BTS NRC MUC Texte 2

The future of cars: Wireless wheels

Connected cars will make driving safer, cleaner and more efficient. Their introduction should be speeded up.

Since its invention the car has delivered many benefits. It has boosted economic growth, increased social mobility and given people a lot of fun. But the car has also brought many problems. It pollutes the air, creates congestion and kills people. Fortunately, an emerging technology promises to make motoring safer, less polluting and less prone to hold-ups. “Connected cars” can communicate wirelessly with each other and with traffic-management systems, avoid pedestrians and other vehicles and find open parking spots.[(…)]

Many new cars are already being fitted with equipment that lets them maintain their distance and stay in a motorway lane automatically at a range of speeds, and recognize a parking space and slot into it. Soon, all new cars in Europe will have to be able to alert the emergency services if their on-board sensors detect a crash. Singapore has led the way with using variable tolls to smooth traffic flows during rush-hours; Britain is pioneering “smart motorways”, whose speed limits vary constantly to achieve a similar effect. Combined, these innovations could create a much more efficient system. [(…)]

If cars are to connect, new infrastructure will have to be built. Roads and parking spaces will need sensors to monitor them; motorways will need dedicated lanes for connected. Upgrading to a central traffic-management system is a lot cheaper than building new roads.

In the past, more people driving meant more roads, more jams, more death and more fumes. In future, the connected car could offer mankind the pleasures of the road with rather less of the pain.

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