

Not very smart cars

As someone who embraced the coming of the first mobile phones, adopted the iPad and welcomed the scope the web offered as with this blog I am in principle happy with the idea of a self driving car that would leave me free to do other things on a journey.

As a legislator I will need some persuading we have reached the development point with self drive cars that is acceptable and will fit on our roads alongside cars with human drivers.

So far I have found the addition of extra computing power to my current car far from smart. It is often annoying, slows down using the vehicle and can conflict with your safe judgements as a driver.

In the morning the computer display says Good Morning. There is no point in saying Good Morning back, and it delays being able to tell the sat nav where I am going which needs to be done before driving off . I drive to a local shop, leave the car for 5 minutes and then it wishes me Good Morning all over again with no sense of irony!

You are driving along on a sunny day -remember those?- and go briefly into shade. You can see perfectly well. The car puts the lights on. Why? I didn't tell it to.

You are in heavy London traffic on one of those junctions where your turn gets a few seconds on green. You follow the car ahead closely but safely at a slow speed to get round before red and the car screams at you.

You choose to stay in third gear because you foresee the likely need to stop at lights a few hundred yards ahead. The car tells you to change to a higher gear in blissful ignorance that you will need to slow down.

The sat nav tells you you will arrive in Westminster at a stated time. You estimate it will take a quarter an hour longer because the last three miles are always impossible thanks to the anti motorist street layouts, lights and road blocks. The sat nav is nearly always wrong and never learns from the repeat errors.

The other day the car told me I needed to download additional software. I complied when the car was parked overnight. In the morning it needed more time to complete. It had for no good reason hidden icons I needed to access easily, so I had to waste more time before setting off trying to rescue items that would be useful.

It has a fuel use/ environment programme. However you drive the vehicle the accelerator rating plunges from 5.0 to 1.0 as soon as you get the car moving. The brake and speed ratings make more sense and help give you better consumption figures for restrained driving.

Car producers need to keep in touch with what buyers want. Not all technology

is good. Touch screens in cars are difficult to read when the sun shines on them and when they get finger marked. They do not always respond to touch. It is dangerous to look at them when you need to be very alert watching everything going on on the road around you. It is very annoying when they do not respond to first touch. It is therefore important the touch screen does not contain controls you need when driving. Switches and knobs on older cars always work first time and do not require you to look away from the road ahead.