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Entourage PS, a car-grade tracking device in your pocket

BY KEVIN HALL
8:58 AM ON 10/24/09

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At a glance: Escort's Entourage Portable Security system is strong enough to keep track of cars, but it fits — albeit with a bit of a bulge — in your pocket. It's about the size of small cordless handset, and it uses Blackline's GPS network for tracking and positioning.

The most attractive feature of the Entourage PS is its ability to let you know if whatever you're tracking — a car or a backpack, say — isn't where it's supposed to be. Once you get an email or text alert, it's a cinch to start tracking the unit in real-time. It's like having Big Brother in your pocket, but this time you're calling the shots.

Click Continue to read our in-depth impressions.



One button for power, one for arming it. That's it.

Using the Entourage PS is pretty straight forward. The unit itself only has two buttons: one to turn it on, and another to arm the device. Other than that, there's a jack for power, but that's it. You'll get into the meat of the Entourage PS's features by way of Blackline's website and, as you'll see down below, through a remote control scheme.

Instant Security

The Entourage PS's security features comes primarily in two flavors. Motion alerts let you know when

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ever travels 300 meters (985 feet) from that spot, you'll get a text or an email, depending on how you set it up. I went for the text, and sure enough I got one by the time I reached the deli.

By default, the Entourage PS checks in periodically, and you can set the interval yours pings the network (anywhere from every ten minutes to once a day). Once you know there's a problem, you can begin tracking your device in real-time, which will leave you a breadcrumb every few seconds. Check out the image below to see how that looks.

Control by Remote

From Blackline's website you can do everything you need to, from simple tasks such as locating the unit to arming and scheduling its security features. All of the buttons and drop-down menus are plainly presented in such a way that even a newcomer to the world of GPS security would be able to set up alarms and alerts with just a little poking around. What's more, a glance at your profile tells you everything you need to know: how much battery life your Entourage PS has left, if it's armed, signal strength, how many satellites it's currently being tracked by, and — if it's in motion — which direction it's heading and how fast.

Besides the website, you can also control the unit by way of any browser-enabled smartphone, such as a Blackberry. This mobile avenue offers all the same functionality, but with a lot more flexibility. Expanded uses become apparent, too — it wouldn't be a stretch to use the Entourage to find where you parked, since it's accurate enough.

Strength in Numbers

You can keep track of several Escort trackers at once through the Blackline website. It's easy enough to just have one and put it where you need it, but if you have more it's as simple as selecting which device you want to keep tabs on. Also, if you know anyone else with an Escort tracker, you can become friends on the Blackline website and even share security permissions.

As a twist, Entourage PS units can also give you alerts based on their proximity to one another. Clark Swanson, president and CEO of Blackline, told us about how a mother once used two Entourage units to figure out when her kid would be at the neighborhood's bus stop. Since she knew how many miles away it was, she could have a notification sent to her phone when both of her units were a certain distance apart from one another. It may not be the most common use for the Entourage PS, but it certainly demonstrates its versatility.

Final Thoughts

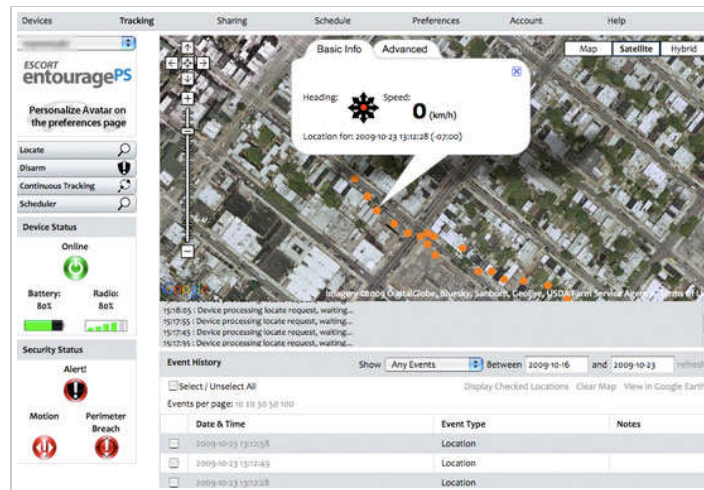
Now that you've read all that, chances are you know whether or not Escort's Entourage PS is right for you. It comes with the hardware to install it in your vehicle, but, really, its uses extend beyond that. You can keep it in your bag or purse, for instance, or even your kid's backpack.

The unit itself costs \$350, with variable subscription plans through Blackline that start at \$20 a month (or you can sign up for a year for \$180).

Via [Escort](#) and [Blackline GPS](#)

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Here's an example of how you can interface with your Escort. See those orange dots? That's me walking down the street.

MASTER ARCHIVE

Comments

By [TxSleeper](#) at 9:33 AM ON 10/24/09

Nice device! Seems like it can be used for very interesting scenarios. But, isn't it just like an altered version of the ankle bracelet for prisoners? > <http://bit.ly/mnlAj>

By [John](#) at 2:24 PM ON 10/24/09

Well, subby John, how else would it send out the location. It has to have cellular technology, hence a subscription. Use your noodle, did you think it was going to be able send the location by magic?

By **tsxtsd** at 11:23 PM ON 10/24/09

@Levophed, I agree with John, we know that it uses cellular technology, we just don't like to have a subscription WITH them. I would like to have a say which cellular provider I would use for the device, just like many other GPS tracking device that is available today.

By **martin** at 10:49 PM ON 10/29/09

the only problem with this is that best buy is coming out with something similar for less than a third of the price. it's still subscription based, but you could use the \$250 you saved on hardware to cover those monthly payments for a while. or you could just pay per use of the service rather than an unlimited plan if you don't plan on checking it all the time. it's called an insignia little buddy if anyone else is interested.

http://www.bestbuy.com/site/olspage.jsp?_dyncharset=ISO-8859-1&_dynSessConf=-367446669558422322&id=pcat17071&type=page&st=insignia+little+buddy&sc=Global&cp=1&nrp=15&sp=&qp=&list=n&iht=y&usc=All+Categorie

By **NishaTruePosition** at 11:43 AM ON 10/30/09

TruePosition offers a service to track mobile phones location using U-TDOA technology utilizing the cell phone's radio, instead of GPS. Triangulation between multiple mobile phone signals offers movement tracking of people both indoors and outdoors which is useful for asset tracking, surveillance, and E-911. Find out more at www.trueposition.com

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