

Carsoft Ultimate Home



BMW Ultimate Home V8.0 - (08/2009)



MINI Ultimate Home V8.0 - (08/2009)



Setup



Exit

9/12/2009 3:01 PM Carsoft Ultimate Home V8.0

ROAD TEST - CARSOFT ULTIMATE HOME v8.0

I had the pleasure of trialling the latest version of Carsoft's "Ultimate Home" software today – the latest of 3 updates since initially upgrading from Carsoft v6.5 to the genuine article, and the first to be based on a graphical user interface.

Those of you who are familiar with my postings in the Diagnostic Software section of **Bimmerforums.com**, will no doubt be familiar with the "Carsoft Success" thread which I began in 2008 after being duped into purchasing a non-functional pirated version of Carsoft's Beta v6.5 software.

There are currently literally dozens of diagnostic programs for the budding BMW enthusiast to choose from, ranging from small, self contained, specialised tools such as the excellent tools manufactured by the Peake Research Corporation up to those providing dealer-level functionality. Carsoft Ultimate Home software is targeted at the home user, who simply wants to diagnose, repair and maintain their vehicle whilst avoiding the costs associated with dealer servicing.

Carsoft Ultimate Home software does not have the ability to code or program the various control units of your vehicle – these functions, if utilised incorrectly by an untrained user can have disastrous effects on your car, often necessitating the physical replacement of expensive computer modules to restore lost or destroyed functionality. What Carsoft Ultimate home does do however, is allow you to diagnose problems with the sensors in your car, clear fault codes, view live engine data, test the functionality of various components such as central locking, electric windows, interior lights etc., reset fuel adaptations, service intervals and even realign the engine control (DME) and immobiliser (EWS) modules.

Forget about getting hold of a knock-off copy of Carsoft Ultimate Home v8.0 – Carsoft have adopted the latest security measures to protect their new software, which requires the use

of a coded security dongle – a legacy of Carsoft having their original Beta v6.5 software pirated.

The new software is suitable for use with any Windows operating System (even Vista). It can be used in conjunction with a true serial port, USB adaptor or PCMCIA card and is supported by a comprehensive user manual, manufacturer warranty (with free upgrades for 2 years) and full technical support. Unlike v6.5 it also handles both BMW and Mini vehicles right up until 2008!

As I have had mixed success with some “aftermarket” interfaces, and CarsoftWest now offers spec Carsoft interfaces at competitive prices, I used a genuine Carsoft interface for my testing. Let’s have a look at some screen shots of the program in action and see what it will do...

The first screen (shown at the beginning of this article) is where you nominate the type of vehicle you will be working with and is a completely fresh approach from the earlier versions of Carsoft. Buttons, including one for “Setup” which allows the choice of an appropriate COM Port, are large, easy to read and use.

My test car was a Euro-spec 1998 BMW E36 328i individual Coupe so I chose the “BMW Ultimate Home V8.0” button and was instantly greeted by a second screen, which invited me to choose between BMW Passenger vehicles or off-road vehicles. Every screen from here on includes a button to access the Carsoft PDF manual, which includes a comprehensive explanation of the numerous BMW acronyms and provides the ability to access the manual without terminating any particular program function.



After choosing BMW Passenger Vehicles I was invited to nominate between 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 (yes, the E31 is listed) and Z series.

Carsoft Ultimate Home

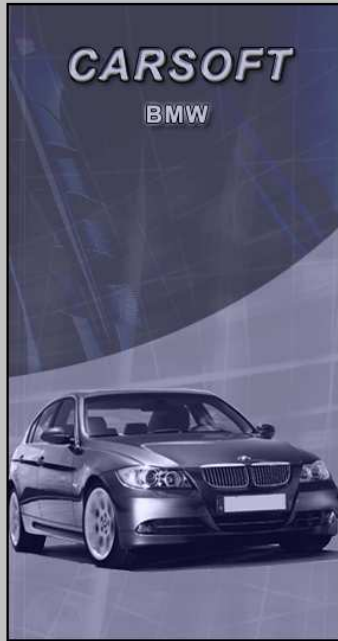


Next was a pop up of the various 3 series variants (both petrol and diesel) that are available for diagnosis.

Once I had made my choice, I was able to choose the “Quick Test” or “System Diagnostic Tests” button. In essence the “Quick Test” button performs the same function as the “Total Diagnosis” under previous versions of Carsoft. One major area of improvement here is that rather than listing every possible module configuration and then simply advising whether the status was “OK”, “ERROR” or “Module does not respond” – the software checks for presence of the module and then reports the status of only those modules relevant to the particular model variant under test.

Previous versions of Carsoft listed every possible inclusion, leaving many users perplexed at why they had been unable to access all the modules listed and thinking that they were experiencing electrical and/or diagnostic failures.

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Vehicle	Engine Type	Model
E30 3 Series	DIESEL	
E36 3 Series	DIESEL	
E46 3 Series	DIESEL	
E90 3 Series	DIESEL	
E91 3 Series	DIESEL	
E92 3 Series	DIESEL	
E93 3 Series	DIESEL	
E30 3 Series	PETROL	
E36 3 Series	PETROL	
E46 3 Series	PETROL	
E90 3 Series	PETROL	
E91 3 Series	PETROL	
E92 3 Series	PETROL	
E93 3 Series	PETROL	

Quick Test

System Diagnostic Tests



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Manual



Setup

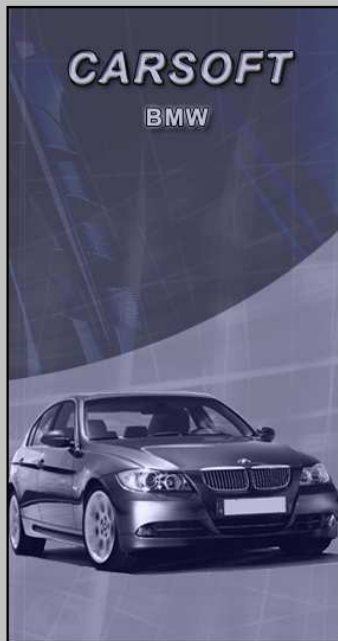


Exit

9/12/2009 3:03 PM Passenger Vehicles\ 3 Series\

There are a lot of possible variants, even for the E36 3 series, so the "Quick Test" still takes about 10 minutes to complete. I was using a Dell M65 2.1GHz Pentium Core Duo Laptop for my tests. Although I had the vehicle engine running during the diagnostic, I know the car's battery was low as the result of the vehicle having been seldom driven and, as expected got a couple of errors as the result of low voltage.

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DME Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
AB Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
ABS/ASC Single Diagnosis	Status: Error !	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
ZKE/ZVM Single Diagnosis	Status: Error !	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
EGS Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
EWS Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
CVM Single Diagnosis	Status: Module does not respond...!	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>



Back



Main



Start



Print



Manual



Exit

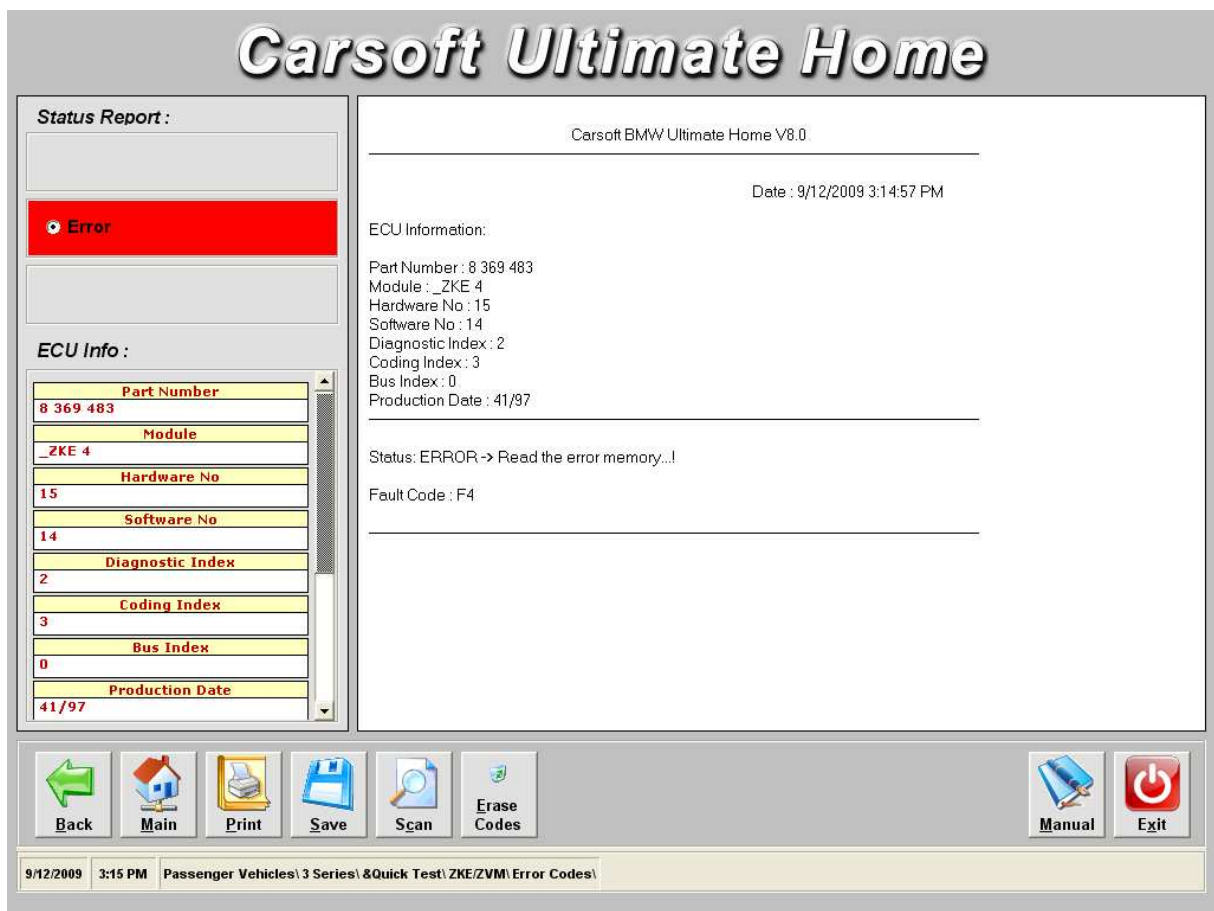
9/12/2009 3:12 PM Passenger Vehicles\ 3 Series\ &Quick Test\

As the test vehicle was not a cabriolet, (but they are a valid variant for the E36) naturally I got a "Module does not respond" message from the convertible top control module (CVM).

Another nice feature of the graphical user interface software is the ability to access a single module diagnostic test directly from the total diagnostic result screen without having to jump across to another menu as was the case with the previous versions of Carsoft.

Activating the "Single Diagnostic" button only selects the program mode – you then need to choose whether to Scan the module or erase the error codes.

As previously stated, I knew that the car battery was low before I started testing and as I have written extensively in my forum posts, this often shows up as inability to access information from various modules. The low battery error was stored in the ZKE module as shown in the following screen shot, but as the battery voltage had been restored as the result of running the engine during my testing, once cleared the error did not reset.



The car had been running for about 10 minutes by the time I ran a single diagnostic on the ABS/ASC module, so it came up clear on the single test as expected.

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Status Report :

OK

ECU Info :

Module
_ABS Teves
Software No
B4







Carsoft BMW Ultimate Home V8.0



Date : 9/12/2009 3:12:59 PM

ECU Information:

Module : _ABS Teves
Software No : B4

Status: OK

 Back
  Main
  Print
  Save
  Scan
  Erase Codes

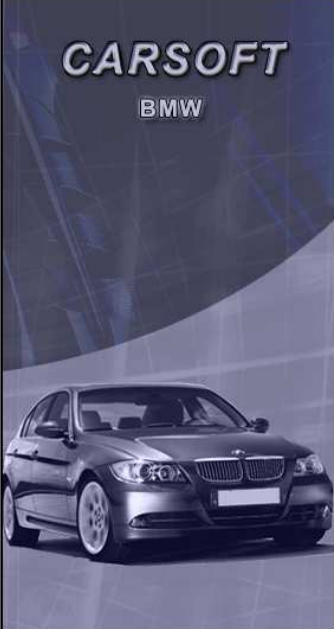
 Manual
  Exit

9/12/2009 3:14 PM Passenger Vehicles\3 Series\ &Quick Test\ ABS/ASC\Error Codes\

To access individual modules, read live engine data, reset the Service interval or perform any of the ancillary functions (such as DME/EWS alignment etc.), choose the “System Diagnostic Test” button after selecting the model variant of your vehicle.

The program then lists various individual systems, from which a further selection can be made.


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Vehicle	Engine Type	Model
E30 3 Series	DIESEL	
E36 3 Series	DIESEL	
E46 3 Series	DIESEL	
E90 3 Series	DIESEL	
E91 3 Series	DIESEL	
E92 3 Series	DIESEL	
E93 3 Series	DIESEL	
E30 3 Series	PETROL	
E36 3 Series	PETROL	
E46 3 Series	PETROL	
E90 3 Series	PETROL	
E91 3 Series	PETROL	
E92 3 Series	PETROL	
E93 3 Series	PETROL	

Quick Test

System Diagnostic Tests


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Carsoft Ultimate Home


CARSOFT
BMW




Driveline




Chassis Systems






Body



Information and Communication



AIRCO


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9/12/2009 3:17 PM Passenger Vehicles\ 3 Series\ System &Diagnostic Tests\

Keen to check the functionality of the ancillary program functions, I chose the “Driveline” button to access engine (DME) and automatic gearbox (EGS) data.

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CARSOFT
BMW



DME Engine



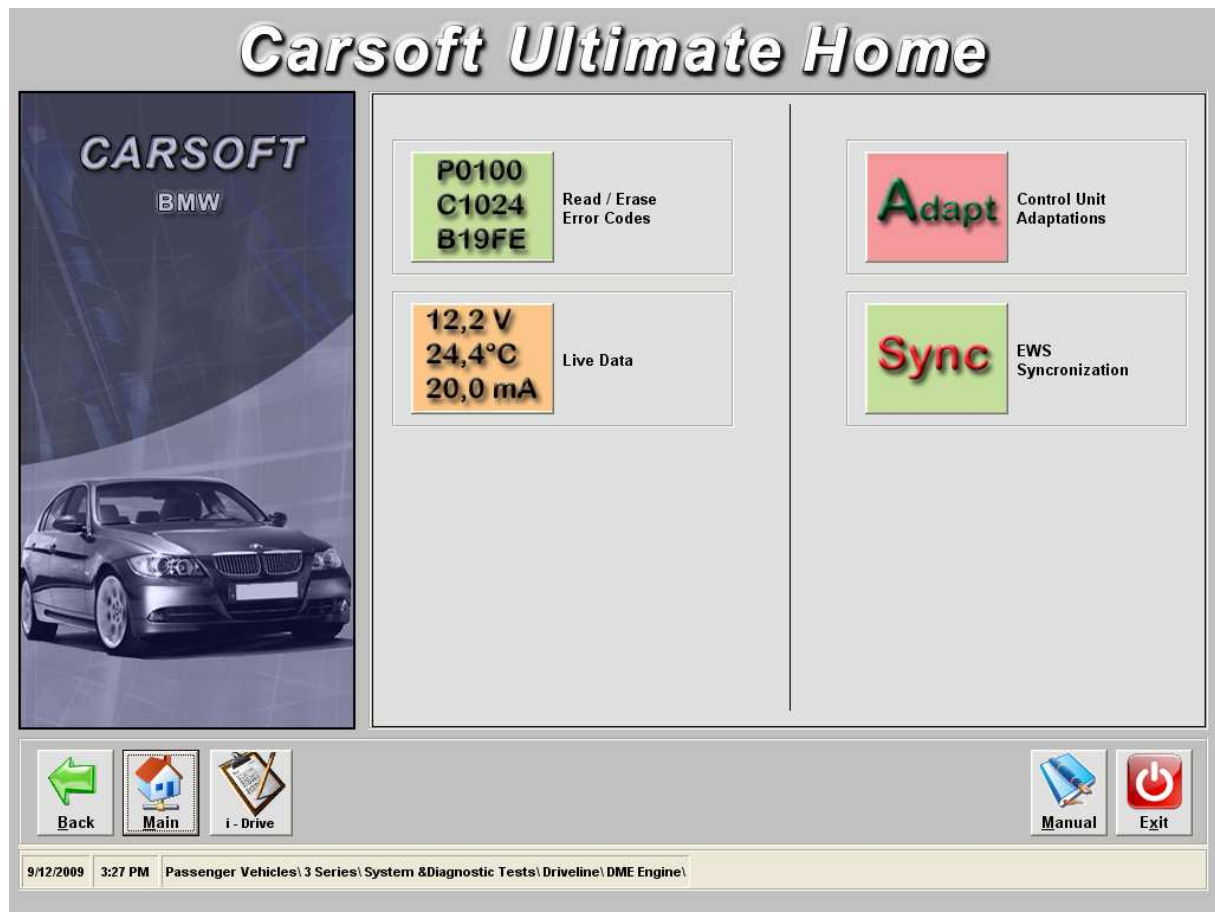
EGS - Auto Trans

 Back  Main  i - Drive  Manual  Exit

9/12/2009 3:20 PM Passenger Vehicles\ 3 Series\ System &Diagnostic Tests\ Driveline\

Choosing "DME" gave me options to Read and/or erase error codes, reset fuel adaptation values, view live engine data or synchronise the EWS to the DME.

As many users have aired doubts about the ability of Carsoft v6.5 to perform the above functions, I tried them all – including the DME/EWS Synchronisation and all were fully functional.



I then used the "Back" button to run similar tests via the ZKE module and accessed the Service Reset and component activation functions to conduct a Service Reset and test out my central locking and power windows before returning to the DME to view some live engine data.

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Progress bar: 2/5

Injection signal cylinder 1	2.531	msec
Lambda probe heating 1	76.440	%
Lambda probe heating 2	76.440	%
Signal Lambda probe heating 1	4.777	v
Signal Lambda probe heating 2	4.348	v
Idle speed - Air - Adaptation	0.824	kg/h
Power Supply	13.6	v

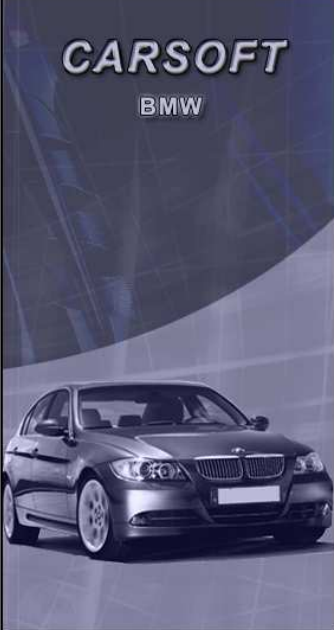
< Start Display STORE Cancel >

9/12/2009 3:29 PM Passenger Vehicles\3 Series\System &Diagnostic Tests\Driveline\DME Engine\Live Data\

No surprises here, the live engine data is displayed in identical format to the previous versions of Carsoft, which I find easy to read and understand.

Last step in the test was to again use the "Quick Test" button to view all modules and verify that no fault codes had reset during the course of the various tests I had conducted – as expected a clean bill of health with green across the board (all modules OK).

Carsoft Ultimate Home



DME Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
AB Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
ABS/ASC Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
ZKE/ZVM Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
EGS Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
EWS Single Diagnosis	Status: OK	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
CVM Single Diagnosis	Status: Module does not respond...!	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>

Back Main Start Print Manual Exit

9/12/2009 3:39 PM Passenger Vehicles\3 Series\ &Quick Test\

Having completed my evaluation, I went to switch the ignition off, disconnect the interface and verify that the Service Reset had actually taken effect. The "ABS" warning light was on, but I believe that this had set when the ABS/ASC module showed an error during my initial test (conducted whilst the battery was low). I had not cleared any error codes as the module had come up clear once the battery voltage had been restored.

The "ABS" warning light extinguished with no further action when I turned the ignition off and remained out when I restarted the car with the diagnostic equipment disconnected to verify that the service interval had in fact been reset.

The verdict? If you require a professional quality diagnostic tool capable of performing coding and programming, you should probably consider something a little more comprehensive but in my opinion Carsoft Ultimate Home v8.0 is right on the money for its targeted consumer group – home mechanics who simply want to diagnose, repair and maintain their cars without the expense of dealer servicing. A nicely presented, easy to use diagnostic tool that can reset your Service Interval indicator after oil changes and clear that annoying SRS (Airbag) warning light without a trip to the dealer.

David Mc
12 September 2009

Postscript:- As the result of Carsoft International's continuing program of product development and improvement, several software revisions have been released since the time of writing this article. The current version of Carsoft Ultimate Home as of October 2010 is v8.5.