

Big Bro to track kids, vehicles in city

GPS enabled devices are now being lapped up by Chennaiites to keep an eye on people dear to them

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

They say it's better to be safe than sorry. Whether it's sending your four-year old to prep school or taking a road trip to a neighbouring city for the first time; a technology that is being rapidly adopted by Chennaiites is the GPS or Global Positioning Systems.

In fact, parents concerned about the safety of their children while they are in school or elsewhere and individuals intending to keep a tab on their vehicles, parked anywhere in the city make up the demand for devices like GPS-based regional navigators and personal or vehicle trackers. They have now become the hottest selling commodities in the electronic market. And gadget gurus are hailing it as 'the' tech to look out for in 2009.

Anush Gopalan, the president and CEO of Hetrogenous, a company dealing with telemetry and telematics (in relation to GPS devices) says, "GPS devices could be broadly classified into navigation devices like Map My India's Delphi navigator which has built-in maps to guide you wherever you want to go. These can be installed in your vehicles and can be used to locate everything in real-time, from ATMs to petrol pumps to hospitals. There are also tracking devices which coupled with mobiles can be used for tracking pets, kids the elderly and vehicles as well."

Paromita S, a parent from the city says, "I have a teenaged son and he has a habit of sneaking out at nights to party with his friends. So we recently installed a navigator in his car to keep an eye on him."

In fact, the market for GPS devices is poised for an explosion. Anush adds, "By the next year, Indian customers are expected to be lap up close to five lakh GPS units (trackers and navigators)."

Manohar G, an IT professional says, "I recently installed a navigator in my Santro. It has become intrinsic to commute around the city. Now, I don't have to rely on someone to navigate my way around."

But navigation is just half the story. Personal and vehicular tracking is supposed to bring in a veritable change in lifestyle once it picks up. Sampan Guard, a technical advisor with Rexall Setrack, a GPS solutions company says,

"Our clients comprise health care professionals to corporates to schools and individuals. In the backdrop of the rising number of car thefts in cities, GPS can help owners track their vehicle online on a PC and even shut off its engine from the computer itself."

He adds, "Similar integrations are happening on the personal tracking front where parents are given a login ID to a certain site which helps them pinpoint their child's exact location anywhere in the world. All they need is a GPS enabled device that can be incorporated into the mobile phone of the child."

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