

## Car PC

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Car PCs have become en vogue recently. Many people have acquired such a device to present it in their vehicle. Often though, it is just dead weight and used sparsely. Many don't even know about the power and capabilities a car PC can deliver. Yes, you can run navigation software on it and the map is in most cases quite nice. But whether this justifies the relatively high price is more the questionable.



There is a variety of suppliers on the market. Even some tour operations have started to sell car PCs in their shops. Unfortunately, the choice was very narrow a few years ago. In principle, one has to decide between a permanent installed PC or a removable tablet PC. Both options have their advantages/disadvantages. I decided to buy a tablet PC. This option seemed more suitable for my needs. I can detach the tablet PC from the car-docking station and update/reprogram it in my office/hotel and – very important – it is safe from theft when not in the car. Prices are rather exorbitant. Don't even try below 2'000 CHF and a good piece of equipment will cost you easily 5'000 CHF and more. That strains the budget. Some 'clever' people think to use just their Laptop or Notebook. Attach them to the GPS antenna, the battery and finito. But they will find out the hard way. Normal PCs are not built for offroading and will break sooner rather than later. One of my colleagues received the error message 'fatal disk error' just after 2'000 kilometers. Reason is that vibrations and kicks will sound the death knell for the Laptop. A second HD might be a temporary solution. But who takes a harddisk with him for every 2'000 km? The components of Laptops are plugged whereas the interior of car PCs is soldered and the HD has special protection. In addition, car PCs are much more temperature resistant (eg -5 to +40 degrees) and humidity does not any harm to them.



I opted for a Hammerhead Tablet PC with „Magnet Screen“ of Walkabout Computers, today DRS Tactical Systems, Inc (<http://www.drs-ts.com/walkabout/>). So far, I didn't have any problems with it. It works just fine (although I have still a fully configured second HD with me – you never know). I need the PC mainly as a control center for my Inmarsat satellite system. On the other hand, it is also convenient to memorize all kinds of statistics in Excel, to write a tour log in Word, to capture tracks and to save fotos. With the option of a DVB-T stick, I am also able to write e-mails or skype provided that WLAN connection is available. Unfortunately, it does not yet play full DVD as it is based on a 386-processor (run under Windows XP professional) and loading time is often very long (but time is not the major factor on my trips). Actual models have certainly more 'engine' power.

