Manager

ham radio on the net Operating ▼ Resources ▼ Site Info ▼ Login/Register Community -Reviews For: Radio Shack PRO-96 Digital Trunking Scanner **Reviews Home** Category: Receivers: Scanners Review Summary For: Radio Shack PRO-96 Digital Trunking Scanner eMail Subscription Registered users are allowed to subscribe to specific review topics and receive eMail notifications when new reviews are posted. Reviews: 19 MSRP: 499.00 Manager - NA4M Manager Notes Donate to keep eHam on Description: This Analog, digital APCO-25 3600/9600 BPS EDACS and Motorola trunking scanner is the most advanced scanner on the the net market today. Product is not in production More Info: http://www.radioshack.com **Total reviews** # last 180 days Avg. Rating last 180 days Avg. overall rating 4.5 0 0 19 Rating: 🙏 🙏 🙏 🙏 **PAULGBLUNDELL** 2008-11-07 2 years on - Still great Time Owned: more than 12 months. DTS-96 Digital Trunk Tracking Handheld Scanner Review Here's my review of the DTS-96 handheld scanner, this unit is basically a clone of the pro96 from the USA but with some changes to suit the Australia market. I have been told the DTS-96 is now end of life with DSE so they won't be getting any more in. Some of the more important specs: Most of the important bands from 25 MHz – 1300 MHz, including 70-80MHz unlike the US pro96. AM / FM/ Digital modes 11 V-Scanner folders – 500 channels in 10 banks per folder. Trunk Tracker (Motorola and EDACS) APCO 25 Digital decoding CTCSS / DCS decoding 12 Character 4 line display Text Tags PC Programming Here's what you get with it out of the box: DTS-96 unit: This is a large handheld unit and is quite heavy, takes 4xAA batteries and seems to last quite a while on them. Manual This is a must have item as this is a very complex unit to set up and use. 2 x Battery cases One is black and is for use with non-rechargeable cells, the other is yellow and allows you to charge NiCad or NiMH cells while in the radio, personally I am not a fan of this and I charge my batteries in a normal charger. Programming the unit: As you can't get programming software for this radio I have programmed it all by hand, I have set up a EDACS bank and about 300 normal channels, the process to do this is outlined in the manual but is not as hard as the manual makes it sound, I did all the above in less then 3 hours with adding alpha tags to some channels / talk groups. Using it for the last few days after programming it shows it seems to work very well both on the EDACS trunking and on normal vhf / uhf channels, doing some side by side testing with my 780 and my 396T shows that the scan speed is very good and that it performs as well if not better then the above units on both the EDACS system and normal vhf / uhf channels, the audio is great and has a very good sound to it, not tinny or anything like that. Good points: 11 V scanner folders – allows the storing of 11 configs so you can quickly change as you move to different areas, say have one for Launceston and one for Hobart. APCO25 Digital Instant CTCSS decode on screen Good audio from speaker and very natural sounding. Uses of AA batteries Fast scan / search 5 preprogrammed search ranges plus 1 custom search range. Good RF performance, by this I mean I can program channels I want to listen to and hear them well with few - no problems with overload and interference. Works like a "real" scanner, unlike some units that try to do everything and have all the features under the sun but lack the "fun" factor; I can hear what I want when I want without complex programming steps. Display / keypad backlight – this works very well. Text Tags – easy to program and are easy to read. Display is well laid out and full of information. BNC aerial connection. Bad points: No I-calls on Trunking systems (not a huge issue to me) Sucks batteries a bit fast Quite a large / heavy unit. Some keys a little hard to press (might just be my fat fingers) So to sum up, am I happy with the unit, yes I am, would I buy one again, yes I would, is it better then a Uniden 396T which is it's main rival at the moment, well yes and no, I have used both and doing some side by side testing they were much the same but the nicer audio, faster scan rate and easier programming of the DTS-96 just puts it ahead in my book. If you have a 396T there is little to want to make you sell it to buy one of these but if you are tossing up between the two units try them both and see which you prefer, while it might lack some features of the 396T in my experience it seems to perform as a scanner much better. Hope this has been helpful, and please let me know if you have any questions about it." Now over 2 years later since I got my first DTS-96 and once again I am the proud owner of the DTS-96 (there is no way I will be letting this one go) as I was unable to get a 396T locally from DSE and once again I am glad I have made the choice to stick with this instead of a 396T which is still a good little scanner but for what I do I find the DTS-96 suits me better, here are a few reasons: -- Overall better RF performance and better APCO25 decoding (from the small amount I have done with it) - Louder audio Better screen and keypad backlighting More backlight functions and delays -- Wider screen fonts -- More reliable Sub audible Squelch Tail Elimination turn-off codes (debatable) -- V-Scanner Folders feature (Virtually 11 scanners-in-one or 5500 channels total) -- Analog volume and squelch controls (UBCD396T has 16 digital steps on each) -- Easier to store found CTCSS/CDCSS tones/codes -- V-folders can quickly restore a default setup (clear lockouts, etc) -- Infinite backlight availability without losing timed setting. Paul Earlier 5-star review posted by PAULGBLUNDELL on 2007-04-16 Here's my review of the new DTS-96 handheld scanner, this unit is basically a clone of the pro96 from the USA but with some changes to suit the Australia market. . Some of the more important specs: Most of the important bands from 25 MHz – 1300 MHz, including 70-80MHz unlike the US pro96. AM / FM/ Digital modes 11 V-Scanner folders – 500 channels in 10 banks per folder. Trunk Tracker (Motorola and EDACS) APCO 25 Digital decoding CTCSS / DCS decoding 12 Character 4 line display Text Tags PC Programming Here's what you get with it out of the box: DTS-96 unit: This is a large handheld unit and is quite heavy, takes 4xAA batteries and seems to last quite a while on them. 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If you have a 396T there is little to want to make you sell it to buy one of these but if you are tossing up between the two units try them both and see which you prefer, while it might lack some features of the 396T in my experience it seems to perform as a scanner much better. I was so impressed with the DTS-96 I am selling my 396T. Hope this has been helpful, and please let me know if you have any questions about it. Rating: 🛨 🛧 W8WJW 2008-03-31 Time Owned: more than 12 months. DSP Update NEEDED from RS! This scanner would be a 5/5 -BUT- there is just ONE major issue that needed to be addressed by RadioShack / GRE: reception of a Simulcast Project25 CQPSK multisite system is horrible, and nearly unusable. A SINGLE SITE Project25 comes in quite acceptably (with digital 'thin' sound), but no reception issues. The multicast / simulcast system is in Lucas County Ohio, includes the City of Toledo, and has 13 tower sites in the county. Reception on the PRO-96 is unusable at my location, even using a yagi pointed at a single Radio Shack had previsouly issued DSP firmware updgrade v1.4 to address some Project25 APCO25 issues, but they are sorely in need of an upgrade now to address horrible reception of CQPSK reception from multiple sites. Perhaps there IS nothing that can be done to correct this major issue, BUT IF it can be addressed with a new v1.5 upgrade, then I would be a happy camper. Radio Shack / GRE - are you listening? 73's Rating: **NOVKG** 2007-08-27 **Great radio** Time Owned: more than 12 months. I really like this one. Its sensitivity revivals anything else I have. There are currently 2 shortcomings with this radio: (1) no 700Mhz trunking. (2) no LTR trunking on any band. Other than that, this is a fantastic radio. I love using PRO96COM & Win96 PC programs with it. Fantastic folks, and awesome sensitivity. Rating: 🛨 🛧 UBBE 2007-08-01 **Excellent receiver!** Time Owned: more than 12 months. This is almost a Pro-2006 in a portable form. Sensitivity is ok but what really stands out are it's intermod rejection and overload resistance. This is the best handheld scanner I ever tried when it comes to recevier performance. You can feed any kind of roof top antenna to this scanner and it doesn't hesitate one bit. More good points are a reasonable 9-10 hour constant use from a set of fully charged 2300mAH NiHM's. Very good backlight of the keys. Analog trunk are also decoding the datasignal on the voice channels. When you manually step through channels you instantly see the TG id or nametag as soon as a call are heard. It's also used to revert back to the control channel when it can't decode the data. That's better than Unidens squelch or end-tone detection in a situation where a channel is interfered or very weak. And sadly that ends the positive points. This is a very specific US scanner as the step sizes are carved in stone and can not be altered. Some marine VHF channels like 159.900 and 161.600 and of course a lot of frequency bands have the wrong step size for euro usage. As it has a receiver performance like a good old scanner from the 80's, it also means it has some bad points taken from that era of scanners. There's no menu system. Everything has it own button or cryptic combination of function keys and number buttons that requires keeping the manual next to you. Delay for conventional channels are only a simple 2 sec on or off function. The lack of a menu makes it impossible to handle a lot of channels like a Uniden with dynamic memory. The Pro-96 have then divided the normal Uniden channel capability into 10 smaller parts with 500 channels each but you can only access them one part at a time and not in any combination. There's some evident PLL jitter noise from the VCO that creates a hiss in the audio. This probably also affects the squelch, creating too much noise partly masking a carrier, as it works a bit erratic and nonconsistant. The squelch also lacks hysteres and pops and stutter easily. The audio is extreamly thinny and toppy and lacks any midrange and bass. This also enhance the hiss both from VCO and normal noise. It is the same thing using headphones. Every conversation are clouded by a hiss. The volume has already been mentioned as being too sensitiv. You have only to touch it slightly and it goes to full audio level. But if a 4 or 8 ohm loudspeaker are connected to the earphone jack the volume suddenly works as it should and the audio is perfect with the high end of the speech band cut off. There's no dataskip or other similar function to skip over silent carriers. You only have one programmable search range. There's no NFM, SFM or WFM modes, only FM, which makes the Pro-96 hard to use when you listen to a mix of 25Khz and 12,5Khz channels. The display is cluttery with a lot of superfluos characters like + and . signs which makes it hard to read with a quick glance. The scanner is bottom heavy due to the four batteries and you must hold the scanner at the very bottom part, where the batteri lid is. Unfortunatly the lid is badle design and comes loose easily when you hold the scanner firmly. The scanners square and big design of the chassi with sharp edges makes it carv into my fingers after a short while of holding it. The analog trunk function only support talk groups, no ID's, private call or interconnect. The analog trunk data decoder are unsensitive and doesn't decode as well as a Uniden at the same noise level. The percent indicator often show 0% with only a small amount of noise. Even an almost fully saturated signal only gives a 50% decode value. During scanning of trunked system the display doesn't show any info besides "scan". You have no information of if it even have found a datachannel or actually decodes anything. You can not upgrade the firmware, at least nothing have been released. Only the APCO-25 DSP can be upgraded. It probably wont need any upgrade due to lack of features. It's a very basic and simple scanner almost as if a scanner from the 80's have been added with the most basic form of trunked options you can get away with. The update signalling from a cell phone 2 meters away easily break into the audio circuit of the Pro-96, even during scanning. I haven't been able to test the APCO-25 feature so it is solely the good receiver performance that makes me give it a 3 as a rating. Also, the high pricetag of \$499 doesn't match well with the lack of features, options and trunk performance of the Pro-96. But it is a damn good receiver! Urban Larsson Sweden **KE4RWS** Rating: ★★★★★ 2007-06-29 My Best Scanner Yet Time Owned: 0 to 3 months. The Radio Shack PRO-96 is my first true digital trunking scanner I've owned. I did have the Uniden BC785D for a few months but didn't have the optional digital card for it so I had no experience with any real digital scanners until now. I also currently own the PRO-95, which I must say is very close in design to the PRO-96. I know both are manufactured by GRE, and there are definitely some shared aspects of both models. First, I have to say I'm very impressed with the PRO-96 in terms of its capabilities and the quality of this radio. Although I possess no official testing equipment, I can say from my own use of a vast array of scanners the PRO-96 is a fine piece of equipment and is a technological wonder when compared to scanners from just a few years ago. With that said let me be the first to say I'm particularly fond of 'larger' portable radios, be it scanners or transceivers. I don't really care for all the new tiny dual band portables, scanners and the like. I want to know I've got something in my hand when I'm using one of these radio sets, and the PRO-96 is just the right size for my liking (I wouldn't want anything larger though). Some have commented they don't care for the PRO-96 because it's simply too big for them, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's merely a personal preference. I personally like bigger radio's with bigger keys, buttons and knobs. My amateur handheld's are comprised mainly of Motorola HT1000 and MTX series portables, which are the same size as the PRO-96 and are just the right size I prefer in a portable radio. That's just me. Naturally I downloaded the recommended Win96 programming software to try it out and of course I loved it. I already had the programming cable, which I previously used on my PRO-95 and it works perfectly with the PRO-96 (serial port style). Although I was already familiar with Win95 software for my PRO-95, I did have a bit of a learning challenge with Win96, as the digital programming aspect made things somewhat different, not to mention having to learn just how the V-folders work (which I have to say is a really nice feature). And speaking of the V-folders feature, I found this particularly useful while out in the field and desiring to completely change the scanners profile without the aid of a computer. This would also be a life-saver if one encountered a critical error that required a hard-reset of the entire CPU. Since performing a hard-reset does NOT affect the V-folders, one could restore your favorite profile from the V-folders and be back in business within seconds (again, without the aid of a computer). I found the backlighting of the keys/buttons and display to be excellent and is a huge improvement over the previous model, the PRO-95 (the 95 has a dim greenish backlight in the display and the keys have no backlighting at all). The PRO-96 Button layout appears to have logical placement and all controls are easily manipulated. Audio output is very adequate for a radio of this size, and I found digital transmissions to have particularly good audio quality vs. analog trunking systems. It should be noted if you desire to plug in an external speaker for improved audio performance you'll need to use an amplified speaker, as there's not enough audio coming from the PRO-96 to really drive a typical external speaker. I tested my PRO-96 using a Radio Shack amplified speaker and it provides PLENTY of great audio output. I've always been a fan of the Shack's amplified speaker though. Can't say enough good things about this speaker. Like most GRE-made scanners, the PRO-96 utilizes a triple-conversion receiver, which simply means less heterodynes and interference in general. Triple-up receiver design is a must for any wide banded radio if you want to minimize unwanted hash. I felt the receiver sensitivity is very good but this is based solely on stations I could hear in various bands. Keep in mind I possess NO testing equipment so my observations are based on how the PRO-96 compares to other receivers in my own inventory. Based on what others have documented using test equipment (posted in various places on the internet), it was obvious the 96 has a more sensitive receiver than the 95 if you compare the numbers alone, which is encouraging since this IS a \$500 scanner. Frequency coverage is very good on the PRO-96 but there are gaps you need to be aware of, which can be an issue depending on where you live and what you want to listen to. Stock PRO-96 ranges are 25-54, 108-174, 216-225, 406-512, 806-960 (minus cellular of course), and 1240-1300 MHz. Win96 has a selection that extends the frequency range of this model. This enables certain ranges but not all blocked out areas. Naturally, all US cellular telephone ranges are blocked but oddly enough so is 174-216 MHz. Although there's really nothing there one would want to listen to (that I'm aware of in the US other than TV broadcasts in W-FM, which the PRO-96 is not capable of receiving), its feasible other countries would have activity there. Many other high-end scanners include this range so who knows why GRE left this range out of the PRO-96 (maybe at the request of RS). Once 'Extended Frequencies' is selected in Win96, the scanner's new received ranges are 17-174, 216-550, and 764-1300 MHz (minus cellular). Bear in mind sensitivity will be greatly affected in some ranges, as the PRO-96 was not originally designed to receive beyond certain areas, although some extended ranges receive very well. Sensitivity in these extended ranges is documented on the internet- simply search for PRO-96 and you'll locate lots of documented stuff on this model. The battery life was decent, I felt. I tested my PRO-96 using a fresh set (4) of Duracell alkaline's and a set (4) of Duracell NiMH AA rechargeable batteries (rated at 2,000 mah). Just to make it more challenging I also ran the keypad/display backlighting the entire time I operated the scanner whether I needed it or not. The alkaline's provided roughly six (6) hours continuous run time while the NiMH rechargeable's provided at least four and a half (4.5) hours. This also included nearly continuous radio traffic (audio output) throughout the duration of the battery's lives monitoring my local digital trunking system. Just like the PRO-95, the PRO96 will begin flashing "LOW BATT" in the display once the battery level drops below a certain point, and will beep every 30 seconds or so as well. I personally found that you should be ready to replace the batteries fairly quickly once the Low Batt indicator starts flashing, as the remaining power doesn't last long once this starts, depending on the type of batteries being used. In fact, I noticed on a couple occasions while using rechargeable batteries and using the backlight, the Low Batt indicator didn't even come up. It merely started turning itself off and on. Unlike the PRO-95, the 96 has a menu setting in Win96 that lets you enter a preset voltage where the Low Batt message will begin flashing. Another thing I really like about the PRO-96 is the continued use of a standard BNC antenna connector. Although many prefer other type connectors, I'm just a simple guy when it comes to scanner antenna connectors and I much prefer a regular ol' BNC over anything else to accommodate quick and easy antenna change-overs when necessary. I have 3 basic antennas I use based on what I'm listening to, and this is where I love a good old fashioned BNC connector. Again though, that's just me and is nothing more than personal preference. I did purchase the optional Radio Shack 800 MHz rubber duck antenna just to see if there was a noticeable difference between the stock antenna from the dedicated 800 MHz model. Most people say it improved their 800 reception while a select few say it did nothing. Just for the record, I noticed no noticeable difference and ended up returning the 800 MHz antenna and getting my \$20 back. But like many have already said regarding this, your mileage may vary. I can say the only thing I wish GRE had incorporated into the PRO-96 is LTR trunking ability. There's not much in the way of LTR where I live but in my travels I would use it often and I would have thought a \$500 is LTR trunking ability. scanner that seems to have everything else would have had the ability to follow LTR. The PRO-96 does have user-upgradeable DSP firmware, which can be downloaded from the Radio Shack website and loaded into the scanner via the programming cable and your PC. This is an important feature because DSP is responsible for proper digital operation. This is only a DSP firmware upgrade however, NOT the CPU (some have confused the two). The PRO-96 from Radio Shack is \$499 with \$399 being the sale price. I've seen them sell on eBay (used) for \$225-\$350. One thing in particular I think Radio Shack should really consider is providing the programming cable, power supply, rechargeable batteries, and maybe even programming software with the PRO-96. Although this is an exceptional scanner, the fact that it costs \$500 plus tax tends to place it in the category of receivers where these 'options' should be included in the price. Uniden's BC396 comes with these items as standard and so should the PRO-96. Overall I'm extremely pleased with my PRO-96 and plan on keeping it a very long time. This is a high-quality product with some great improvements over previous models, and its obvious GRE is listening to what people want in a scanner. No scanner will have absolutely everything we desire but I have to say I'm very impressed with this model and it's a pleasure to use every day. I understand the current offering from Uniden (the BC396) is also a highly rated model, but if you're a GRE fan (or just prefer larger portable scanners with high quality), then the PRO-96 is for you. If the 96 is anything like the 95 I should get a lot of enjoyment from this radio and I can say I definitely recommend the Radio Shack PRO-96 digital trunking scanner. Randy Evans KE4RWS Rating: 🙏 🙏 🙏 🙏 **KQ4KK** 2007-04-14 With Software, a Great Scanner Time Owned: more than 12 months. The Pro-96 comes loaded with files of most of the large cities/areas freqs, modes, and codes. If it doesn't, then you got to program it by a PC. The best program out here is WIN96. http://www.starrsoft.com/software/Win96/ If you do it by hand, or any other program, it will drive you crazy!! Rating: 🛨 🛧 🙏 **KB2FBI** 2007-04-14 got it 2 progrm via kypad Time Owned: 3 to 6 months. Frank Sinatra, "Love, is lovlier, the second time around." It is still has THE highest learning curve of any gear I've owned. I had to "learn" how to catch the frequencies (better to just look up and enter) but I found some missing talk group codes. Then, next, NEXT!, set up the talk groups as MOTOROLA (usually) Then, step through PGM frequency channels, setting mode as MOT. Do so through the 10 or 12 frequencies. Then, THEN!, while scanning, use Trunk key T to capture and store the group ID. Owning a Pro 97 was a good tutor for this, The Pro 97 is great and easy. The Pro 96 not nearly so friendly. Also, the keyboard layout of important keys is like the interior controls of the first VW bug. Remember, no words - strange pictures - taking forever to find what passed for a heater? So, it is doable. Digital is okay, analog is better. WOW. Who designed this? It is also like some packaging (like my Rx bags!) you see it in the blister pack but just can't get the darn thing open! GRINS KB2FBI -.- -. ### Earlier 3-star review posted by KB2FBI on 2007-03-16 It seems to be able to do ALL things, save one; get programmed. People love this, and I suspect I am fond of it. I am spoiled as I have the RS Pro-97, which is a "piece of cake" to learn on and use for trunk scanning. The Pro-96? I would say it is, "User vicious." An amateur radio licensee, moi, should eventually be able to program the radio. I even asked for help. I found no one who could explain how to do it. (Because they can't do it!) Almost all recommended using a software program to load and program the radio. The manual lacks screen pictures with, "This is the on indicator. This is the lock out indicator. DG means a digital system ..." and so on. It can cover just about everything there is to hear. Where my QTH is, I have the locals on Motorola on a type LLL analog and the city of Austin, 1 mile away, on a digital (Apco-25) system so I need both. This radio can do it. Not easily in explaining it, but it works. I programmed it, by accident! I also have some PC software but so far I haven't used it on the Pro-96. So, it knows all, does all. If you have the digital system to listen to, your best bet. It also is a little hard of hearing compared to the Pro-97. The RS 800 MHz antenna is a must have. So, the Pro-96 is a cruel mistress. "She" can do all you want, but getting there is not even 1/2 the fun. It is no fun at all. Look for the sales and it becomes a deal to execute. Anyone remember Tom Lehrer? His song, "The Masochism Tango!" Rating: 🛨 🛧 2007-03-16 N3DG3 Overpriced, User Unfriendly Time Owned: 6 to 12 months. After getting over the sticker-shock on this Radio Shack Scanner, I found the unit to have generally good audio quality, but sensitivity, selectivity and rejection that could be much better. As well, I have found it to be quite user-unfriendly requiring much time, patience and a PC to really use effectively (not my idea of a radio for a hobby or the casual user). You have to be a PC Power User to use this radio. The price, even on sale, is way out of line and appears to be what the market will bear until they discontinue them and sell them for a fraction of list price. Buy a used one far cheaper than new, maybe you'll be satisfied and maybe the store will help you program it for free, if they have spare time !!! Rating: W2DI 2007-02-14 Time Owned: 0 to 3 months. Edge to Pro-96 I've had both the BCD-396 and Pro-96 - just have the Pro-96 now. Both are really fine radios and top of the line scanners for both digital and analog use. For the BCD-396, I like the following: -Size. Smaller than the Pro-96. Just the perfect size -Blue Display. Just my preference. -Memory Management, More flexible and open than the Pro. Not thrilled with the Pro V-File arrangement. Works ok but a little cumbersome compared to the 396. -Scan Speed. Might be a hair faster than the Pro, but hard to tell. -WFM. You can receive TV and FM commercial stations. Cannot with the Pro. For the Pro-96 I like the following: -I used Radio Reference for both but the Pro is, IMO, easier to program from scratch, if you get all the info. As a previous writer said, you can easily program in the control channels and set-up a few other things and scan away. You'll track all the system ID's but not know what they are for. With R/Ref, you get much more info. -The Pro has a better AGC and handles digital signals better. The 396 will sometimes pop or take time to even out. Got to be careful with phones. -The Pro does last longer with a set of batteries. The 396 is not bad, but the PRO is better. -The Pro seems to be a bit more sensitive with the stock antennas. However, for the 800MHz band, the RS 800MHz duck is a noticable improvement. -Pro seems to have more robust audio. -Lastly, I was fortunate to get the Pro for 399. That helps. Both are great. I would agree with others that the 396 has the edge with features, flexibility and looks while the Pro has an edge with performance. Just observations, no measuring done. Thanks for reading. Joe Rating: 🛨 🛧 🙏 **SIERRAHOTEL** 2007-02-14 **Great.** Time Owned: 0 to 3 months. I just bought one of these, after several local agencies went over to digital. I had friends with both the Uniden Bearcat 396T and the GRE made Pro-96, and I borrowed both to compare them so I could decide which one I wanted to finally buy. As far as initial set up to scan, the 96 wins, hands down. All you need to do to scan most Motorola systems, both digital and analog, is to set a bank to Mo trunked mode and program just the control channels and scan away. I had the 3 major trunked systems set up in less than a half hour, using the keypad on the radio. It would have been even faster if I had the cable adaptor I needed. The Bearcat took a long time to set up the same way, the file I used to set it up was incorrect and I had to redo it, basically from scratch. I found the Bearcat's keypad too small and very annoying to use. Bearcat's trunk setup is more flexible, but for most users, it's too complex for it's own good. Once I get the cable to program the 96, I will add the alpha tags for the talkgroups, but I can listen fine without them. Sensitivity was about the same, the bearcat seemed a little better on the air band but the 96 had better audio, and digital signals that were barely readable on the bearcat weren't great on the 96, but not nearly as bad as they were on the 396T. Both radios had oddly acting volume controls. Both of them went totally silent after I turned them down and I forgot to turn them back up. I think most of the diffference in sensitivity is due to the stock antennas. Both radios share a lot of the same features, many of them of almost no use to most users, some, like the 396T's Close Call feature, might come in handy at the NHRA or NASCAR races. I like the blue backlight color on the 396T better than the 96's amber, but I have problems reading it in my old age, but I can read the 96's display without any problems. I wish both manufacturers would add a color change feature to a future model, my 2-meter mobile's backlight can be green or amber. I greatly prefer the green, the amber is annoying. Both radios use good old, can get anywhere, AA batteries. For RS, this is nothing new, but Uniden finally abandoned the overpriced battery back nonsense after about 20 years. I don't know how many times my old BC-205's battery pack died unexpectedly. I made the decision not to buy any Uniden scanner until the got rid of the battery packs and went to AA batteries. I'm glad to see they finally wised up. Compared to my old Pro-93, battery life isn't as good, but I got about 16-17 hours on a set of AA's. I got about 13-14 hours on the 396. It uses just 3 AA batteries compared to the 96's 4, and I think that's part of the reason the 96 has louder audio.

I am very happy with this scanner, as I have been with my previous Pro-93. Radio Shack has another winner here. There's nothing really wrong with the 396T, but it's too complicated to use, IMO. Ease of use, louder audio, and better digital audio make it the clear winner, for me anyway. Copyright 2000-2022 eHam.net, LLC eHam.net is a community web site for amateur (ham) radio operators around the world. Site Privacy Statement Contact the site with comments or questions.