

Bluetooth on track?

Posted by Chris - 27 Feb 2008 06:28

Chuck and I have been talking about doing this for a while now. At the March 8th party Ill be bringing with me some bluetooth headsets that I've been collecting over time. The idea is that we can use these on track to talk with each other, this could be helpful for those in racing teams, comp school, etc. I want to try a specific bluetooth, the "Jawbone" which, unlike typical bluetooth that just pick up sound, gets your voice off the vibration in your cheekbone and, im hoping, will work with our helmets and loud cars. Ill try and see if i can get a half dozen of these for us to use, with free weekends that most providers offer and 3 way calling it could be interesting.

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Re:Bluetooth on track?

Posted by Weston - 27 Feb 2008 07:18

I'm not too worried about microphones picking up too much background noise... my Chase Cam microphone mounted on the passenger side floor is able to pick up most everything I say from several feet away in a noisy race car, with my full face helmet on. I know that Chuck has tucked his microphone into his helmet with good results too.

My main concern is with the earpiece being loud enough to hear it in a noisy race car. I think this is the main problem for us. I've found that just driving my race car on the highway on my way to an event is too noisy for the Bluetooth headset I have... people can seem to hear me alright, but it's really hard for me to hear them. Having a helmet on should help, but race track conditions are also going to be a lot louder than driving on the street.

My gut feeling is that FRS/GMRS radios could work better for us, being that they are cheap, readily available, there would be no dropped calls (imagine trying to re-dial as you race around the track), and we could wire up custom headsets and microphones if we needed to. I could even make my video record our funny conversations on it's spare audio channel (which could also easily be removed later if we wanted too). The problems would be range (they say 5 miles, but that's with flat land and nothing in between the two radios), and the possibility of other people using the same frequencies. Maybe we could mount a small external antenna on our cars to help the range issue though (I've seen other race cars do similar things).

The radios have anywhere from 7 to 22 channels, so it wont be a big problem, but we would just need to make sure we don't pick the same channel as someone else. I know that some NASA officials (ie Chuck, Kevin, etc) are using what look like FRS or GMRS radios, but last I knew, race control was using more professional radios on a completely separate and dedicated frequency. So, at worst, we have to listen to Kevin heckling us. The privacy code feature is pretty much useless... you're still on the same actual frequency, so you'll still interfere with other people; it's just that you're transmitting a specific tone that other receivers with the same privacy code are listening for. In my experience, interference or static will

screw up that tone, so other people may not hear you at all. Unless you have really good conditions, it's best to just set it to zero, which turns that feature off so that you hear everything on that channel.

I suppose another idea would be something based on a CB radio transceiver... 40 channels, optional sideband channels, and there shouldn't be any range issues for us. We'd just have way more of an issue with other people using the same frequencies, especially if we're near a trucking route or in a rural area, which applies to pretty much all of our tracks.

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Re:Bluetooth on track?

Posted by Chris - 27 Feb 2008 07:24

theres also just regular wired phone headsets which can get really loud...

I can get some of those too.

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Re:Bluetooth on track?

Posted by SvoChuck - 27 Feb 2008 15:19

I thought you kids would be good for something ... lets work it out and have a plan for in car . we can use this as a safety channel and other uses.

this will not be mandatory.

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Re:Bluetooth on track?

Posted by 944cer - 29 Feb 2008 03:53

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CB's generally require keying a mike, not something we want to do while driving. You can paick an "off" channel and avoid most outside/trucker chatter.

Not sure how much, if any, chatter I want going on in my helmet besides my own!

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Re:Bluetooth on track?

Posted by Bottoz - 29 Feb 2008 04:38

The cell phone option sounds great to me... free weekends and all. Is there a way we can all dial into a conference, or would it be just 3-way calling? I have a wired head set that would work well. I've tried 2-way radios on track... hell, they didn't even work well in city traffic. Perhaps it was just my low quality radios, but it was very hard to understand even inside a Tahoe at 40 MPH.

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