similarly Navigation Master will draw a blue line between your start and finish points. It is just a matter of following the blue (or should that be yellow) brick road to your destination. The system by this simple, but effective charting of a route is only of assistance to somebody with an intimate Knowledge of London, a black cabbie in other words.

The second part of the mapping is a standard SatNav system developed by [Smart to Go](#) and produces visual and audible directions as any other SatNav. Supplied in map form, and rather over reliant on menus it's not as easy to use as my new TomTom and traffic alerts and 3-D mapping come at an additional price. Rather disappointingly the keyboard does not follow a standard QWERTY layout unlike the A-Z section making it far more difficult to use.

But for the A-Z London map with its traffic alerts and vast database (I've yet to ask for one it didn't know) this little gizmo is worth the £300 price tag. Given there are only about 14,000 possible users and already 800 devices have been sold, I would recommend that you use one as your working day will be so much easier.

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