

NAVIGATOR UPGRADE

Driving with digital directions

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE

■ Rob Robson



Recently, I had the opportunity to spend a few days using the updated Hema Navigator HN5i.

The new HN5i retains most of the hardware from the previous model but has had considerable changes made to the software, including the addition of several new features.

Unlike present day street navigators, the Hema unit not only provides a platform for urban directions but also outback travel using real maps with OziExplorer and Memory-Map software.

The Hema Navigator, released in 2008, was directed squarely at the four-wheel-drive market. It turned out to be an unequivocal success for Hema.

In 2010 the map maker released the Navigator 5 with new hardware including a sleek 5-inch (12.7cm) touch screen which could be viewed from almost any angle because it was bright and bold with good resolution.

With this latest upgrade, the Hema Navigator does it better and easier than before and includes a change from Route 66 to iGo Primo for street navigation.

It also comes with the latest Camps Australia Wide Edition 6 sites preloaded. This provides details of more than 3700 campsites in Australia and New Zealand — a nice little bonus for



Finding your way: The updated navigational software system makes adventurous off-road driving in remote areas easier than ever.

those who can use it. There are also free street updates for two years available in regular downloads.

"iGo kept showing us the best of everything they had and we took the lot," Hema managing director Rob Boegheim said.

"We simply wanted the best navigation system for our customers."

For off-road drivers the unit comes with Hema 4WD, Touring and Australia Topo 250k maps preloaded on to an 8GB Micro SD card, giving 4GB of free space for additional digital maps.

Plus it now uses Ezi Ozi software that is more user friendly — anyone who has used the full version OziExplorer will testify that it takes a lot of getting



Path less travelled: Outback driving is less daunting with digital navigation.



Trio: The touch-screen device offers three navigation options.

used to. Features are now accessed more easily via icons rather than a menu system, with a new toolbar down the side of the screen.

The icons at the base change depending on what function you're using, and those who can't bear to change from the old version of OziExplorer can go back to it with just two clicks.

And then there is Memory-Map. I'm still a little perplexed why Hema continues to include this as part of the trilogy but, having said that, it provides an excellent introduction for anyone new to digital mapping software.

For off-roaders, GPS navigation has come a long way in a short time. Within 10 years the technology has revolutionised the way we plan, execute and record our outback travels, and Hema has been a big part of that progress.

The update for the Hema Navigator will make it even more attractive to 4WD users looking for a standalone digital mapping tool.

But with alternatives coming thick and fast in the form of GPS apps for the iPhone and iPad, the battle for market share will be tough.