

STREETS & TRIPS 2003

Manufactured by Microsoft

Reviewed by Kay and Dave Cargill

Cost: is \$49.99 at Staples

System Requirements: Windows 98 or above and Internet Explorer 5 browser or above. CD-Rom drive. It requires 24 MB of RAM for my Windows 98, and a PC with Pentium 133MHz or higher processor. They recommend Pentium III.

Installation was easy. I only installed the minimum installation which takes 295 MBs. The standard installation takes 925 MBs. Minimum installation requires that you insert the run disk each time you run the program. The standard installation does not require the disk for use. For my own personal use, I would not be using this program on a daily or weekly basis; that is why I only did the minimum installation.

Great Features: door to door directions, locally and nationally; easily locate restaurants, hotels, museums, libraries, gas stations, hospitals, update with latest road construction info from the internet You can find all kinds of nearby places with this program. You can also use a GPS receiver with this program.

It gives you “instant” results with detailed exit numbers on the trip itinerary printout. IT DOES NOT HOWEVER, GIVE YOU THE NAMES OF TOWN/CITY/EXIT NUMBER when you stop overnight, which would help in orientation. It just gives you mileage and route numbers. This might be OK for some people, but I would prefer if they would list the name of the town/city/state that you are stopping in overnight.

I found the map difficult to work with in trying to pinpoint a location at first. I could zoom in on the map but couldn't navigate further than that. Finally figured out how to use the pan feature. Exit numbers on the maps would be very helpful also. It could verify exactly where you are, (telling you to drive east for 21 miles, on Route 271, doesn't really tell you where you are). You'd have to be watching your odometer constantly to check mileage. But as long as I have the printed directions to get to my destination I am OK. This is where the names of towns, cities or suburbs with exit numbers would come in handy on the itinerary sheet.

Without the exit numbers on the road map, it's difficult to use the pushpin feature on the Drawing Tool bar to mark a single place on the map.

This program comes with a 6 page small manual that refers to finding a place, map, route, finding nearby places and push pins. These items are all explained in the manual. There is also a page for Streets & Trips FAQ's and there is Internet access to get the latest construction info on your trips. This manual was very helpful, but you have to spend a lot of time “playing” with this program in order to figure out what you are doing.

Product support is offered on the Internet as well as a help menu in the program. I did not need this support for the trips that I planned. I did however, use the help feature A LOT!

I recommend this program to anyone who is planning a trip in the future, but be prepared to spend some time getting acquainted with the various tool bars and having someone else help in reading the manual to you as you try different features. My husband helped me and I couldn't have done it without him.