



Looking for open parking spaces in the city is one of the more teeth-grinding rituals for drivers, but researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA may have hit upon a relatively low-cost solution. They've combined ultrasonic sensors with GPS to create digital maps of available parking spaces for Web-based navigation systems, according to Technology Review.

The Rutgers researchers took a low-cost approach by building a sensor platform based on a \$20 ultrasonic sensor that gauges the distance to nearby obstacles, and a \$100 GPS receiver to mark locations. They combined the setup with a PC to transmit the data to a central server via WiFi, and placed the prototype platform on three cars that commute through Highland Park, NJ.

Based on data collected from daily commutes of the three cars alone, the team created a 95% accurate ultrasound algorithm to calculate available parking spaces, and also made digital maps based on the GPS data that were more than 90% accurate. These were then made available to navigation systems on other cars via WiFi connections or cellular modems.