

NEWS

Lexus Reveals "Remote Touch" Mouse-Based, Point-And-Click Infotainment System

BY **MATT HARDIGREE** | JANUARY 15, 2009 12:30 PM EST

Lexus debuted a new navigation system in the HS 250h, their new dedicated hybrid, continuing the assimilation of computer controls into automobiles with a track-ball-like mouse. We decided to play with it.

Lexus HS 250h: A Prius For The Country Club

The Lexus HS 250h will offer the economy of the 2010 Toyota Prius in a more stylish, and more expensive package.

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The new "Remote Touch" system found on the HS 250h is one of the first production infotainment systems to include a controller similar to an inverted-track ball mouse, as opposed to either a touchscreen or a control knob found on most systems. Placed in the vehicle where the hand naturally rests, the "Remote Touch" is likely to reduce the movement of the shoulders which occurs when a driver goes to touch a screen. This is nice because many people tend to move the steering wheel at the same time, causing them to depart from lanes.

When you look at the screen you see a typical mouse pointer or, if you select it, a gigantic hand. When moving the inverted mouse button around feels fairly natural and the reproduction on the screen makes it easier to make a selection. This gives the system an advantage over a knob, which requires too much attention paid to a screen to select button direction.

The screen itself is located at a far, high angle in a place seemingly easier for a driver to see. The demo system was pulled out of the car for use, so it is hard for



nicely-designed as something you could find on a \$200 Garmin Nuvi.

Using the interface is easy, and not in the way most systems are easy for someone who has used a navigation system before. The Hard Disk Drive (HDD) navigation display isn't drastically different in its nesting of menu pages from other systems, but the ability to select the layers of information with a mouse-like control makes them easier to jump through.

Like the 2010 Toyota Prius, the Lexus HS 250h is only offered as a hybrid and will carry a larger four-cylinder gasoline power plant. In order to differentiate the Lexus from the Prius the company went not only with a new, less geeky aesthetic but also with superior features. One of the key pieces is the new HDD navigation system and, compared to the base DVD-based Toyota system, it may be worth the premium. You can also find the system on the 2010 Lexus RX and the new LX-series vehicles.

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