

### Developers Show Support for Microsoft Auto PC

More than 55 independent software vendors have announced plans to develop more than 250 new applications for the PC Companion line of products — the Handheld PC, Palm PC, and Auto PC, which are powered by the Microsoft Windows CE operating system version 2.0.

Some of the PC Companion developer companies include Clarion, Eclipse International, Etak, MobileSoft, Navigational Technologies Corp., Nissan Motor Corporation U.S.A., ORA Electronics, Phillips Mobile Computing Group, and Uniden.

Meanwhile, Etak, Inc. announced that it will extend its support of Microsoft's Windows CE operating system platform for handheld devices to the Auto PC and Palm PC platforms. Working jointly with Cue Network Corporation, operator of the world's largest FM paging radio network, and Metro Networks, the oldest and largest traffic reporting service in the U.S., Etak will develop applications that send real-time traffic and traveler information over a paging network to wireless capable Auto PC-, Palm PC- and other CE-based devices. These applications will be available in the form of both products and services, and may include a Global Positioning System (GPS) guidance option.



### BlitzSafe Designs "Smart" Integration Device

A lot of car audio competitors are familiar with BlitzSafe. They were the guys that made the stealth-retracting faceplate back in the days when pullout Benz boxes were all the rage. BlitzSafe got started in OEM Integration with Mercedes dealers in North America. Mercedes had made it very difficult to integrate aftermarket head units into some vehicles because they would flip wires on harnesses to make them incompatible with the aftermarket. BlitzSafe created in-line circuits to defeat Mercedes and allow dashboard democracy to reign.

Leaping forward to 1998, BlitzSafe has created a new line of CD Integration device with DMX (or Digital Multiplexing) technology — these allow the easy hook-up of an aftermarket Alpine MBUS CD changer to a factory head unit with CD changer controls. What makes these products so revolutionary is that they actually recognize the protocol of the factory radio and communicate with it through the use of a microprocessor. In other words, the BlitzSafe unit communicates with the factory head unit and the CD changer and acts as a translator. Some units on the market are only passive units — they just change positions of the wires in the DIN harness, however, the BlitzSafe device is the only surefire way to get OEM-installed CD changer performance.

The DMX technology allows for two signals to be sent over the same wire — the command signal sent from the head unit to control the changer, and the signal from the changer to the unit. The BlitzSafe unit is a piece of cake to install — they have taken all the guesswork out of it for the guys in the install bay. All you have to do is plug the aftermarket CD changer into the BlitzSafe unit, and then plug the wiring harness from the BlitzSafe into the factory receptacle. If for some reason the manufacturer was not nice enough to run a CD cable from the trunk to the dash, then the stock Alpine wire can be run from the trunk to the dash and the BlitzSafe may be installed there.

The BlitzSafe units are engineered and made in the U.S.A. They feature a lifetime warranty against failure. The MSRP of the units will be from \$60 to \$110. But consider this: Mercedes dealerships are charging \$900 for an OEM changer, so you can be sure an aftermarket one is a cost-effective option. BlitzSafe manufactures units for Mercedes, Volvo, Jaguar, Chrysler, and Honda Accord vehicles (with CD changer controls). However, they will work in all Volvos, Jaguars, and Chrysler cars including Jeep, Dodge, and Plymouth. —Brett Solomon

### Introduces New Mini-Disc Products to Autosound

Etak, Inc. has introduced Mini-Disc products to the American autosound market. The MDX-26900, the first of a new line of Mini-Disc change controls, will allow a driver to control an in-car stereo with a Mini-Disc. The MDX-26900 will be available in a variety of configurations, including a change control with a Mini-Disc. The MDX-26900 will be available in a variety of configurations, including a change control with a Mini-Disc. The MDX-26900 will be available in a variety of configurations, including a change control with a Mini-Disc.

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