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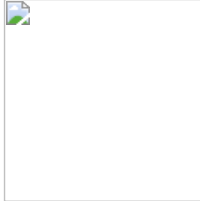


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Products of the Year 1998 (continued)

What you do is plug in the Earthmate GPS receiver, shown in Figure D, into your Palm device, wait a few seconds, and then follow the directions shown on screen.

FIGURE D



Like the Palm computer, Earthmate is small enough to fit in your pocket (although, where did he hide all that wire?)

Earthmate is a GPS system that plugs into the Palm computer. You download trips into the Palm's memory and then, as you're driving, the Earthmate controls the next leg of your trip is automatically updated as you drive.

The Earthmate receiver is just about the same size as the Palm device. A (long) cable runs between the two. Once plugged in, with trip routing downloaded, it becomes an instant homing pigeon.

This is quite an impressive solution, although, honestly, we had reservations about granting it Product of the Year honors. Although we've had numerous authors also reported very positive results, here in our little patch of Central New Jersey, we've never been able to get the Earthmate to work, even after several attempts. However, the highly enthusiastic reader letters swayed us, and it is a truly transformative solution -- so we granted the award anyway. Some time soon, we hope the thing will work for us.

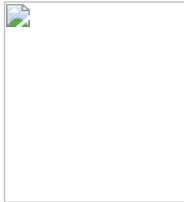
OmniRemote from Pacific Neo-Tek

It was on the front page of USA Today. The Palm computer was intercepting keyless entry codes and making it possible to break into cars. And the culprit was the software. The software was called OmniRemote, a product that turned the Palm computer into a learning remote control.

Well, USA Today (and all the other press who jumped on the bandwagon) blew things way out of proportion. Certain keyless entry systems use IR beams to capture the IR signal requires line of site, a steady hand, and a few, very obvious seconds. It's not something you're going to do in a stealthy way. Also, the Palm device. Instead, any learning remote control can learn an IR signal. Sometimes our esteemed fourth estate needs to do some more homework.

That said, OmniRemote is cool beans. This little chunk of code turns a Palm III or a PalmPilot with the Palm III Upgrade Card into a highly programmable remote control. For us with large home theatres, this is super slick. Granted, it's pretty expensive to use a Palm III as a remote control. But there are competitive solutions, Figure E, that cost even more.

FIGURE E



In any case, with OmniRemote, you can draw out buttons on your Palm organizer's screen. Different categories mean different controls. You can record n even have buttons that switch between categories. It's a gadget geek nirvana.

you've got a Palm computer that doesn't have an IR signal, you can buy a little IR dongle from Pacific Neo-Tek.

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