

Using your iPhone as GPS

By: Jac Brown

In the summer of 2021, I met Wes Francis at his first ride with the club, the 7R2 in Wheeling. During lunch, Wes, Tom Hudson, Tom Brimhall, and I waited out a thunderstorm on the rooftop patio of Maxwell's Pizza in McConnelville, OH. We talked about lots of things, but the subject that I remember best was Wes' use of his iPhone as a GPS. Of course, I brought up the reasons that I had heard why you shouldn't do that, and Wes had a good answer for each.



1. Vibration will kill sensors in your phone. Wes had been using his iPhone for 6 years on the motorcycle without trouble. That said, if I was worried, the Quad Lock mounting system he was using has an available vibration dampener designed to solve that problem.
2. The phone isn't protected from rain. Wes reminded me that this was true in the past, but any current smart phone is waterproof. Good point.

3. You need cell service to get map information for your gps to function. That is true if you wanted to use Google maps for guidance, but there are several apps that have downloaded maps available for any part of the world. Wes was using an app called Scenic and thought it was pretty good. All the routes I had sent him downloaded easily and he was following them problem free.

At the time, I didn't have any reason to change from my Zumo 660, but last winter, I bought another bike and needed a way to use GPS on it. I am not planning on selling the KTM, so the Zumo 660 will stay there. For the new bike, I tried looking for a Zumo 660 motorcycle mount but no luck. Remembering new Zumo's being north of \$500, I thought about Wes' Scenic app recommendation and started pricing what it would cost.

First of all, Scenic is currently only iPhone. There is said to be an Android version in beta testing with promises of release early next year, but Scenic is a one-man operation so release dates can slip. Judge for yourself if you are using Android.

There is a free version of Scenic, but downloaded maps are limited and it is missing features we all would want, so feel free to try Scenic with the free version, but plan on getting Premium if you want to really use it.

The cost.

- ◆ Currently, Scenic Premium Forever is 110 Euro or regular Premium for 27.99 Euro per year.
- ◆ You can buy maps inside the app, either by individual states or the whole US. The whole US was about \$75 at the time I bought it with free lifetime updates, and it only takes about 1 Gb memory on your phone. Other parts of the world are also available at reasonable prices.

Assuming you chose Quad Lock for mounting.

- Quad Lock phone case and motorcycle handlebar mount combo is \$79.99.
- At the time of writing this there is a 20% discount at Quad Lock for Premium Scenic users or 10% for all users. Get the code in the Scenic app.
- Quad Lock vibration dampener \$19.99 (optional).
- Quad Lock Waterproof Wireless Charging Head \$74.99 (optional).



I chose the vibration dampener because my new motorcycle is one of those listed as possibly having vibration problems. I probably would have bought it anyway because the phone is expensive, and this is cheap \$20 insurance. After my first trip, I also got the wireless charger because I didn't like the way my Apple charging cord was cantilevered out from the phone base. It looked like a vibration risk to me. You might also need a place to plug in your USB to keep the phone charged. My bike has 2 USB ports, so no problem.

Assuming you already have the phone, the Scenic + Quad Lock is going to cost you between \$190 and \$284 dollars without discounts. About the cost of a rear tire.

Does it work well as motorcycle GPS? Yes. Well, maybe one small qualification.

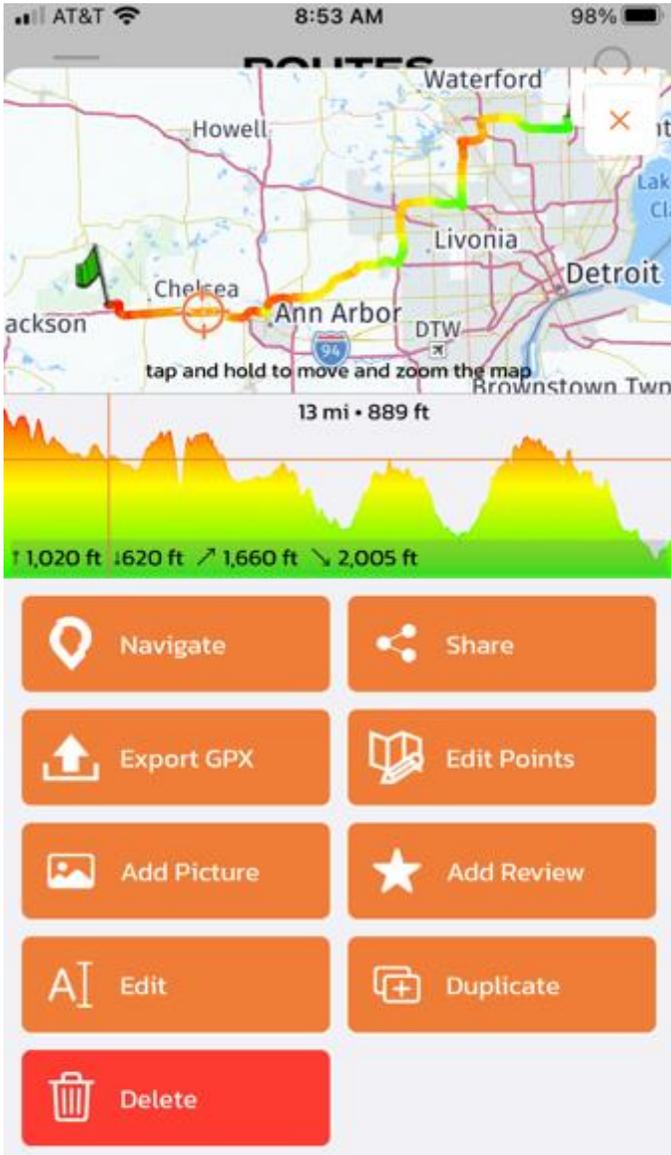
First, a caveat. I don't have any experience with the Zumo XT. Most people tell me it is a lot better than the old Zumo, is faster, and more responsive. I am only able to reference my old 660. For the most part, Scenic works as fast as any app on your phone.

Of course, there is a learning curve for any new software, but Scenic seemed shorter than most for me and there are good FAQ and forum help.

The maps are complete and with Premium you get not only data from the offline maps but also search results from Google and Apple maps. That allows you to search by name, even using the microphone. For example, I just said "Triumph Detroit" into the microphone and the correct result popped up from all 3 sources. Of course, in the middle of the Kansas prairie with no service, things weren't as good. I just waited until I got to town and cell service to get better search results. This only affects search results. I will admit that, with search being so easy, I very quickly got used to using search and not typing in an address.

Navigation and planned stops work just fine without signal. Without a signal, gas stations still show up, just not as many. The route overview shows an elevation profile, and you can drag along the route to see the hills (see picture below next paragraph).

Downloading routes to Scenic is dead easy. I just email the routes to myself and import them into Scenic. Both routes and tracks display on Scenic so it's easy to see route errors. Making a new route on the gps is much better with Scenic than my old Garmin experience. This may be one place where the XT catches up or comes closer.



With Scenic, it asks “where to?” If you select a destination, you have the option of having it route from “fast” to “extra curvy” with several steps in between. Whether it’s a route calculated this way or one you build yourself with shape points, editing is easy. You can move shape points around, delete, or add new ones. I expect most riders do routing this way and it’s very easy once you are used to the software.

Voice navigation is a Premium feature. There are different voice choices including recorded voice that seems more natural to me. This one doesn’t try to announce the road names, so no mangled pronunciation. Instead, it simply tells you where to turn. There are more choices of

voice in the Garmin world, but Scenic does have “Surfer Dude” if you have a sense of humor.

Among the voice navigation options is a small tone before each announcement so that the Bluetooth can turn on before the announcement starts. My old Garmin cuts off the beginning of words because it doesn’t do this.



Following a route will feel very familiar. Most display items can be customized. One of my favorites is being able to control the color of roads on the map. That lets me choose a higher contrast for small roads and which makes rerouting around a blocked road easier.

In the navigation screen, you can open what is known as the “big button screen” which is designed to make controlling the navigation

screen easy with gloves. That brings me to my “one small qualification”.

The old Garmin uses a different kind of screen than your phone. It takes more force, but any finger or glove can actuate buttons on the screen. With a phone, your finger makes a small electrical connection on the screen, so the force is low, and you can do things like zoom in and out with a 2-finger pinch. Put on a normal glove and you really can't control anything.

Many new gloves are supposed to be touch device friendly, but I managed to find a way to screw that up. I have an older phone and have been using screen protectors for years. It turns out that a screen protector can take a “touch device ready” glove that works fine directly on the screen and make it fail miserably. The newest iPhones have new glass is said to be tough enough you could go without a screen protector. Is this an excuse to get a new phone?

Anyway, you will want your phone to work with gloves if you are going to use it for GPS. If you have riding gloves that work well on your phone, then COOL! But you should check your gloves on your phone before downloading any phone-based GPS app.

If they don't work, there are ways of fixing your gloves, but they take a little effort. From what I have seen, things that look like paint or dye don't work very well. The things that do work involve conductive thread. That thread on the outside of the glove makes the electrical connection for you. There are also “stickers” that are said to work, but I haven't any experience.

There are 2 conductive thread methods that I know.



For \$20, you can buy these little sleeves called Farkle Fingers from Adaptiv that go over the end of your glove fingers (see picture above). They work like a charm, as good as your fingers. The trouble is that they are made of thin, stretchy fabric and there is a lot of Velcro around gloves and riding jackets. The first time I tried them, I lost both of them in the first hour. Velcro even grabbed one while sitting in the parking lot. Then both of them disappeared while riding. My guess is that some nearby Velcro grabbed them, pulled them off, and they disappeared in the wind. If I'm going to make these work, I'm going to have to figure out how to attach them to the gloves. Happily, there were 4 in the package, so I still have 2 to play with. Maybe I can sew them on, being careful not to put holes in any Gore-Tex.

The second approach is to buy some conductive thread and sew a little patch in the tip of the finger and thumb, again being careful of Gore-Tex.

It comes down to this. If you can make your gloves work on your phone, Scenic + Quad Lock is a really good solution. It's not perfect, but it is a worthwhile alternative to Zumo. It is clearly better than old Zumo and maybe better than XT. But you may have to do a little work to get to a happy glove solution.

Thanks, Wes.

A special thanks to **Jac Brown** for his article and amazing pictures featured this month.

Remember... All published articles earn a free breakfast, entry into the year-end newsletter drawing AND your fellow members and the newsletter editor will appreciate your articles. You will also earn points toward the **2022 MOTY Awards!**



MSTR Heads Up

Here is a listing of some of the upcoming local events and meetings within the next few months. If you know of a

local motorcycle event in Michigan or Ontario the MSTR would be interested in send Rachel Durling an e-mail to Communications@mstriders.com with the details.

MSTR East Breakfast Meetings

This month's east side breakfast meeting will be on Saturday November 19, 2022 (week early due to Thanksgiving) at 9:00am George's Senate in Northville located at 39430 Dun Rovin Dr, Northville, MI 48168.

December's east side breakfast meeting will be on Saturday December 17, 2022 (again a week early due to Christmas).

MSTR West Lunch Meetings

Our next west side lunch meeting will be on Saturday December 10, 2022, at 11am at the Alibi Bar & Grill, 1394 East Riverside Dr, Ionia, MI 48846.

Twisty Road Seminar
MotorcycleSafetyAssociation.com

What a Professional rider says about the Seminar

"The Twisty Road Seminar offers sound advice to all street riders, regardless of experience level!"
Mark Miller, Isle of Man TT – 1st Place Winner

About us

The Motorcycle Safety Association is a State of Michigan Non-Profit corporation. The U.S. Treasury Department has determined the Association is a charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are therefore tax deductible to the extent the law allows. info@MotorcycleSafetyAssociation.com

BMW Motorcycles of Southeast Michigan:

- 11/26/2022 [Customer Appreciation Movie Day](#)
- 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm BMW Motorcycles of Southeast Michigan, Plymouth MI
- 12/03/2022 [Tech Seminar: The Fundamentals of Touring](#)
- 11:00 am - 4:00 pm BMW Motorcycles Southeast Michigan, Plymouth MI
- 12/17/2022 [Holiday Party & Raffle](#)
- 10:00 am - 4:00 pm BMW Motorcycles of Southeast Michigan, Plymouth MI

Check their website at <https://bmwmotomichigan.com/events/> for more details on events above.

2022 MOTY Banquet

We will be having our 2022 MOTY banquet this year at Zerbo's on Saturday 2/4/2022. More details to come.



MSTR 2022 Rides

Unfortunately, the rides for 2022 have been completed for the year. Please check the MSTR website on the events page for a list of the tentative list of rides and events for 2023 (www.mstriders.com). If you are interested in volunteering, please send an email to the address above.

Note: MSTRider membership is required to attend an MSTR riding event. We will not be able to add your name to an event sign-up list unless you are a current MSTRider or until your New MSTRider Form or MSTRider Renewal form and fee are received. Go to www.mstriders.com, then navigate to the Resources page and scroll down to the **New MSTRider Form** or the **MSTRider Renewal Form**.

MSTR Newsletter & Website

The MSTR Newsletter and Website (www.mstriders.com) belong to you, the

riders. They both can only be as good and as interesting as you make them. If you have something to say about a ride, your bike, perhaps a trip you are planning, whatever, send it in for the newsletter and/or website to:

Rachel Durling:
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MSTR Photo Gallery

The MSTR maintains a Smug Mug photo gallery (<https://mstriders.smugmug.com/>) to allow riders to upload and download pictures of various club events. Upload and download passwords are sent out to participants for each event. Click on the above link or visit the MSTR

website and select the MSTR Photo Gallery link to check out all the event pictures.

Memories from our 2022 riding season:



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