Car Electronics & GPS for the Newbie by Tracy Narvaez

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Computers are becoming a dominant feature in modern life and have made car electronics & GPS gadgets smarter and cheaper. It also means that these electronics are becoming standard features in all car models. Such devices contribute to making road trips safer and fun for everyone.

In the 1980s, the only electronic thing that people knew existed in their car was the radio. It usually came with a cassette player that took some time to rewind if you liked to replay a song. If you loved music then it usually meant that you would have a bunch of tapes crammed inside the glove compartment.

There was another electronic part that existed way back also. It was the electronic ignition system. This was more reliable than the mechanically driven distributor. Electronic ignition gives off a better spark and was more fuel efficient.

Today, on-board car electronics have bloomed. The car stereo is not only a music player but a very capable video player as well. It is not unusual to have LCD displays in the back seat to keep kids entertained and behaved while you are driving.

Mechanics and tuners speak of a computer inside the engine bay. This is called the ECU of the electronic control unit. This is a real computer because it has an operating system and uses software to manage the engine.

While the computer that most of us know has a mouse and keyboard, the ECU uses sensors for input. Such sensors determine the amount of air going into the engine, the amount of oxygen present in the air, and a lot of other parameters. This data is used for engine management which results in fewer emissions given off and efficient consumption of fuel.

It is possible to replace the software in the ECU so that the engine becomes even more responsive. This is the expense of fuel efficiency and handling especially at normal speeds. The software is replaced by a chip upgrade. However do not expect great results by just replacing one part. Engine upgrade should be done as a system. It means upgrading the chip, your crankshaft, as well as air induction.

For the male driver who never wants to ask for directions, the GPS is the perfect additional gadget. GPS is still primarily military technology but has found widespread civilian use. This tool, aside from being a navigational aid, is also a very accurate timekeeper.

The car GPS is meant to be mounted on the dashboard. It has a large display so that the driver can see it and drive safely at the same time. The display usually shows a street map that shows the road ahead of you. A female voice gently reminds you when a turn is required. Sometimes that voice may sound insulting when it says that you missed a required turn.

Massive computerization on all facets of modern life only meant that electronics has become cheaper. This is very true for car electronics & GPS. The benefits of these gadgets are great for it greatly increases car safety and enjoyment for all.

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