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Five Great Gadgets for Your Car (That You've Probably Never Heard Of)

By Alfred Poor - FOXNews.com

Nothing captures the spirit of the American lifestyle better than the open road, with the endless highway of possibilities unwinding in front of you. And if there's one thing we love as much as our cars, it's the gadgets in our cars.

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Sanyo

GPS units, such as this dashboard-integrated Sanyo Gorilla, are commonplace. But there's a wide array of other fun gadgets for your car.

Nothing captures the spirit of the American lifestyle better than the open road, with the endless highway of possibilities unwinding in front of you. And if there's one thing we love as much as our cars, it's the gadgets in our cars.

Japan helped reshape the auto industry by including all the bells and whistles as standard features when Detroit was still trying to sell them as optional extras. Now our cars come with power locks and windows, GPS systems, stereos with iPod docks, and more. Could we possibly need any more gadgets for our cars?

Of course we could! And here's a half dozen weird and wonderful devices that you may not have considered that can make your driving experience even more enjoyable.

Dude, Where's My Car? Before you can hit the open road, you have to get in your car. And that can be a challenge if you can't remember where you left it.

Most GPS devices are designed to help you get where you're going, but the **Ecco Intelligent Digital Compass Personal Pocket GPS Locator** helps you find where you've been. Keep this handy fob on your keychain, and press a button when you leave your car. A moving arrow on the display will help you find your way back when it's time to head home, which can be handy the next time you park at the mall or the airport.

Dude, Where's My GPS? Portable GPS devices have let the directionally challenged lead normal, productive lives. Unfortunately, a suction cup on the windshield screams "Steal me!" to a certain segment of society.

You don't have to polish away the telltale circle from the glass and hide your device any more. Just clamp on the **Maplock security device** and secure it to your steering wheel by a steel cable. This import from Down Under won't be available until March, but Amazon is taking orders for it now.

Avoid Making New Friends. There's something imposing about a man or woman in uniform, but you generally don't want to make their acquaintance on the drive home from a party or your favorite watering hole. Instead of relying on your friends to decide whether you're impaired, consider investing in a personal breathalyzer, such as the **BACtrack B70 Breathalyzer**.

This model has a sensor that you breathe onto, so you don't actually have to touch it to your lips. As a result, it's safe to share with other users. (Even with a device like this, the best safety strategy is a designated driver who doesn't drink at all.)

Can You Hear Me Now? Listening to tunes through a headset while a passenger can be a good way to avoid annoying the driver, but headsets and earbuds are a bad idea for the driver since they can mask or block out the sound of horns and emergency vehicle sirens. So use a Bluetooth wireless connection to control your cell phone or mobile media player.

A device like the Bluetooth steering wheel hands-free and music car kit by **WXG** not only lets you control your music, but you can also place and receive calls on it. Caller ID information is shown on the LCD panel. The rechargeable device clamps right onto your steering wheel so that your hands never have to leave the wheel. Now that many jurisdictions have banned the use of cell phones by drivers — unless they use a hands-free device — a gadget like this can pay for itself just by avoiding a single ticket.

Come On Back! Come On Back! Parking in a garage space shouldn't be that difficult, but some drivers seem to leave crumpled lawn mowers and tricycles in their wake. There are plenty of gadgets that will tell when you've backed in (or pulled in forward) far enough.

Complex devices mount on the ceiling and shine a laser onto your dashboard when you reach the right spot. I can't help thinking there's a ninja sniper at the other end of that red beam of light. I like the simpler approach of the parking sensor offered at Haband. It's simply a four-foot-tall fiberglass pole on a weighted base. When your car's bumper touches the pole, the bright red LED lights at the top of the pole start flashing. It's a simple and inexpensive device that will do the job, and easier to install than the classic "tennis-ball-on-a-string."

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