

Garmin Ends CD-ROM Chart Updates

If you are tempted by cheap online prices for some older Garmin handheld GPS plotters, you might want to think twice before clicking “Buy.” *Practical Sailor* has gotten a few letters from disgruntled owners of older Garmin handheld GPSs who have discovered that their devices are no longer being supported with updated Blue Charts.

Products that are affected are those that have limited internal storage and cannot accept data cards. This includes several products that fared well in *Practical Sailor* testing, such as the grey-scale Garmin GPSMap 76, the Garmin 76Cs, and the West Marine 76Cs. The West Marine 76Cs and the Garmin 76Cs were available to consumers as late as 2007.

The Blue Chart series charts were first published as a CD-ROM version in 2001. In 2006, Garmin introduced more data-rich Blue Chart G2 data cards and a series of new devices to run them, and said it would continue to support legacy units with CD-ROM updates. Now, on the verge of

re-releasing the latest version of its G2 Vision series charts (recalled in 2009 due to data errors), Garmin is pulling back chart support for the older units. It will continue to do semi-

annual updates of its Blue Chart G2 data-card chart series.

“The GPSMap 76 series was announced eight years ago, and like all electronics, these products are limited by the technology available at that time,” explained Garmin’s Carly Baltes. “If the unit includes expandable memory (the GPSMap 76CSx and the GPSMap 76Cx), then BlueChart G2 data can be loaded to provide updated charts.

“We always struggle when we can no longer support older legacy products. However there are times when technology advances make these decision necessary.”



West Marine GPS 76CS