

Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 GPS Locator Edition
By
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I have been given the opportunity to review Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 GPS Locator Edition. I would like to give you some insight into the program installation, system requirements, performance, features, ease of use, and benefits of the GPS locator and my overall opinion of the product.

First let's look at the installation of the product. The program requires a DVD drive to install the program and depending on how you install the program it may be required to run the program. In order to effectively use the GPS module that comes with the package you need a laptop. The laptop needs a USB port to connect the GPS and a DVD drive to install and run the program. My test laptop doesn't have a DVD drive so I had to improvise. I was able install the program completely to the hard drive so that I wouldn't need to have a DVD drive to run the program. This is one of the ways that the program can be installed if you have enough free hard drive space. This will also allow the program to run faster. The program installed on the first try and without any problems. The system requirements for this program are
The laptop I used for the test is a Pentium III 1GHz with 256 megabytes of ram and a 60 gigabyte hard drive. The performance of the product is very reasonable even with these modest specifications. So my installation and performance experience was above average for this type of system. Next let's look at benefits of the GPS receiver.

The GPS receiver which in addition to providing you with location information also provides your approximate speed. The speed indication was fairly accurate when compared to the speedometer. The location on the map was also pretty accurate. I was impressed in the detail the map had to offer. I live about 30 minutes from the nearest large city so most of my driving was done in the country. I thought that they may have only had great detail in the cities and not in the country but boy was I wrong. The GPS task pane in the software allows you to control the way the GPS behaves. You can have the GPS center on your position which is useful to find your way. You also have the ability to do a dynamic turn view. This gives you more map to see and a better sense of where you're going and where you have been. You can also set the map to rotate to the direction you are traveling. If you use this option and you aren't paying attention you could lose track of the direction you are going. If you leave the option off you will always know that the top of the map is north. The last option for the GPS is to allow it to navigate to a specific address. This is a useful option which if setup ahead of time can be used by only the driver as Streets & Trips 2007 will voice navigate for you. It however, is not recommended for use by your self. It is much easier to have a navigator to use the software and GPS. Now that we have seen what the GPS can do let's look at some of the other features of the Streets and Trips software.

Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 is a very robust software package. It includes a section for driving directions, travel information including hotels, motels, gas stations, restaurants, as well as a route planner. The driving directions are created when you use the route planner. The driving directions give you distances and times as well as turn by turn directions. This panel can be turned on or off. This panel is similar to other map software that I have used. I found it to be very straight forward and clear. The route

planner allows you to plan a trip from point A to point B and also allows you to put stops in between. Using the route planner you can search by place name, address or longitude and latitude. Once you have created a start point and an endpoint Streets & Trips it will calculate the best route and show the route on the map as well as display the driving directions. Streets & Trips has the ability to give directions in the United States as well as Canada. You can change the settings of the program to select preferred roads, start and end time for driving, fuel efficiency, time for stops, driving speeds and fuel costs. This was one of my favorite features in the program. It really gives me more control on the overall route plan. I was able to control how the route plan looked based on speed and start and end time. When I changed the road preferences or the fuel costs I got a better look at the over all route plan. It allows you to do what if route planning to see what happens to your total route plan if you changes the settings. Next we are going to look at the ease of use aspect of Streets and Trips 2007.

I found the interface to be very intuitive. There were plenty of icon labels to easily tell which icons are which. The menus are clearly labeled and easy to find. I found the task panes that were selectively turned on were clear and concise. Navigation on the map was straight forward you could easily zoom in and out. You can hold down the left mouse button and just drag to move freeform on the map. Streets & Trips takes advantage of the right mouse button by brining up a context sensitive menu. All in all the program was easy to use. Now that you have seen all the main points of Streets and Trips 2007 I will give you my final thoughts on the product.

I have been using mapping software for over 10 years but it has been a while since I took a look at Microsoft Streets and Trips. The product has really matured and was very pleasant to use. I especially liked the GPS locator. I found the GPS locator to be very helpful in routing me on my trip. The voice navigation was clear and plain. I was however, a little disappointed by the find nearby feature. I though it was extremely light in terms of the number of items listed. Not many choices when it came to the items listed. I was able to test it in an area that I was really familiar with and I knew that there was much other business of the types that would traditionally be listed in mapping software. This would be frustrating if I was using it in a place that was unfamiliar to me and counting on it for travel information. I did not get a chance to log on to the internet to get the construction information so I was unable to check that feature. So if I had to rate this software on a scale of 1 to 10 I would give it a 9. So if you are looking for robust mapping software with GPS capabilities and you have a laptop then I would recommend that you strongly consider Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007.